

# HAWAII TOPPLES JAPAN FROM KARATE THRONE

50th Staters take the measure of the best of Japan's young karate stars after mainland U.S. teams fail in the attempt.

## U.S. Loss on the Mainland

That it had happened was obvious. Yet it still didn't seem quite possible. But there were the final results for all to see: three out of five wins for the Hawaiian champions. A Hawaiian team had beaten the finest of Japan's young karate stars.

The implications were startling. Ja-

pan had been toppled from the karate pinnacle she had occupied for more than a generation. And while the United States may not have the experienced teachers that Japan could offer among its older karate men, it was hard to escape the conclusion that the center of top tournament play had shifted from the Japanese

islands to the Hawaiian islands.

Hawaii's achievement was all the more impressive in the light of the failure a few days earlier of Hidetaka Nishiyama, head of the All-America Karate Federation, to put together winning teams from all the rest of the United States to match against the Japanese.

Nishiyama's teams had dropped four out of five to the Japanese in both San Francisco and Los Angeles.

It remained for the Hawaiians to beat two more Japanese and rack up a team victory. The Hawaiian achievement raised the questions of how and why a team from America's 50th state, with a total population of less than three quarters of a million, was able to pull off such an impressive victory.

## Coaching Is Everything

One answer is that coaching made a difference. The Hawaiian team was coached by a thoroughgoing professional, Masataki Mori, Chief Instructor of the Karate Association of Hawaii (KAH).





Chief Instructor Masataki Mori. leis for the victors.

The 33-year-old Mori has been actively engaged in karate for 16 years. He was team captain of the karate club at Takushoku University in Japan and had joined the Japan Karate Association in 1955. He came to Hawaii as Chief Instructor for the KAH in 1963.

Mori had put his team through many weeks of gruelling training while pointing for the Hawaii-Japan Goodwill Tournament. He had roused team members out early and drilled them intensively in techniques and body conditioning from 5 a.m. to 7 a.m. five days a week.

#### Dojo Turns Out

Three of the five-man Hawaiian team were composed of members who

had won out earlier in the 3rd Annual KAH Tournament. These three were selected to go to Los Angeles to compete in the All-American Karate federation's annual tournament. To give the team members encouragement in their workouts, Mori ordered all the other members of his organization with the rank of 3rd Kyu and above to turn out each morning to train with the three-man team going to Los Angeles.

Mori's workout routine was a stiff one. The first hour consisted of intensive calisthenics and instruction in techniques. The second hour was made up of free-style sparring. The three team members took on in rapid succession all the other karate students present. Thus, within the course

of a month of cram courses, the three team members were exposed to a wide variety of styles and techniques.

Curiously enough, Mori's team members, except for George Sasano, didn't fare too well at the Los Angeles meet. Sasano took second place in the tournament.

#### Steps Up Efforts

Following this meet, Mori redoubled his efforts in Hawaii to whip his team into shape. While Sasano went to San Francisco to compete against the Japanese, the other two team members, Kenneth Funakoshi and Y. K. Chow, returned to drills that Mori had instituted. Mori, in the meanwhile, had rounded out his team by adding two outstanding players of his own choosing, Eugene Watanabe and Charles Okimura.

It was a confident Japanese team that flew into Hawaii for its match, having come off two straight victories in the mainland United States. The tournament was held at the gymnasium of the St. Louis High School, which is situated on a hill overlooking the beautiful city of Honolulu.

A near-capacity crowd was on hand and it was to be treated to a fireworks display of karate during the matches.

#### Fatal Lunge

**First Match:** Charles Okimura (Hawaii) vs. Katsuhiko Maruoka

The first bout started off favorably for the Hawaiians and gave an indication of the way things were to go. Maruoka, a law student at Keio Gijuku University, tried to overwhelm with a fast rush as the bout opened. He lunged forward with a combination of punches and kicks and scored finally with a roundhouse kick to Okimura's kidney that was good for a half point. Okimura then became the aggressor as play resumed. He attacked with swift front kicks and was awarded a half point. With the score tied, both contestants maneuvered carefully, waiting for an opening. Maruoka made his move first, and it was a fatal one. Okimura countered the lunge with a reverse punch to the

stomach and that was good for a half point and the match. SCORE: Hawaii 1, Japan 0.

