

# JUNIOR AND VETERAN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Sofia, Bulgaria 26th - 30th July 2006**

**I**TF Wales (UKTA) were represented by three juniors (Sophie Collins, Cassie Lund and Tom Harris) and two veterans (Neville Thompson and Dave Lund) at the World Championships, with Victoria Phillips standing in as team coach. Having a long trip over they all looked forward to the challenge that the tournament would hold.

Day one commenced with patterns and Sophie Collins, dan junior female, won her first round easily against her Australian opponent performing much stronger of the two. In her second round, despite showing more power, she lost to the reigning European Champion from Greece who went on to take silver. Cassie Lund, dan junior female, put in a strong pattern with good legs in her first round to ease past her Greek opponent. In her next round she faced an Argentinean of very similar style and power which actually led to the first decision being 3 draws and one vote either way, the second pattern ended 3 draws and 2 votes to Argentina which still wasn't enough for a clear win, leaving the girls to compete in a third designated pattern, where the Argentinean managed to raise her level to take the round five votes in her favour.

Tom Harris, dan junior male, comfortably moved past his Chilean opposite in the first round but was beaten in the second round by a stronger Belarusian opponent. Dave Lund, dan veteran, male patterns easily beat his first round opponent who for some reason chose to do a colour belt pattern as his option! Keeping up his good performance he then beat his second round opponent to move into the semi-final. In the semi-final he lost to a stronger performing Uzbekistani, who went on to take silver but it was a good event for Dave. Last up in the patterns was Neville Thompson, dan veteran male, who drew one of three Canadians in his group - due to a back injury he had to opt for Kwang-Gae as his pattern and put in a good effort but was unfortunately beaten.

Day two was the veteran sparring and Dave Lund, male -64kg, was drawn against

the Dominican Republic and did well for the first round, working his opponent out, but in the second round the Dominican proved to be too fast with good legs and movement and despite a close fight Dave went out on a points decision. Neville Thompson, -90kg, drew a home opponent from Bulgaria in round 1, with better legs Neville tried to keep him off with strong side kicks however the Bulgarian had strong hands and kept Neville under pressure. The Bulgarian's powerful punching eventually winning the necessary points for him to advance to the next round.

Day three and junior sparring started with Sophie Collins, female -52kg, drawing an Estonian in her first round. A cagey first round was fought, with the Estonian using her height to keep Sophie away but in the second round Sophie picked up her game to look like a true international, using strong side kicks and good hands to pick the Estonian off and easily win the bout. Next up she faced a Ukrainian in the quarter final, it took a while but by the second round the Ukrainian had figured out Sophie's side kick and was able to use her hands to pick her off. Despite two yellow cards for contact on very hard head punches the Ukrainian took the match.

Cassie Lund, female -58kg, faced a Paraguayan first round and the strong side kicks took their toll on her, with Cassie winning this round easily. In the next round she faced an Australian and Cassie started the match the stronger and then began using her back leg turning kick to great advantage. She kept working hard despite a weakened arm and despatched her opponent quite easily. Her third round saw her face a strong Serbian opponent, both girls were evenly matched for their work, with Cassie using her better legs and the Serbian trying to pick her off with good hands. After the two 2 minute rounds the decision was a draw. In extra time Cassie's stamina showed through, as she kept working the left leg kick followed by back leg turning kick. Her Serbian opponent couldn't figure out the side kick, repeatedly trying to attack with the same leg, which worked to Cassie's

advantage and she won the match in extra time. Moving into the semi final Cassie faced a Tajikistani girl, who despite being smaller had great timing and was able to move around picking shot off. Cassie, despite her strength working to her advantage, saw the previous round draw and extra time start to take its toll as tiredness showed but the Tajikistani kept moving and picked up the points to win and went on to take gold.

Tom Harris, male -57kg, drew a much taller and stronger Bulgarian as his opponent in the first round and with home advantage left Tom in no doubt he was in for a hard fight. Working well in the first round, he kept his side kick long and aimed to come off the back leg. Towards the end of the round the Bulgarian's stronger hands started to show through as Tom came under pressure. In the second round the Bulgarian stepped the pace up and Tom did well to pick off shots with the back leg turning kick. Unfortunately the match then came to a hasty end when a lucky reverse turning kick to the head, coupled with a very hasty decision by the Bulgarian doctor to not allow Tom to continue, meant the bout was over, as he was declared unable to continue.

With only a small Welsh contingent competing the two bronze medals achieved and performances of all the competitors throughout were a resounding success for a small nation in a tournament attracting the world's best. Dave Lund, bronze medal for patterns and daughter Cassie Lund, bronze for sparring, were backed by the very good performances of Sophie Collins, Neville Thompson and Tom Harris, as well as the coaching of Victoria Phillips. Everyone back home is very proud of them and what they have achieved and they themselves have gained valuable experience and confidence, which will serve them well later in the year when they travel to the European Championships in Greece.

For any further details or information from ITF Wales (UKTA) please contact Mr Chris Black II secretary@itfwales.com or visit our website [www.itfwales.com](http://www.itfwales.com)

