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74-year-old Pemberton Athlete Named Tiger Balm Black Belt Athlete of the Month

Five years ago Isao Naito decided to try something new and joined the **Pemberton / Whistler Shito-Ryu Seikokai Karate Club**. He was 69 years old then and did not (and still doesn't) speak much English. This month, the 74-year-old was awarded Karate BC's provincial award for outstanding performance of a Karate BC member.

The Tiger Balm Black Belt Athlete of the Month is awarded to any **Karate BC** member in the provincial sport system that demonstrates excellence on and off the mat. In Naito's case, reports from Shito-Ryu members claim he is an inspiration to all because of his courage to start karate at a time when most people are thinking of winding down in retirement and demonstrating a full commitment to his karate training. Not only does he train regularly at the Pemberton Karate Club, but he has been willing to take extra steps to supplement his training by commuting to Vancouver to train with Shihan Akira Sato, attending Brown and Black belt workshops, and attending World Champion Atsuko Wakai's workshop when she came to Vancouver.

One of his black belt colleagues, Rosella Ng, claims ".....although his body may take longer to do what he wants it to do, Naito-san has always persisted and has been determined to keep up with his dojo mates not only in learning new kata and kumite techniques, but also in the pace of the training."

Recently, Naito successfully tested for his shodan black belt, keeping up with not only the count but with the two teenagers who were doing their test as well. "I think that Naito-san is a role model for what the spirit of karate-do is all about", says Ng.

Karate BC is the official sanctioning sport governing body
for the sport of karate in the province of BC.

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Affiliations:

Sport BC, Canadian Sport Council, Pan-American Karate Federation, National Karate Association of Canada,
World Karate Federation, The Canadian Olympic Association, Coaching Association of BC, BC Recreation and Parks Association