

Torney crowned kata king

Twelve-year-old wins gold in his first-ever provincial appearance

Terry Farrell

Sports Editor

For 12-year-old David Torney, his first-ever BC Karate Championships appearance will be a tough act to follow.

Just a year and a half after starting in karate, Torney is a provincial champion. He won a gold medal in the 11/12 boys' novice kata, one of nine medals won by North West Shito-Kai Karate Club members at the annual provincial championships, held in Burnaby last week.

"My cousins had been trying to talk me into getting into karate since I was five," he said. "I'm glad I finally said yes. I like the thrill of it and the tournaments are fun."

Torney had only one chance to impress the judges. Whereas in the older divisions, competitors square off against each other in kata, going through their form routines and being judged as the winner or loser of a head-to-head challenge, the competition is a bit different in the 11/12 division. All competitors in that age group perform once, with the highest score at the end claiming top spot on the podium.

Torney performed the matsuri-mura-rohai kata and felt that gave him an edge on the rest of the field.

"I was the only one in the competition to do that kata," he said. "It's a pretty advanced kata, which the judges like and also, it's one of my best katas."

In regards to North West Shito-Kai results, Torney's gold medal was matched only by his sensei, Nigel Nikolaisen.

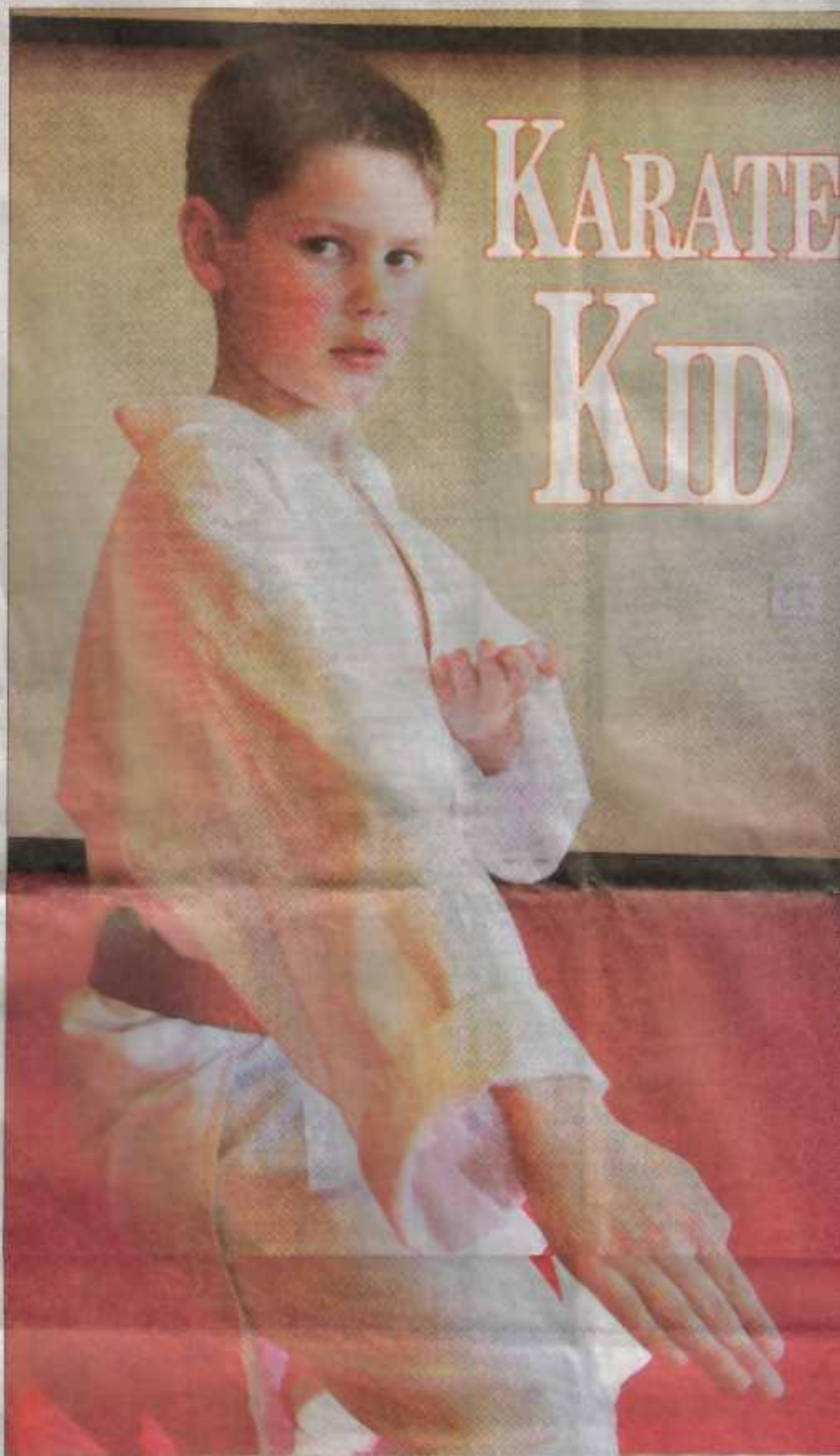
Nikolaisen won the gold in the men's elite kata division – his 19th provincial medal. And while that's a formidable feat in itself for the 23-year-old, it was the achievements of his students that made Nikolaisen proudest.

