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Double dragon Local twins prepare for international kung fu challenge after Canadian success

By Greg MacDonald
Sports

Oct 01, 2008



GREG MACDONALD PHOTO

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Allan-Chew and his twin sister Anita won two medals at t...
While most kids were playing outside or laying on the couch in front of the TV, Anita-Chew was spending her summer vacation battling opponents with bamboo sticks, swords and other weapons.

For seven weeks, the 11-year-old and her twin brother Allan spent every weekday training in Wushu, traditionally known as kung fu or martial arts.

The two have been competing in the sport since they were in Grade 3 and have participated in tournaments across the world.

The summer's hard work paid off for Anita, who won a gold medal and two silvers at the national junior Wushu qualifying tournament in Vancouver last week.

She placed .005 points out of first place overall for the competition, but it was still enough to make it to the national team.

Now Anita will be heading to Bali, Indonesia in December to compete in broad sword, long weapons and staff fighting.

And even though she already dedicates most of her weekends to training, the Centennial public school student is ready to go at her work even more tenaciously.

"I'm going to train on the weekends even harder so I can win the competition," Anita said.

Allan, meanwhile, won two bronze and a silver at the Vancouver event, but will have to wait to see whether he gets to go to Bali.

Another kid qualified ahead of him, but he's not sure whether he'll go. Allan is the back up.

He's still going to train like he's going and will accompany Anita to Scarborough every weekend to train. And it's not just the kids who are serious about Wushu -- the whole family is.

The Chew's parents, David and Eunice, have rented out an apartment in Toronto just so the kids can train with noted instructor Wayland Li.

The family's Wushu fixation stems from an incident that Allan had in school way back when he was in Grade 1.

After getting in a fight, David decided that the kids needed to be able to defend themselves and enrolled them in martial arts lessons. They loved it.

"I like the experience of meeting people and then seeing them win or lose," Anita said. "It's also about accepting winning or losing.

"It's nice to see yourself win."

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Anita is hoping to do a lot more winning when she heads to the Pacific later this year, but she's skeptical about her chances.

"There's a lot of good people so I might lose," she said. "I don't know if I will win."

Even if she doesn't, she's already seen the effects of learning martial arts on her normal life.

"In Wushu, you have to concentrate really hard to get used to a form," Anita said. "It's the same as getting used to dividing (in school)."

Anita will leave for Indonesia on Dec. 7. She's hoping this will be a launching pad for a long career in Wushu.

She'd even love to go to the Olympics someday, although Wushu currently isn't an official sport.

In Beijing, however, Wushu was a featured side sport, meaning it's being considered for entry into the Games.

And since that day is coming, Eunice would like to see the federal government give support to this sport like they do to others.

Young athletes like Anita and Allan are forced to pay their own way for their development, meaning once Wushu becomes an official sport, Canada won't be as strong as other countries.

For now, Anita and her family will pay themselves to help her realize her dream:

"I want to represent Canada," she said.

Anita is currently looking for sponsorships for her trip to Indonesia.

For more information, call the Chews at 519-888-0716.

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