

Media Release: Husband and wife among seven judoka named for Commonwealth Games

From: [New Zealand Olympic Committee <office@olympic.org.nz>](mailto:office@olympic.org.nz)
Reply-To: [New Zealand Olympic Committee <office@olympic.org.nz>](mailto:office@olympic.org.nz)
To: office@judonz.org
Subject: Media Release: Husband and wife among seven judoka named for Commonwealth Games
Date: Friday, 13 May 2022 8:29 AM
Size: 84 KB

New Zealand Olympic Committee

[View this email in your browser](#)



NZOC Media Release

13 May 2022

Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games: Husband and wife among seven judoka named for Commonwealth Games

Husband and wife judoka Jason Koster and Moira de Villiers are set to relive a dream as they head to their second Commonwealth Games together.

The Christchurch based pair are two of seven judo athletes named to the New Zealand Team today. The athletes are:

- **Qona Christie – Women’s U57kg**
- **Moira de Villiers – Women’s U78kg**
- **Hayley Mackey – Women’s U78kg**
- **Sydnee Andrews – Women’s +78kg**
- **Elliott Connolly – Men’s U81kg**
- **Jason Koster – Men’s U100kg**
- **Kody Andrews – Men’s +100kg**

Moira de Villiers (Christchurch) heads to the Games ranked second in the Commonwealth and in hot form, having won gold at the Tunis and Algiers Opens in early 2022.

De Villiers won silver at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and competed at the London 2012 Olympic Games, where she placed 17th.

Her husband Jason Koster (Christchurch) also returns from Glasgow 2014, where he won bronze in the under 100kg category.

"It's a dream come true," said de Villiers. "After having my daughter four years ago, it's been a real goal to get back to the Commonwealth Games and I've got my eyes on gold this time!"

She says sharing the experience with her husband will be extremely special.

"We've been on this journey together for a really long time and it's amazing to have my husband and coach right by my side."

Koster first fought for New Zealand as a 17-year-old and will head to Birmingham aged 39.

"It's been a long journey for me," said Koster. "The last 10 years has been full on and I'm ready to finish what we started and to fight for gold. To literally do this alongside my wife is so special, I couldn't ask for a better partner and I can't wait for Birmingham 2022."

Koster will be in demand in Birmingham, as well as competing he also coaches Moira, Hayley, Elliott and Kody at Premiere Equipe Judo Club in Christchurch.

"To be taking a whole team is amazing, we only started this club four years ago and to now have five of us headed to Birmingham is fantastic, I don't think I could have scripted a better end to my career."

Commonwealth Games debutants Qona Christie, Hayley Mackey and Sydnee Andrews round out the women's team. 23-year-old Christie from Wellington won gold at this year's Sydney International Open, while the youngest squad member, 19-year-old Sydnee Andrews from Gisborne, won bronze at the Prague Open in early 2022.

In the men's division, Jason Koster is joined by first time Commonwealth Games athletes Elliott Connolly and Kody Andrews. 28-year-old Connolly has just returned to New Zealand after training and honing his skills in France, where judo is extremely popular.

His teammate 21-year-old Kody Andrews from Christchurch has enjoyed a recent return to international competition, finishing 7th at the recent Tunis Open, Algiers Open and Pan-American/Oceania

Championships.

“This means a lot to me, I’ve been doing sport my whole life, to represent my country it’s amazing. It’s a moment that I’ll cherish forever,” said Kody.

It’s the first-time judo athletes have been in any New Zealand Games Team since the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, with judo left off the programme at the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.

The athletes will train in New Zealand, Australia and Europe prior to the Commonwealth Games.

NZOC CEO Nicki Nicol extended her congratulations to the athletes.

“It’s fantastic to have judo back at the Commonwealth Games and we’re thrilled to name such a strong team,” said Nicol.

“I wish the athletes all the best for the rest of their preparation, we look forward to watching them represent New Zealand in just over two months’ time.”

Judo New Zealand President Derek Maggs says he’s delighted to have seven athletes confirmed for Birmingham.

“The team is a good mix of experienced fighters and younger athletes breaking through to their first major games. We look forward to them doing well and winning some medals for New Zealand.”

The naming takes the total number of athletes currently selected to the New Zealand Team for Birmingham 2022 to 32.

