



8-30 GOODINE STREET
FREDERICTON, NB
EXEC@LUTTENBWRESTLING.COM
(506) 478-0692

STEWART TAKES BRONZE AT 2017 GAMES OF LA FRANCOPHONIE



 NORMAND LEGER

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ABIDJAN, COTE D'IVOIRE

This past week three New Brunswick wrestlers competed at the 2017 Games of La Francophonie in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. Samantha Stewart, Darrion Sterling, and Mario Tran, all from Fredericton, each competed in the Freestyle competition representing New Brunswick from July 22 to 24 in the West African nation.

Mario Tran, who competed in the men's 57kg division, was the first NB athlete to compete. Tran dropped his opening match to Armenian Mkhitar Grigoryan 7-18. Tran was pulled into the bronze medal final as Grigoryan advanced to the 57kg final against Canadian Steven Takahashi. Tran finished the competition in 5th place after falling short to Youssoup Deliev of France.

Stewart competed the following day in the women's 53kg class. Stewart began the competition with a 7-0 win over her Romanian competitor before dropping her semifinal match to Canadian Kristina McLaren. In the bronze final, Stewart quickly pinned her competitor from the host country, Cote d'Ivoire, to earn her spot on the podium.

Sterling was the final NB wrestler to compete. Beginning to competition with two wins against competitors from Chad and Quebec, Sterling fell short of a victory in the 69kg semi-final against Canadian Kayla Brodner. Sterling advanced to the bronze medal final but fell short to the competitor from France to finish in 5th place.

The Games of La Francophonie are the largest sporting and cultural event for youth organized within the Francophonie. The games take every four years and are open to athletes and artists between the ages of 18 to 30. New Brunswick, along with Quebec, sends their own contingent to the games because of their special status in La Francophonie. The next edition of the Games of La Francophonie will be held 2021 in Moncton.