**Second Match:** Eugene Watanabe (Hawaii) vs. Hideharu Osada.

The second match was a close one. The initial lead was taken by the Hawaiian, but he lost it when he resorted more to a judo technique instead of continuing to spar. At the command of *Hajime* (Begin), both contestants clashed in the center of the ring with a fast exchange of kicks and punches. After a short pause, Osada, from Kinki University, executed a front kick which was blocked by Watanabe. Watanabe countered well with a punch and was awarded with a half point. When fighting resumed, Watanabe grabbed hold of Osada's *gi* (uniform) and tried to topple the Japanese. But Osada wrenched free and executed a powerful front kick to the stomach of Watanabe, who was off balance. The kick was good for a full point. SCORE: Hawaii 1, Japan 1.

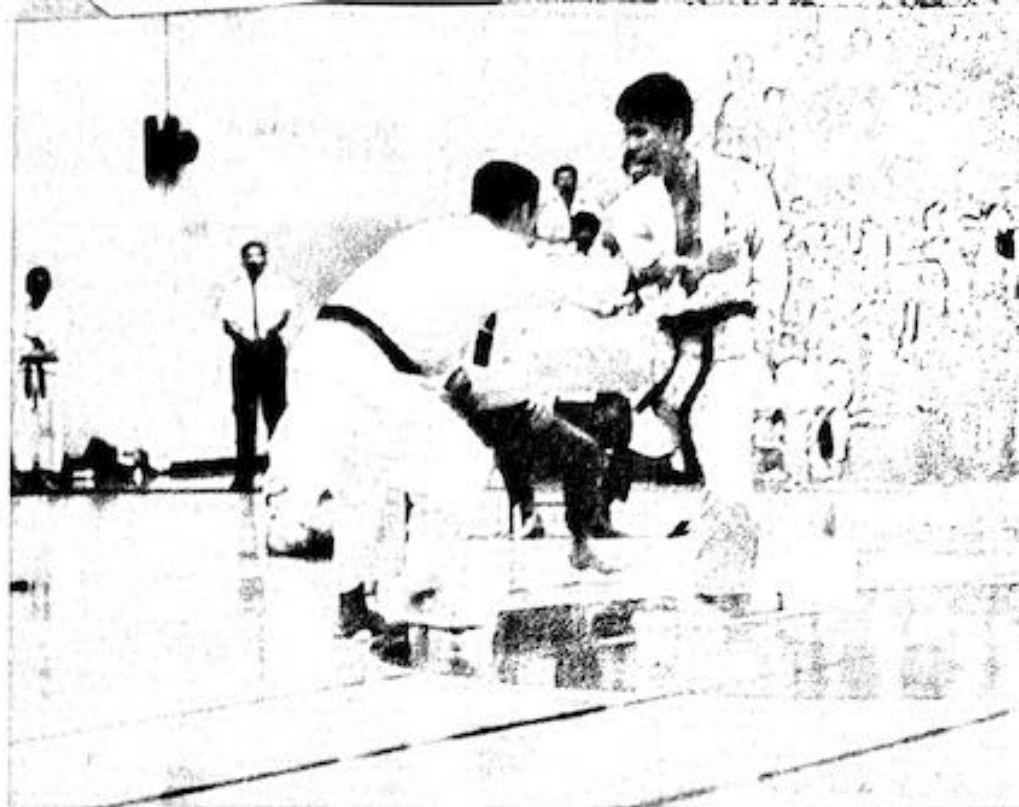
#### Japan Takes Lead

**Third Match:** Y. K. Chow (Hawaii) vs. Yoshitomo Nagasawa.

Both contestants assumed their karate posture and stalked each other at the opening. Chow relied on his powerful front kick and waited for an opening. There was an exchange of punches and kicks that were either blocked or out of range. Nagasawa became the aggressor and lunged forward with a punch to Chow's chest and scored a half point. In an attempt to make up ground, Chow charged Nagasawa with swift front kicks which were blocked. Nagasawa countered with a roundhouse kick that scored another half a point. SCORE: Hawaii 1, Japan 2.

