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KATE HOWEY FIGHTS FOR LAST TIME ON BRITISH SOIL

Judo players from all over world descended on Burgess Hill, West Sussex at the weekend for the 2004 British Open Championships and British Open Championships for the Visually Impaired.

Despite the absence of some top ranked British players Great Britain managed to pick up two gold medals. Most surprisingly in the –70kg women’s category where Karen Roberts easily destroyed the competition despite moving up a weight from the –63kg, where she is Commonwealth Champion.

Kate Howey picked up a bronze medal in her last event on British soil. She was being beaten by Marianne Charve of France in her third fight but came back in the repechage to beat another French player, Anne Marlot. Her last outing in front of the home crowd proved to be a drawn out affair lasting eight minutes until Howey finally defeated her opponent with a foot sweep. At the medal ceremony, Kate, who has qualified the Great Britain Olympic place in the –70kg weight category for Athens, took the opportunity to thank everyone who had supported her in her career.

World silver medallist, Craig Fallon made the tactical decision to move up a weight category for the tournament switching to the –66kg. He lost only one of his six fights and picked up a bronze medal.

Britain showed its strength in the women’s +78kg category picking up gold and silver from Simone Callender and Kerry Manfredi, and Fiona Robertson of Judo Scotland won bronze in the –48kg weight category

Sarah Clark only managed a 5th place after being beaten by World Champion Daniela Krukower of Argentina in the –63kg. Clark who is currently ranked 6th in Europe will travel to Bucharest in May in her last attempt to qualify the Olympic place for Athens.

In the largest Visually Impaired British Open ever, Great Britain won five medals. Ben Quilter and Darren Kail dominated the –66kg category winning the gold and bronze medals. Four times Paralympic medallist Simon Jackson continued his reign in the –73kg winning gold. Ian Rose won silver in the –100kg and Maxine Ingram won silver in the women’s –63kg weight category.

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