Nine of Nikolaisen's apprentices took part in the championships, held at the Minoru Arena, and it was a memorable inaugural appearance for the local karate school.

North West Shito-Kai students combined for eight medals at the event.

"We've all been preparing really hard for this – throwing in extra classes and stuff – so it really paid off," said Nikolaisen. "At the beginning of the year I took the whole dojo to the Zone 6 qualifier at Carhi and I was pleasantly surprised with how many of them qualified.

"It was really exciting, to see that many of my students



Twelve-year-old David Torney goes through the motions of his kata routine that earned him a provincial gold medal at the BC Karate Championships in Burnaby last week.

there. I was more focused on them this year than myself. I only competed to show my students that I'm still in it with all of them, but this was all about them.

"And timing wise it worked out great for me. I was able to see every one of them win their medals. Once one kid was finished I was able to look over my shoulder and see another kid just getting started."

As for Torney's gold, Nikolaisen said it was a just reward for the commitment shown by the youngster.

"David has really shown a lot

of enthusiasm," said Nikolaisen. "Even last summer, after the season, he would come to my house and work in my basement with me. So he's been focusing on perfecting his form for a long time – over a year just on this (kata). I'm really impressed with his effort and determination."

Allison Guilderson was the other medalist to emerge from the six-pack of 'juniors' representing North West Shito-Kai.

Guilderson, another of the club's 12-year-olds, won the bronze medal for the same kata and also took the bronze in

girls' novice 11/12 kumite.

"I sat in her corner and watched her fight and she did everything I said," said Nikolaisen. "Her semifinal fight, that determined the gold medal fight (berth), she lost in overtime. It was that close.

"And her kata was every bit as close. She placed third with a score of 21.6. The person who won gold had a score of 21.8."

Hayley Guilderson, Adam Guilderson, Cory Clausen and Brandon Irvine were the other club juniors to compete at the provincials.

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Karate: Roberts earns berth at Nationals

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Three of Nikolaisen's adult students medalled at the tournament, with Clinton Roberts leading the way.

Roberts eaned a spot on Team BC and will be representing the province at Nationals as a result of his double medal performance in Burnaby.

He won silver in the junior elite kumite and bronze in men's elite kumite.

"As a 19-year-old, he was able to compete in both the 18-20-year-old division, as well as the men's division," said Nikolaisen. "He fought harder than anyone in the tournament. Three of his matches went to overtime and although I know he would have liked to have placed even better, he really put on a show. He came out with a few bumps to show for his efforts and a couple of medals. He'll be ready to go at Nationals."

Derek Lorentz won a couple of medals as well, winning bronze in both men's novice kata and men's novice kumite.

Gerald Donnelley's bronze in men's novice kata rounded out the

school's medal haul.

"They've both been at it for a couple of years and are just about ready to move up to green belt," said Nikolaisen. "Derek's 26 and Gerald's 24, so they show that it's never too late to get into the sport. My girlfriend's father just joined and he's almost 50. There's no age limit to this. My youngest student is four and my oldest is almost 50 so there's quite the age spread."

As for Nikolaisen's gold, he felt fairly confident.

"Once I saw who I had with my draw, I chose my katas accordingly," he said. "I had my set order and I was lucky enough that I didn't have to change it once I saw who I was up against. I prefer not to do the same kata as the person I'm facing. I knew after my first round, and after watching my competitors, that this was my gold to win. I just felt it. Not to blow smoke or anything, it's just that I felt strongly that way and that's what pulled me through."

Nineteen provincial medals for the teacher and for the majority of his students, their first.

When asked if this was

his first on a path to catch his sensei's total, young David Torney let out a whistle and laughed.

"Whew, that's a tough

one," he said. "I have a long, long way to go before I can say I'm as good as him."

It all starts somewhere



David Torney tosses Allison Guilderson, with North West Shito-Kai club mates (from left) Cory Clausen, Hayley Guilderson, Lauren Dalbock and Calen Clausen looking on. Torney and (Allison) Guilderson were two of the club's medal winners at the 2007 BC Karate Championships last weekend in Burnaby.

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