

## ■ COACHING



SA karateka Meghan Booyens. |  
REG CALDECOTT

# Karateka sets mind on Olympic title

TUKS karateka Meghan Booyens has her work cut out in trying to qualify for the Olympic Games.

With her mind set on trying to qualify for next year's Olympic Games in Tokyo, Booyens has had to learn to multitask.

Karate is truly her passion. It's when she is on the mats training and coaching that she is at her happiest.

"To become a world-class athlete, I have to push my limits every day and have developed incredible self-discipline and commitment," said Booyens.

"Silver or bronze medals just aren't good enough for me. I want to be a champion."

Booyens won a bronze medal at last year's African Championships. She is hoping to go one better next week when competing against the continent's best in Gaborone, Botswana.

A good result will boost her chances of qualifying for the Games.

Booyens believes that to excel as a karateka requires not only fitness and a sound technique, but the ability to think on one's feet.

There should be a good reason for each punch thrown or kick to the body. A good karateka can pre-empt what an opponent is going to do and immediately counter-attack.

As with most South African athletes competing in the smaller sporting codes, Booyens's biggest frustration is funding to compete internationally.

"The only way I can improve is to test myself against more experienced karateka continuously, which means I have to compete internationally.

"So far this year, I've been to competitions in Dubai, Istanbul and Shanghai, but it's not enough."

Booyens's other goal, as a coach, is to help establish TuksKarate – the karate club of the University of Pretoria – to become competitive in local tournaments.

At the weekend, Tuks competed at the USSA Tournament in Grahamstown, winning the gold medal, the silver and the bronze.

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