

GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL



PRESS RELEASE

Godalming's Olympic Hopefuls Strike Gold

Four Godalming based athletes received grants of £1,500 each from Sport Godalming's Go for Gold Champions' Fund to boost their dreams of competing in Team GB this summer. With 190 days to go until the Olympic Games these grants are a great confidence builder, just as the tough performance challenges reach a peak, demonstrating the local community's support for its athletes.

Fencer Liz Ng, kayaker Paul Wycherley, discus thrower Chris Scott and para dressage rider Nicky Thompson, all current and highly ranked internationals, were awarded their grants because of their realistic chances of selection for the Games. The Mayor of Godalming, Cllr Steve Cosser, presented the grants in a Council Chamber filled with friends and supporters.

Sport Godalming launched its Go for Gold Champions' Fund in 2007 to support local athletes' dreams of selection for 2012; a once in a lifetime opportunity. The fund has raised £35,000, all from local sources, with many organisations giving generously. Over the five years Go for Gold has helped over 20 athletes many of whom will be challenging for top international ranking in a few years' time. As the late Danny Denningberg said: "thanks to Go for Gold no young athlete from Godalming will miss the opportunity to compete due to a lack of money". The Go for Gold Champions' Fund remains the only community funded project specifically to help the community's own Olympic hopefuls.

Speaking at the presentation of the grants, Bill Braid, Secretary to Sport Godalming said: "it's amazing that a town the size of Godalming is able to boast four international athletes of this calibre".

Kayaker Paul Wycherley, summed up his immediate challenge: "the battle is now well and truly on to be the fastest man come the early season races in April and May and so secure a place at the Olympics". Paul went on to say "through all the peaks and troughs it's friends and family that keep me going and Go

for Gold is a key member of my support team. The financial input is extremely welcome and allows me to devote myself to my training, but it's more than that – it is the knowledge that a team of people, a community, believes in me and has the faith in my ability to do my utmost to deliver the best possible result. That's what I am aiming to do in 2012”.

Fencer Liz Ng added that: “the grants from Go for Gold have helped me to gain a GB place at major championships across the globe without having the worry of wondering if I would be able to go”.

That really says it all about the terrific success of Gold for Gold which has given tangible support to the local sports stars of Godalming over 5 years to assist them with their training and competition costs often involving overseas travel without which they might not be challenging for 2012. Godalming should be proud of itself and its athletes.

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