

Nor Cal Japan Karate-do Team Shows Courage, Skill

Submitted by Dave McKinnis

Students from the Northern California Japan Karate-do school, including some national competitors from Moraga, attended the Ajari Cup in Oakland on Sunday, Oct. 14. The Ajari Cup is a traditional Japanese karate tournament, a combination of ritual and martial art, emphasizing respect for the pursuit of excellence, respect for one's opponent, and respect for the competitive event itself – a competition in which the athlete responds to the official with a respectful bow whether receiving points for a score or a warning for an infraction.

The sparring matches con-



Kassie McKinnis sees scoring opportunity

sist of intermittent attacks and counterattacks, with the competitors being restarted after any score. In the advanced divisions of sport karate each exchange can be over in a heartbeat. The referee and judges stare intently to capture that moment and award points when a score is made.

Unlike a large national tournament, this smaller tournament presents unique challenges in terms of size and age mismatches in the grouping of contestants. The NCJK team performed with great courage and skill, often against older and larger competitors. Everyone on this experienced team received medals and no injuries, including Moraga locals, Ryan Liu, and Kyle and Kassie McKinnis.

Ten-year-old Kassie McKinnis won the bronze in Kata (forms), and bronze in Kumite (sparring) in the 10-11yr. old female group. Kyle McKinnis, age 14, won the gold in Kata, and silver in Kumite in the 14-15yr. old male group. Ryan Liu, age 16 took the silver in Kata in the 16-17yr. old male group.