

Alexiya Falconi ready for Taekwondo Championships this year

By Robert Belardi

Alexiya Falconi is preparing herself for the Taekwondo World Championships in the fall of this year.

Alexiya, sister of St. Andrew's College football star Nathan Falconi, has been training all year while away in her first year of university at Wilfrid Laurier studying for a Bachelor of Business Administration degree.

?When I'm at school I usually just go to the gym and do weight training and cardio. Whenever I am home, I usually just practice my kicking and my sparring techniques and just go over my patterns.?

Now, nearing the end of her first full year of postsecondary school, it's time to enter the highest level of competition with the highest belt of requirement to show for it.

This isn't the first time Falconi has earned a black belt.

When she was six years old, she and her younger brother both earned a junior black belt in Karate. When Falconi was 13, turning 14, she earned her senior black belt.

?After I got my senior black belt, I decided I wanted a change and I wanted to try a new marshal art,? Falconi said.

Falconi has been a part of Nobleton Taekwondo crafting her style in this dojang that respects the Korean origins of this martial art.

Falconi says before every practice all of the students bow to the grand master. While stretching, the class is required to count to 10 in Korean while holding their position. At the end of the class, you bow to the grand master and then you are dismissed.

She credits the teachings from Mr. Adriano, Mr. Gallo, Mr. Rita and Master Scarfo for helping her along the way.

She earned her colour belt and qualified for the World Championships in the Netherlands in 2017 looking to bring home a medal. Instead, she brought home two bronze medals, one in sparring and the other in patterns.

?It was a great experience. I learned a lot about myself, my training, my sparring skills and my pattern skills. I learned what I had to do in order for me to perform better for next time.?

She qualified for the next competition, however, she opted to withdraw to focus on school and acclimatize to the work load while living

away from home.

Approaching this year's competition, Falconi learned to expect the unexpected since her last tournament.

Back in 2017, another fighter used her hands. It was axiomatic to Falconi that she would not know how to defend against it, and it was the toughest fight she had faced thus far.

Approaching the world championships this time around, she says she knows exactly what to do.

?You practice everything. I think that's one thing I learned from my last tournament. I did not expect hands, so now I need to learn to expect just hands or to expect just legs, or to expect both,? she said.

?I think that's where I'll be able to perform my best in is, to be comfortable in all areas that my opponent chooses to fight.?

Falconi will also prepare for a high level of competition. She will stare into the face of other prime fighters around the globe. As a black belt, the level of competition is different than colour belt. There is a coach on the sideline, your coach can command you from the moment the fight commences; similar to boxing.

In the colour belt division, there is no coach. This division strictly encourages friendly fighting.

With the worlds set in her sights this year, Falconi says that one day, with the correct training and top results from future tournaments, she would like to pursue an opportunity in competing for Canada in the Olympics.

If not, she knows her dad would like to see her open her very own dojang, a future that she is open to as well.