

The IndependentSPORTS

Kayla Maduk wins gold at World Taekwondo Championships

By JEFFREY MORRIS

Barrhaven's Kayla Maduk is a world champion.

The John McCrae Secondary School student and Barrhaven native won gold and silver medals Tuesday and Wednesday at the International Taekwondo Federation World Championships in Wellington, New Zealand.

Maduk won a gold medal in Junior Womens 2nd Degree Patterns, and also took a silver medal in sparring.

She backed out of the power breaking event, which was scheduled to take place just before the patterns event, as she did not want to risk aggravating an injury suffered during the sparring preliminaries.

"She sparred first and was quite sore and didn't want to risk any more injury right before her patterns since patterns is her favorite event," said Heather Maduk, Kayla's mother, via her blog. "She still has team sparring and team power breaking to compete in on Saturday. At least she will still get to compete in some sort of power breaking since she has really trained hard for that event as well. It was an amazing day for her and she will write another blog tomorrow but right now she is sound asleep! I know she will want to give you all the details herself and post some pictures."

I can't tell you how proud I felt watching my little girl standing on the podium hearing the national anthem. I just might have shed a tear or two."

Kayla left for New Zealand earlier this month to get ready for the competition.

"Every competitor has to be prepared to be completely eliminated in four minutes with a sudden death round in sparring or a couple minutes in patterns," Kayla wrote on her blog. "But every competitor has the dream of standing on the podium hearing their national anthem and having the title of World Champion. Such a high title comes with as much risk and sacrifice. If it's not worth achieving it's not worth working for. There are so many factors to consider. You have the luck of the draw, judges, and how you compete on any given day. We are all entering equally and we all want the same end result - A gold medal!"

"I want to thank everyone again for all their support both financially and emotionally through this long journey to get me to the world stage. I certainly can't prom-



ise you a gold medal or any medal for that matter but I can promise you that I've done everything that I possibly can to prepare myself for this event both physically and mentally. I have appreciated all the countless hours of amazing coaching, driving me to and from training, waiting while I train, introducing me to the best coaches and training buddies possible, the media and press support and the endless hours of pep talks from coaches, family and

friends. I also really appreciate my soccer team being so patient with me not playing in the games through the winter and not going to Dallas with them so I could come to New Zealand.

I almost don't want today to end since I know I will feel a bit lost when it's over but at the same time I can't wait to get into the arena and show the world what I can do. Whatever is meant to be will be and I'll just have to accept the results whatever they are.

Wish me luck and thanks again everyone for your support. You all got me here!"

Kayla arrived with her parents, Jay and Heather, on March 6. After the initial meet and greet of the Canadian team, she got a chance to do some sightseeing with her family. Among their adventures was a Seal Safari in a Landrover with six other tourists.

"I've never seen such high mountains and low valleys," she wrote. "We

were all just laying on the gravel and they blended right in with the colour of rocks. The huge wave kept crashing against the rocks so water was spraying everywhere. You could get really close to seals and they had the cutest eyes I've ever seen. One seal snarled at Greg and scared him because he didn't even know he was there since he was camouflaged so well."

After the sightseeing, Maduk and her teammates began getting ready for this week's competition. The reality of where she was was starting to set in.

"As we were sitting down for breakfast we saw the Poland team out for their morning run. It was like a sea of red tracksuits. All the countries are walking around in groups and it can be pretty intimidating but I'm sure the Canadian team is just as intimidating. Canada actually has the second largest team after New Zealand which is pretty impressive. We all received our official photo passes that we have to wear everywhere. It's great getting to know some of my teammates more. The team is spread out from coast to coast so we don't see each other that often and when we do we are usually competing against each other so the circumstances are different.

We had our first team training in the arena. I focused on my sparring and tomorrow I will focus on patterns. I really haven't had as much sparring as I would have liked in the last few weeks. First because I was so sick and second it's not a good idea to train to rough before a competition like this in case of injury.

"I also went for a nice walk with two teammates down at the waterfront. We actually saw team Australia and we chatted with them for a bit. Then later on, we saw a teenage dragon boat team for NZ who were really interested in what we were doing. It all becomes more real when you see the teams from other countries and then talk to strangers about what we are here for. I'm usually not nervous until the day of the competition, but the nerves are starting to surface a little bit. I'm just so excited to be here. I'm having the time of my life and no matter the outcome, I'm having a blast and this is the greatest experience I could ever ask for."

Kayla has two events remaining - team sparring and team power breaking - which are scheduled for Saturday.

MIKE CARROCCETTO PHOTOS

Kayla Maduk has captured a gold and a silver at the ITF World Taekwondo Championships. She still has two events remaining Saturday.

even saw wild horses, goats, wild pigs, lots of birds and deer. We drove by a huge wind farm with 65 wind mills that stood 100m high and had blades that were 60m long. After we reached the top we knew we had to come down. The road was in a zig-zag pattern. It was way too steep to go down straight. The dirt road was full of pot holes and boulders that had fallen down the mountain. We were bounced around and one guy hit his head hard on the ceiling. We kept shifting our weight when some of the road was really steep and close to a cliff. My mom was so nervous and she hates heights so she was freaking out. Once we got to the bottom we were on the isolated shore. It wasn't a sandy beach, it was actually fine gray crushed volcanic rock and it was really deep. The landrover sank about a foot with all our weight. The driver had to keep checking with his binoculars to see if the roads ahead were washed out and to see where the tides were to know whether it was safe to continue. I kept wondering what would happen if we got stuck in the sand and I couldn't get back to the hotel on time for my team meeting.

"Once we reached our final destination we saw so many seals. These were Australian Fur Seals. They