



Judo star aims for Olympic glory

By Jonathan Blackstaffe

Children often dream of sporting glory. Scoring the winner at Wembley or competing in the Olympics are the fantasies for many. Such dreams usually end up biting the dust, but one East Finchley boy stands a better chance than most of making his a reality.

For Jean-Rene Badrick, 15, resident of Falloden Way and a member of Willesden Judo Club, is already being talked up as a possible Olympic gold medallist for Britain. He is also receiving an increasing amount of both television and newspaper attention.

Jean-Rene's record makes this sort of pressure almost inevitable. Along with a host of other medals, he has won two British titles in his age group and represented his country on more than 20 occasions.

Talented athlete

Now, under the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme run by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, he has been given the benefit of a £10,000 grant.

The scheme, which has a total budget of £1million, has been designed to enhance Britain's hopes of success in the 2012 Olympics, for which London is

of course bidding to be the host.

The money will provide Jean-Rene with access to top-notch facilities, coaching, medical advice and sports psychologists.

Jean-Rene, who has been practising judo since he was seven, is reported as having said, "I got into judo because I wanted to learn how to defend myself but now it's an important part of my life."

Indeed, not only is the East Finchley teenager one of 100 talented youngsters deemed worthy of such assistance, he was also deemed worthy of an audience with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Tessa Jowell (surely enough to inspire anyone to Olympic victory).

So, the stage is set and the audience's breath is bated. Now, Jean-Rene Badrick just has to take that prize out of his dreams into reality.



Young rugby team's success

By Wendy Devine

A youth rugby team with players from East Finchley has tackled its way to its best result in a tournament this season.

The Under-12 side from Finchley Rugby Club made it to the semi-finals of the prestigious 2005 Sudbury Mini Rugby Festival in Suffolk.

They eventually claimed third place in the competition after narrowly losing to a side from Diss in Norfolk.

All teams from Finchley, including U8s, U9s, U10s, U11s and the U12s, played well in the visit to the event, arranged by club chairman George Loureda and fixture secretary Gareth Byers.

Most of the players and their families travelled to Suffolk by coach from their base in Summers Lane, North Finchley, enjoying the Essex and Suffolk countryside on a warm, sunny Sunday in April.

The U12s played four matches in their group, winning their first one against Bury St Edmunds in impressive style before narrowly losing to Ipswich, then being soundly beaten by an impres-

sive but tough Romford side, who eventually went on to win the tournament.

Loyal parents said the U12s were unlucky to lose to Diss in the semi-final and pointed at some questionable refereeing. One East Finchley parent was heard to say to the hapless, bespectacled ref at the end of the game: 'Should have gone to Specsavers!'

Despite the disappoint-

ment, all players and parents enjoyed a great day out and are already looking forward to the beginning of the new season in August.

Chairman George Loureda is looking for new players to join the club, particularly in the Colts section, who are the U18s and U19s. If you are interested, please contact him via email on georgeloureda@camden.gov.uk.

Mini marathon marvels

By Jonathan Blackstaffe

It could be said that the London Marathon separates the men from the boys. Well, if that's the case, Barnet has some very grown-up boys (and girls).

For Barnet has been announced as placing third amongst boroughs in the 2005 London Mini Marathon.

The Mini Marathon, run along with the main event on Sunday 17 April, comprised the last five kilometres of the full course.

Jostling amongst more than 1,500 of London's youngsters were 48 entrants from Barnet.

Front of the field for Barnet's boys was Niall Fleming, a leading borough athlete and winner of his 11- to 12-year-old boys age group.

The borough was rather pleased with the young runners'

achievements. Jill Stansfield, Director of Children's Services, said, "What a fantastic achievement! I would like to congratulate all our young runners for their efforts, especially Niall who is making a name for himself as an athlete to watch in the future."

So, congratulations to the council's sports development team which focuses on getting young people involved in sporting activities to enable them to lead healthy and active lifestyles and, most of all, to the kids who competed.

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