**Fourth Match:** George Sasano (Hawaii) vs. Masaru Tokai.

Respecting each others' prowess, neither attacked and both played a waiting game. Tokai executed a lung-



Osada's kick to Watanabe's stomach is good for ippon.



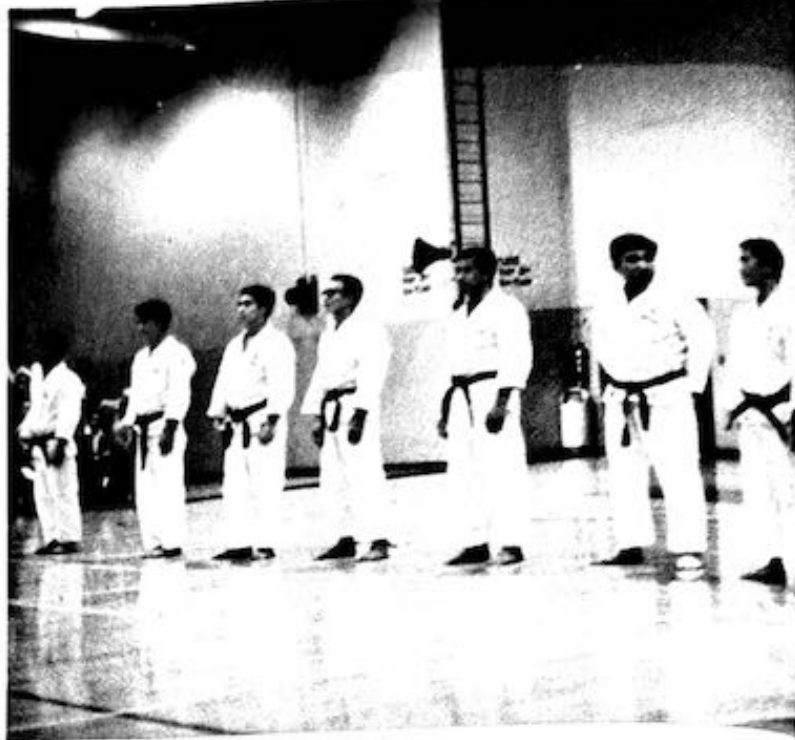
Sasano attempts front kick on Tokai.

ing punch and followed up with a front kick which was blocked by Sasano. After a fast exchange of punches Sasano scored half a point with a roundhouse kick to the kidney. Tokai became the aggressor and went after

Sasano with combinations of front kicks and punches. Sasano spotted an opening in Tokai's defense and moved in swiftly with a front kick and scored half a point. SCORE: Hawaii 2, Japan 2.



The Hawaiian team: (l. to r.) Coaches Uyehara and Narikawa, players Funakoshi, Sasano, Y. K. Chow, Watanabe, and Okimura.



The Japanese team: (l. to r.) Muruoka, Osada, Nagasawa, Tokai, Ozawa, coaches Tanahoe and Mano.

### Booming Right Punch

**Final Match:** Kenneth Funakoshi (Hawaii) vs. Hideo Ozawa.

With the score tied, the fifth match became the decisive one for the tournament. There was tremendous pressure on both men. At the start, both contestants stalked each other very cautiously. Ozawa suddenly carried the attack to Funakoshi, who blocked the powerful kicks and punches. Funakoshi and Ozawa traded kicks and punches, none of which were effective. Ozawa again attacked with kicks and punches. However, Funakoshi stood firm. He blocked a front kick of Ozawa's, and without hesitation, countered with a booming right punch that landed in the area of Ozawa's heart. Funakoshi scored one full point for the blow. **SCORE:** Hawaii 3, Japan 2.

For the first time, an American team had beaten a crack Japanese championship squad. The victory was a tribute specifically to coach Mori and his team and, in a larger sense, to the rapid improvements in the style of play outside of Japan.

Funakoshi grabs Ozawa's gi.

