

Edinburgh student Sally Conway is crowned British Judo Champion



An Edinburgh College student has fought her way to the top of the British Judo Championships, after winning gold in the U70kg category.

Sally Conway, who studies Instructors Course in Fitness and Exercise at Edinburgh College, is a full-time judo athlete and competes for Great Britain. The young athlete recently tore ligaments in her shoulder whilst competing at the London 2012 Olympics but returned to full health to win gold at the British Championships in Sheffield.

This sporting success follows a European Cup gold in Malaga and three weeks of Grand Prix and Grand Slam competitions in Tokyo, South Korea and Abu Dhabi, where she won a bronze medal and \$1500 in prize money. Sally now has her sights set on competing in the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

Sally said: "It was important to finish the year on a high with a medal. The plan now is to taper down a bit before heading out to a training camp in the New Year. Over the Christmas period I will still be keeping active, nothing too serious, probably down to one session a day.

"I want to be ready for the Paris Grand Slam in February so I can achieve my main goal of 2014 – to compete and hopefully medal at the Commonwealth Games. To be selected as early as possible would be ideal as then the pressure of qualifying is off and I can focus on the competition.

“I’m so looking forward to competing at a Commonwealth Games, especially in my home country. I am sure it will be really fun. Already there’s such anticipation and everyone is asking me if I will be going to the Games.”

Sally is one of eight judoka to be nominated by Judo Scotland for scholarship support from Winning Students, the national programme that provides funding and assistance to talented athletes studying in colleges and universities across Scotland.

Sally, who is 26-years-old, added: “By the end of June, I will be qualified as a gym instructor and in delivering circuit training and exercise to music classes. I am also doing Lifeguarding and First Aid courses and there is the option of further study afterwards.

“I am loving being back in education. I left school at seventeen and went into full-time training until this year. After London, I said I want to get back into education again, both to break up the training, but also to let me have a different focus. It’s something which will give me more options for the future.

“I can’t see myself sitting in an office working at a computer; it was always going to be something around fitness and physical activity.”

Edinburgh College is brimming with sporting talent, with fellow judo champ Jodie Mullen, football players Lizzie Arnot, Lucy Graham and Sarah Laverty, and curling champion Jennifer Dodds all awarded Winning student scholarships to compete in international competitions, such as the Commonwealth Games, Olympics and Paralympics.

Photograph Rob Eyton Jones