

Vietnamese Ngọc Khánh Nguyen Wins Second Medal, Seeing the World Through Wrestling

It was the last day of wrestling competition at the National Intercollegiate Athletic Games 2023 at Chung Yuan Christian University. Ngọc Khánh Nguyen from Hwa Hsia University of Technology won silver medal at Division II men's freestyle wrestling 79 kg class.

Seeing his last name, it's not difficult to guess where Nguyen is from. Nguyen came from Hanoi, Vietnam, and came to Taiwan to study eight years ago. He didn't even recognize any Mandarin character, but can now speak fluently, and even majors in Department of Business Administration.

"I think there are three languages in the world that are the most difficult," Nguyen said. "Mandarin and Vietnamese are two of them, so I don't think I would have any problem."

Being different from the athletic class system in Taiwan, Vietnam focuses on local training centers. They provide professional venues and trainings so that students can participate in sports they like outside of school and during summer break, which contains more freedom than that of in Taiwan.

"Originally, I did it for health," Nguyen said. "Yet I can compete in many different places now, and I can even participate in the National Intercollegiate Athletic Games in Taiwan. Wrestling brought me all these."

Nguyen also competed in the final last year, and his opponent was Yu-Sheng Peng from National Pingtung University of Science and Technology two years in a row. Peng was always leading, winning 5:0.

"Nguyen went back to Vietnam because of Covid before," Nguyen's coach, Tsung-Hsiang Chiao said. "He's still finding the right feeling, and he's a little bit nervous since he hasn't competed for a long time."

Chiao mentioned that even though Nguyen isn't play Division I, he's still a very hard-working player.

"He had to practice longer in the beginning because of language barriers," Chiao said. "Yet he's willing to spend more time learning."

Nguyen is now a first-year student at graduate school. Although he still has a wrestling dream, since his father is a farmer in North Vietnam, he hopes that he can return to his hometown soon to help with his family.

"My family is in good condition," Nguyen said. "Yet I hope that my parents can retire soon. I also hope that I can get the ARC in Taiwan soon. It'll be easier for me to commute, and there'll be more protection regarding to laws."

Division II wrestling 79 class finalists are as follows: gold medalist Yu-Sheng Peng from National Pingtung University of Science and Technology, silver medalist Ngọc Khánh Nguyen from Hwa Hsia University of Technology and bronze medalists Chih-Heng Wei and Jui-Yen Weng, both from Taiwan Police College.