ENDS

For media enquiries please contact:

NZOC Communications and Content Manager

Lewis Hampton

+64 27 451 8090

Athlete Bios:

Qona Christie – Women’s U57kg

Qona Christie has been selected as a part of the NZ team heading to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

She will be representing New Zealand in her first Commonwealth Games in the women's Judo under 57kg division.

Her selection follows her results in the Tunis and Algeria African Judo Open in early 2022 where she picked up a bronze medal and a 5th placing respectively.

Moira de Villiers – Women's U78kg

Moira is New Zealand's most experienced and successful female judoka. She competed in the London 2012 Olympic Games in the under 70kg category and went on to compete in the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games where she won the silver medal.

Moira has won gold, three silver and six bronze medals at World Cups and Continental Opens in the Women's Under 70 kg category. She has won multiple Oceania Championships for juniors and seniors since 2006 and was the recipient of the 2015 Marriotts Hadlee Sportswoman of the Year.

After taking a break to have a child, Moira has now returned to competitive judo in the Under 78 kg category. Her first foray into the international scene in 2022 at her new weight, netted her bronze medals at the Continental Opens in Warsaw and Prague and two gold medals in Tunis and Algeria Opens. She also became the first New Zealander ever to medal at the Pan American-Oceania Championships, picking up a bronze Medal.

Hayley Mackey – Women's U78kg

Hayley Mackey will make her Commonwealth Games debut at Birmingham 2022. Her selection comes after competing in Europe and Africa to where she won bronze in the Algeria African Open.

Born and bred in Whakatane, Hayley has recently moved to Christchurch to train at Premiere Equipe Judo Club. She is also studying at the University of Canterbury where she is completing a Bachelor of Science majoring in Psychology.

Aside from Judo, Hayley loves to be in the outdoors, hiking and camping with her friends and family. One of her favourite things is chilling out at the beach with her partner and dog, Zeke.

Sydnee Andrews – Women's +78kg

Sydnee Andrews is a member of the Judo New Zealand Junior and Senior Teams and will make her Commonwealth Games debut at Birmingham 2022.

Raised in Gisborne, Andrews has relocated to the UK, where she is based at the Camberly Judo Club.

Andrews won bronze at the Prague Open and placed fifth at the Tunis Open in early 2022.

Elliott Connolly – Men's U81kg

Elliott Connolly is heading to his first Commonwealth Games at Birmingham 2022, after spending the last year training and competing as a full time athlete in Europe. After receiving the Dame Yvette Williams Scholarship he was able to live his dream and train full time toward his goal of winning a medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Originally from Christchurch, when in New Zealand Connolly trains at Premiere Equipe Judo Club and works as a Personal Trainer.

Jason Koster – Men's U100kg

Glasgow 2014 was the first Commonwealth Games for Jason Koster, a campaign which saw him stand on the podium with fellow kiwi judoka Tim Slyfield. The two judokas earned bronze in the under 100kg category.

The veteran of the New Zealand team, Jason has always maintained a ranking within the top one hundred in the world. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Jason had picked up a bronze medal in the 2019 Lima Open, along with 5th places in Santiago and Taipei.

His last international outing was at the 2021 World Championships where he made it through to the round of 32 after a win over his Kenyan opponent before losing to current world number one from Russia.

Kody Andrews – Men's +100kg

Kody Andrews is heading to his first Commonwealth Games in Birmingham 2022.

Andrews spent several months training and competing overseas in early 2022, finishing 7th at the Tunis

Open, Algiers Open and Pan-American/Oceania Championships.

Originally from Christchurch, Andrews trains at Premiere Equipe Judo Club. He also studies and works as a labourer.

About the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

Birmingham 2022 will welcome 4,500 athletes from 72 nations and territories for 11 days of thrilling competition, from 28 July – 8 August 2022.

The New Zealand Team will be represented by up to 230 athletes, competing in around 20 sports and four para sports. Selections to the team will begin in early 2022, with women's T20 cricket and 3x3 basketball to debut on the programme.

Able bodied and para-athletes will once again compete side by side at the Games, as Birmingham brings the largest ever Commonwealth Games para-programme to life.

Birmingham 2022 will make global sport history by becoming the first ever major multi-sport event to award more medals to women than men.

The Games will be the largest sporting event in the UK since the London 2012 Olympic Games.

