



Donné Breytenbach, second from the left behind, on stage at the Tyumen International Cadet Competition in Russia where she won a gold medal.

Tuks judoka bags gold in Russia

A young judoka from Pretoria recently showed why she was rated so high in this sport when she won a gold medal in Russia at an elite competition.

If there is one thing, Donné Breytenbach from the TuksSport High School truly hates it is to lose a judo fight.

For her, it is just not on.

Taking this into account, it should be no surprise that she won a gold medal at the recent Tyumen International Cadet Competition in Russia.

An elated Nikola Filipov, the head coach at TuksJudo, describes this as the best result of her fighting career.

"To be able to win in Russia, where 700 judokas from 14 countries competed, is a big deal as judo is a major sport in Eastern Europe," explained Filipov.

Breytenbach was pushed out of her comfort zone. She usually fights in the under-52kg category, but over the weekend she decided to move up a weight category competing in the under-57kg category.

"I will be honest it was tough having to fight bigger and stronger rivals. It meant that I had to change my fighting style. I had to be cleverer. Thinking before doing," said Breytenbach on her return to Pretoria.

"Having Nikola next to the mats helped as he is a brilliant strategist. He also has a way to ensure that I remain calm when fighting."

During December, Breytenbach will be representing South Africa in the Region Five Tournament.

She will be competing in the junior category which is under-20. She is confident of getting a good result.

Earlier this year during the African Junior and Cadet Championships in Burundi, she



The Breytenbach twins from TuksSport High School, Donné and Thomas, both participated by special invitation in Russia. **Photo: Supplied**

won bronze medals in the cadet (under-17) as well as the junior (under-20) categories. In the build-up to the championships, she also competed at a Budapest Cup Tournament where she took the bronze medal.

Thomas Breytenbach, her twin brother, was fifth in his competition in Russia. He is reasonably satisfied with his performance as his goal was to gain as much experience as he can.

"At the moment I am the forever student of judo. That is why it is important I make the most of every opportunity I

get to compete internationally. I am sure everything I am learning will stand me to good stead in accomplishing the only real goal I have, and that is to compete at the Olympic Games. Hopefully, it can be at 2024," Thomas said.

Apparently, it not through choice that the Breytenbach twins got to compete in Russia. Every judoka who fought over the weekend was personally invited. Earlier this year a Russian coach was so impressed by their dedication during a training camp in Baja that led to them getting the opportunity to compete in Tyumen.

