

Subject: 50th IFT Recap

IFT 50

They came, they played, and they beat us. Over the weekend of June 30 and July 1, two teams from Japan won first AND second places at the 50th IFT in Hancock, Michigan.

Congratulations to 50th IFT Champion Katon: Takeshi Osada, Kosuke Sampei, Tsuyoshi Seki, Naoki Nishikata, Ryoichi Ohgushi, Takaki Harada. And to 50th IFT Runners-Up Selfish: Makihiko Watanbe, Koichi Watanbe, Takuto Hayashi, Masayashi Kimura, Masafumi Kambe, Takayoshi Suda, and Iwata Kosuke.

Twenty-three teams (many with 6, 7, and 8 on their rosters) participated in the tournament. It was a great reunion of Guts players and teams with names you might recognize from the pages of history: Air Aces, Pauls Bar, West End Scrap, Ridin High, Cupola Bandits, Queen City Flyers, Helter Skelter, Bud Light, and Where Day Go. There were teams with a more recent history, such as defending IFT champion Boomtown Saints, Breakers, Blame The Dog, Aerial Armageddon, and Projectile Disc Function Blue and Green. And there were the NEW teams, including the third place finisher Silverbacks with Joe Welch and Fro Warren from the Lightweights IFT winners in 1981, Mike Colburn from Beer City Express, and a couple of Ultimate players from Florida Johnny Hasson and Marlin Grouper. The other new teams were Dude, Backley, Maki; Healys Acme Bar; Not Quite North Central; Luck of the Irish; and Keweenaw Coasters.

On Saturday, determined from last year's finish at IFT, a number of teams earned first round Byes. Boomtown Saints beat Cupola Bandits in the finals of the 2006 IFT and were the 1 and 2 seeds, respectively. Katon was awarded the 3, as they are the reigning WUGC World Champions and reportedly have not lost a match in seven years. Blame The Dog was the 4 and Breakers the 5. Ridin High with members of Mystery Spot was the 6 seed and Queen City Flyers, from their second place finish at Appleton (there playing under the name of We Are Who We Are) was the 7. Selfish was given the 8 seed and PDF Blue was the 9.

In Round One Winners bracket games that were actually played, Not Quite North Central beat West End Scrap; Healys Acme Bar (looking suspiciously like Midlands Acme Bar team of the mid-1980s) beat Dude, Backley, Maki; Air Aces beat Luck of the Irish; Pauls beat Aerial Armageddon; Where Day Go beat Bud Light in the battle for bragging rights in Marquette, Michigan); and Helter Skelter beat Keweenaw Coasters.

In Round Two Winners bracket games, Boomtown beat Silverbacks; Selfish beat Not Quite North Central; Breakers beat Healys Acme Bar; Blame The Dog beat PDF Blue; Katon beat Air Aces; Queen City Flyers beat Pauls Bar; Where Day Go beat Ridin High; and Cupola Bandits beat Helter Skelter.

In Round Three Winners bracket games, Selfish beat Boomtown Saints, Blame The Dog beat Breakers; Katon beat Queen City Flyers; and Cupola Bandits beat Where Day Go.

In Round One Losers bracket games, PDF- Green beat Dude, Backley, Maki; Bud Light beat Luck of the Irish; and Keweenaw Coasters beat Aerial Armageddon.

In Round Two Losers bracket games, PDF Green beat Pauls Bar; Ridin High beat West End Scrap; Bud Light beat Not Quite North Central; and Healys Acme Bar beat Keweenaw Coasters.

In Round Three Losers bracket games, Air Aces beat PDF Green; Ridin High beat Helter Skelter; Silverbacks beat Bud Light; and Healys Acme Bar beat PDF Blue.

In Round Four Losers bracket games, Boomtown Saints beat Breakers and Silverbacks beat Where Day Go.

In Round Five Losers bracket games, Boomtown Saints beat Cupola Bandits and Silverbacks beat Blame The Dog.

In Round Six of the Losers bracket, Silverbacks beat Boomtown Saints.

In Round Seven of the Losers bracket, the tournament semi-finals, Selfish beat Silverbacks.

And in the finals, although the crowd was cheering for the underdogs who managed to win Game One (23-21), Selfish could not hold on and lost the next two games 21-19 and 21-14. Katon was the 50th IFT Champion!

Silverbacks were the surprise of the tournament, managing to beat a number of good Guts teams in single-game Losers bracket matches. Personally, I cant explain their success they beat my team, Blame The Dog and on paper, we had the better team but that is why we play the games. Joe Welch played the middle with a decent backhand (not the quality of the two-finger shot he threw earlier in his career but plenty good enough to score a lot of his teams points) and solid defense, led his five-man team to a third place IFT finish and if an All-Star team had been selected, he would have been on it.

