



Le Grange wins SA judo title after five years



DJ Le Grange in action against his opponent from Mozambique in the final at last week's national championships.

DJ le Grange reached another milestone in his judo comeback last week when he claimed the South African title in the under-66kg category at the national championships in Bloemfontein.

Because it was an Open Tournament, competitors from other countries were also allowed to compete.

It is the first time in five years that the Tuks judoka has won a national title. He readily admits to having a slight case of the jitters before his first fight.

"At first I struggled to get past my opponent's defence. However, when I managed to take him to ground, which is the strongest aspect of my judo, I pinned him to win. My second fight came in the form of a strong Mozambican with good technique and a high work tempo. The fight was quite high paced. I caught him with a good throw and followed up with a good pin to book a place in the semi-finals," said Le Grange afterwards.

In the semi-final, he fought against a Botswana judoka who competed at last

year's Olympic Games in Rio.

He was tall with a long reach which made getting close to him very difficult. Le Grange said he and his coach, Nikola Filipov, worked on a strategy to neutralise the Botswanan's style and to get him to fight in a way he is not used to do.

Le grange won on points.

His opponent in the final was a Mozambican who won a bronze medal at the Under-20 African Championships.

His speciality is counter attacks. Therefore, Filipov advised his judoka to force his opponent to attack to expose his weaknesses. Le Grange eventually won by scoring an ippon.

"I am satisfied with how the tournament played out. My performance is quite an improvement from previous tournaments. My groundwork was better as well as my timing and execution of all my techniques. It came down to the work and preparation that we did.

"Around eight weeks before the SA Championships we at TuksJudo embarked on an extremely rigorous training regime," Le grange concluded.

