

Bullies leave tae-kwondo champ alone

Represents Canada at pair of international events

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Brianna-Lauren Lor recalled being bullied while in playgrounds.

These days the 12-year-old Stouffville resident is not a target of such threats.

That all changed after her parents enrolled her just two months after celebrating her fifth birthday in tae-kwondo classes.

Since then, Lor has gained a measure of respect in her everyday life.

At the same time though, she's utilized her martial arts skills to make a name for herself on the competitive mat.

During the recent Canadian Taekwondo Championships in Toronto, Lor won a pair of gold medals in sparring and team poomsae along with one silver.

In doing so, she qualified to represent Canada at the inaugural World Cadet Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan this month.

While in Baku, she was to compete in the sparring competition in the 12-14 years old bantam division, 33-37 kilogram weight class group.

After winning the gold in team poomsae, Lor will also represent Canada at the ninth WTF World Taekwondo Poomsae Championships in Aguascalientes, Mexico from Oct. 30 to Nov. 2.

"My masters have taught me to believe in myself. Dream big and never give up. Anything is possible as long as we try our very best."

"I'm really excited and honoured to be the only athlete to qualify to represent Canada in both events," Lor said. "I'm looking forward to this opportunity and hope to learn and improve further from this experience."

Fuelling Lor in her latest feat was a silver medal she earned in poomsae/patterns while making her debut at the Junior Pan Am Games in Mexico last September.

Earning her first black belt at the age of 7 and currently holding a second degree black belt where she trains close to six days a week at Myung's Taekwondo Academy in Stouffville, Lor attributed her success on the mat to several factors.

Foremost was her parents, who signed her up to take up the martial arts discipline.

While training at Myung's, Lor was quick to credit her instructors in Master Edward Fong and Master Jong Seok Ha.

"They believed in me and pushed me to where I am today," said Lor, a French immersion student at Glad Park Public School. "My masters are the ones who put me on the podium to where I've won six provincial gold medals, four national gold medals and

one silver at the Pan Am Games.

"My masters have taught me to believe in myself. Dream big and never give up. Anything is possible as long as we try our very best."

To compete for Canada at the two upcoming events does have some drawbacks for Lor.

Citing both events are self funded, Lor was quick to note athletes do not receive any financial assistance from Sport Canada.

Lor is trying to raise funds so she can represent Canada.

"The cost for me to compete and travel to Azerbaijan for sparring is approximately \$5,000," she cited. "And it will cost another \$2,500 for the poomsae/patterns championship in Mexico."

Setting her sights on reaching the podium at the two upcoming events, Lor said regardless of what transpires, she feels the experiences gained from competing at both events will be a continuing education in her martial arts discipline.

"I will continue to train hard and hope to have the opportunity to represent Canada again," she said.



Brianna-Lauren Lor of Stouffville will compete at the Taekwondo Poomsae Championships in Aguascalientes, Mexico this fall.

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