

Randy's Rookies: Erin Reim, judo champion



Erin Reim has won the gold medal for judo in Canada and the U.S. (Nov. 9, 2011)

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MONTREAL — Bullies should reconsider if they want to pick on 12-year-old Erin Reim.

The "Little Red Tiger" has been practicing judo since she was 5 years old, and she's got Olympic ambitions.

In the past year she has won the top prize at 14 competitions, including gold medals at the Canadian National Championship and the U.S. Nationals.

But she wasn't always inclined to fight.

"When I first started, before a competition, I would run out of the place almost or say, 'I don't want to do the competition because I was so scared.'" said Erin.

"When you start young it can be a little intimidating I guess cause you're getting in a square with another person in front of them and your basically supposed to flip them and your supposed to fight them and at a young age that can be hard."

Seven years of training has given her the confidence and skills to tackle challenges -- and people -- of all sizes.

"My mentality... I don't get nervous for anything," said Erin.

She trains at the Shidokan Judo Club in NDG under National team coach Hiroshi Nakamura.

He has been working with Canadian judo athletes for 43 years and sees a lot of promise in Erin.

"Her talent, desire and devotedness you know, not all the kids have," said Nakamura.

Her parents are happy with Erin's success, as is her brother Josh, himself a former national champion.

"It's difficult at times because we're so competitive, but it's a great because we share our moves together, we tell each other stuff about other competitors and it's a great way to connect," said Josh.

Erin became successful by setting goals and isn't shy about where she wants to go.

"I probably want to go to the Olympics, but before that I'd see even the World Championships is like a huge thing."