

sports

...on the Semiahmoo Peninsula

Wushu fighter wins big at nationals in Toronto

Tricia Weel

A South Surrey wushu fighter is golden in more ways than one.

Akashdeep Dhesi, 16, who trains at Golden Glory gym, won gold at the Wushu National Championships in Toronto last Sunday (Aug. 4), earning him a spot on Team Canada, which means he'll represent Canada at the Youth World Championship in Brunei this September.

His trainer Mostafa Sabeti, Golden Glory owner and head of the South Surrey-based Canada West Wushu Association, noted Dhesi also secured first place while competing in the IKF West Coast Championship last year, and followed that up with a gold medal at the Team BC selection in June.

"This marks his second gold medal at the Canadian championship. Additionally, he earned second place at the Pan American Championship last year," Sabeti said. "With more training in the upcoming months, we are hopeful that Akashdeep will be fully prepared and achieve outstanding results at the Youth World Championships in late September."



Akashdeep Dhesi is proclaimed the first-place winner at the Wushu National Championships held Sunday, Aug. 4. (Contributed to Peace Arch News)

kung fu and one of the most popular forms of martial arts.

Dhesi, who has been training at Golden Glory gym in South Surrey since he was seven years old, is a highly skilled fighter with excellent techniques and powerful kicks, Sabeti said.

"He loves kickboxing (at Golden Glory) because it challenges him physically and mentally, and he thrives in the supportive environment of the gym, where the quality of coaching inspires him to push his limits and grow," Sabeti said.

"He's extremely grateful for the opportunity to represent Team Canada in the world championship."

Dhesi's punctuality and dedication to practice also stands out, he added, and pointed out that wushu will be an official sport in the youth Olympic Games in 2026 in Senegal.

"We are hoping we will get a chance to represent Team Canada in the youth Olympic Games."

Wushu, which originated in China, is the official name of

Coastal FC teams score gold at provincials

Tricia Weel

Some of the Semiahmoo Peninsula's best soccer players had a great start to the summer, with two Coastal FC teams (U15 girls and U14 boys) winning gold at provincials at the end of June.

Now – having qualified for nationals – the U15 girls squad is preparing to travel to Edmonton, Alta., where they'll compete for the Canadian title, from Aug. 14-18.

"I'm looking forward to seeing how well the girls perform. We have some of the best players in the country on our team," coach Steven Duffy said. "I'm excited to see them demonstrate their skills and compete. They are a lot of fun to watch!"

Both teams enjoyed success as well as challenges throughout the regular season, as well as the U14 girls team, who also made it to the provincial final.

The U15 girls were plagued by injuries during the regular season, Duffy explained, but recovered at the right time, growing stronger with each game.

After an amazing team effort in the final, they managed to win the provincials – for the third time in a row.

"The girls were extremely excited after the game. We spoke about the 'three-peat' throughout the entire cup run," Duffy



The Coastal FC U15 girls soccer team at provincials, where they won gold. They travel to Alberta Aug. 14-18 to compete at nationals. (Alina Rogers/Coastal FC photo)

said, but credited the other teams as well. "This is not normal at this level of play, as all the teams are very good. To win provincials three years in a row is an incredible achievement."

"I couldn't be prouder of what they have accomplished." Duffy said this girls team is the most successful he has ever

had the privilege to coach, having won every tournament, league and cup in which they've participated, with five players having advanced to the Whitecaps full-time program.

"As my time with the team comes to a close at the end of the tournament in August, we are hoping to finish with a great showing," he said.

For the U14 boys team, a slower start to the season just meant they had to work harder to make it to the provincial championship – which they did, after winning their last six games of the regular season, coach Aventino Sousa said.

While they had lost their home field advantage, a little travel to other Lower Mainland fields didn't bother them.

"We had a plan and we kept to the plan," Sousa said. "The boys were delighted with the win. It was a very hard thing to do."

Some players never get a chance to play in the final, he noted.

"A lot of people didn't give us a chance – we were the underdogs, no doubt about it. But we knew the way we were training and the way our team was playing...we believed it."

Now, the team aims to qualify for nationals next year, he said.

"I'm super proud of the boys...very proud of them, and very proud of their run, and very happy for them they won it."



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