

## Two local athletes bring home taekwondo medals from Worlds

By Bill Rea

It's great to take a trip to the Netherlands, but it's even better if you come home with medals from the World Taekwondo Championships.

That's what Alexya Falconi, 16, and Paul Martino, 14, did recently.

Falconi collected bronze medals in patterns and sparring. Martino also got bronze in sparring, but earned a silver in patterns.

Falconi said it was a great experience, as she learned what she needs to work on for the next time, and she's confident there's going to be a next time. She said the next World Championships will be in China next October.

"I think we're on the team," she said.

Martino confessed to being a little surprised at his success.

"I didn't expect I was going to place," he said. "I thought I was going to get eliminated in the first round."

He too thought it was a great experience. He also said he had a lot of fun.

"Just training every day," he said has been the secret to his success. "Trying as hard as I can every time I'm in the gym, trying as hard as I can."

He added he benefitted a lot from those around him.

"They all pushed me to do better," he said.

"Continuing to train just made me more confident," Falconi said, adding she plans to concentrate on improving. "I definitely know what went wrong the last time and I definitely know how to improve on it."

The two of them train at Kito Martial Arts (KMA) in Bolton.



Alexya Falconi and Paul Martino with their instructor Gabriel Tello.