Im not sure how other teams fared against the two Japanese teams; Blame The Dog won their first game against Selfish and then lost Games 2 and 3 and didn't earn a chance to play Selfish a second time or Katon. I did, however, watch both teams play late in the tournament and they were good. They were certainly the two best teams at IFT 50. They bagged way more than any other team; anything in the catch-zone was butter, and they exhibited excellent bobbling skills following initial contact. I was particularly impressed by their attitude following catches by their own team or the team they were playing and celebrated or congratulated equally easily and happily. A good catch deserved, and received, a hearty round of applause.

I have a few questions of my own regarding the attention we gave the Japanese just for showing up hopefully, what I initially hoped would happen by them being here will help grow our sport by leaps and bounds. I have a few questions about the rules they play by in Japan, or what rules Team USA can expect to play by in Vancouver but those may only be mine and do not warrant more mention than that at this time.

And lets not forget the women. We were unable to induct any women into the Hall of Fame this year but Linda Lovick got Womens Guts back in the IFT and Tequila Sunrise beat Dynamo Loop 22-20 in a demonstration match! Lets have four teams (or more) at IFT next year! Or maybe even at the US Nationals over Labor Day weekend!

As for Where Do We Go From Here! We got spanked, all of us, by the Japanese teams and unless we can play better Guts than we played at IFT, Japan will have the Julius T. Nachazel trophy for awhile. Some old men can play pretty good Guts for one day. A few old men can play pretty good Guts for two days. No old men can play Guts at the level Guts needs to be played to win. I'm thinking we need ten guys per team; you guys play on Saturday and the rest of us will play on Sunday! No, that ain't gonna work long term. Young men are the future of Guts. Sky King Richardson said it at the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, and Tim Trauger gave us lots to think about on that topic in his talk regarding the Future of Guts. To guarantee the life of the great game of Guts, we each need to generate teams in our own areas made up of young players high school age and younger and grow Guts from the ground up. We each have roots in our own towns, areas, and regions.

We MUST each shoulder this responsibility for the legacy and the sport of Guts (It's throw and catch with a Frisbee) to survive. Sell it to yourself and then sell it to your community. Play Guts! Have Fun! Got GUTS?

On Friday, Gary Ciaglaski organized the Fly-Meet at the Legion Hall in Hancock. At least five vendors set up displays of past IFT and other Guts tournament memorabilia where you could buy, sell, or trade commemorative items. That night, the Legion Hall had been transformed into Club Asylum, complete with disco ball, black-lights, a bead curtain entrance, glow-in-the-dark bracelets, and music from the past four decades. Lots of people met up there. Most spent most of the evening out of doors but you have to admit, it was pretty cool!

As for the Hall of Fame Induction Dinner and Ceremony, special thanks must be given to Cormac Ronan and his staff at Wadsworth Hall on the campus of Michigan Technological University. The banquet was superb.

How about the legends and Hall of Famers in attendance? Sky King, Mel Visser, Jon Davis, Stancil Johnson, John Sappington, Jim Palmeri, Tom Cleworth, Bob McCartney, Tom Matuzak, Al Bauman, Ken Salter, Alan Blake, Joe Youngman, Joe Essman, Ron Arndt, Buck Buchanan, John Begoske, and Dave Young, and more that I'm embarrassed to be omitting.

The plaques awarded that night to the previous HOF classes from 1987 and 2004 and this year's class of 2007 were built and assembled by Dave Nesbitt and will remain in Hancock with Dennis Walikainen until a suitable Guts Frisbee Museum can be established.

Special mention of thanks was given to the Hall of Fame Nominations Committee, including Mike Colburn, Steve DesJardins, Frank Logosh, Linda Lovick, Dave Meyer, Dan Thornton, David Trauger, and Steve Trauger. Many, MANY hours were put into the nominations process and these individuals are very deserving of recognition for their fine effort.

All six newly inducted members of the USGPA Hall of Fame were in attendance: Thor Anderson, Dave Bradshaw, Bill Begoske, Tom Field, Bill Hodges, and Gerard Newman.

Although it was Steve Taylor and Dan Thornton and Steve Trauger and Dan Leach (who with a number of other Guts players did the job of lining the fields and in some cases had to do it twice before we even used the fields once and Dave Nesbitt and Ron Blau and Dennis Walikainen who received most of the credit for the tournament and HOF dinner, let's not forget the women who did most of the on-site work of making both events a success. Barb Thornton, Ann Taylor, Kim Trauger, and Kim Wilson these women (and some of their children) busted it ALL weekend. We would have all looked SAD without them.

If you've got problems with how things were done, don't complain about it. Get involved. Lots of things could have been done differently, sure. If just five more people would have stepped up and taken on just one responsibility, those people who ended up having to do all the work might have been able to do a little bit less and enjoy the whole thing a little bit more. To be completely honest, I'm glad the thing is over I'm crisp. Get involved. It is the USGPA and we need you.

The 50th IFT was a terrific event, no question about it. Will the 51st be anything like it? I doubt it. But that remains to be seen. Sort of depends on you. Got GUTS?

Steve Trauger