

COMMUNICATIONS

It is with deep regret that we must share this sad news to the British and worldwide judo community.

Craig Fallon, 2005 World Champion, Father and Son passed away on Monday 15th July 2019 at the age of 36.

Craig retired from judo in 2011 after an illustrious career which saw him hold both the World (2005) and European (2006) Championship titles simultaneously. To this day he remains only one of two British Judoka, alongside Neil Adams, to hold the two titles concurrently.

Craig remains the last British Judoka to win a World Championship title after beating Ludwig Paischer in the -60kg final, in Cairo, in 2005 at the age of 23. He remains only the third British male to win a judo world title, following Neil Adams in 1981 and Graeme Randall in 1999.

In 2007 Craig won the Men's World Cup at the NIA Arena in Birmingham, where he was the only British medallist in the Olympic qualifying event. At the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, Craig finished 7th.

Craig was also crowned European U23 Champion in 2004 a year after winning silver at both the World Championships in Osaka and the European Championships in Dusseldorf.

Craig was Commonwealth Games Champion, for England, at the 2002 Manchester Games and European Junior Championship silver medallist in 2001.

Craig attributed his success on the tatami to his long-time coach and friend Fitzroy Davis, who in the years of coaching Craig, became more of a father figure and mentor.

Davis said: *'Knowing Craig from the age of 15, I can look back on our time working together with fond memories and fun times. At the pinnacle of his career winning the World Championships in Cairo 2005, he was in my eyes one of the true greats of British Judo. His dedication to the sport he loved will stay with me forever and I will cherish the time we spent together.'*

Craig will be a huge loss to the sport, but I hope his achievements and his incredible story will inspire future generations to come. Your coach and friend, Fitz'

In 2012, following his retirement, the former Wolverhampton Judo Club athlete was inducted into the Wolverhampton Sporting Hall of Fame.

In 2017 Craig started coaching at Judo Landesverband Vorarlberg in Austria where he was coach to a number of promising Cadet and Junior athletes. Namely Laurin Boehler who he led to a 7th place finish at the European U23 Championships in 2017 and Cancun Grand Prix silver and Vache Adamyan to European Cadet Championship 5th place.

In March 2019 Craig returned to the UK to become Head Coach of the Welsh Judo Association.

British Judo Performance Director Nigel Donohue said: *'It is with great shock to hear of the passing of Craig. Firstly, Craig is a son and father, as well as an outstanding Judo fighter of his generation in World Judo. Craig was a fantastic ambassador for British Judo and is our most successful athlete in the modern era of world judo and the most talented judoka that I have ever had the pleasure to watch competing for Great Britain, where he became a European and World Champion. To this date Craig remains the last British Judoka to be crowned World Champion.'*

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He will be greatly missed by his family and the judo world, who has lost a talented athlete and coach.

Craig's family and friends are in our thoughts and prayers, at this very sad time.'

Darren Warner, CEO of the Welsh Judo Association said: *'We are deeply saddened by the recent loss of our Head of Coaching, Craig Fallon. Our heartfelt sympathies are with his family during this difficult time. He was only with the organisation for a short time but was a joy to work with and will be sorely missed.'*

Craig leaves behind his mother, father, brother, sister, partner and son.

Our deepest condolences lie with all his family and friends at this hugely difficult time.

Craig's family have kindly asked to be given time and space to grieve for his loss.

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