

Kick Start To Rio

By Lea McRitchie, Orla Oates and Jodie Hunter

Forres Academy PE department have opted into the 'Champions in School' programme which is a national initiative by The Winning Scotland Foundation. The purpose of this programme is to show pupils the mental and physical demands of life as a professional performance athlete.

Damon Sansum, former Forres Academy pupil and aspiring Olympic athlete, is to be the school's Champion in Sport and will be presenting three practical and theoretical workshops to a selected group of senior pupils who are studying PE. The first workshop took place on Monday 9th March.

Damon was a world Full Contact Kickboxing Champion who made the switch into Olympic Taekwondo through the London 2012 talent spotting programme. Since the start of his career he has gone from being 300th in the world to 5th and is now ranked in the top two for the under 80k category.

He told the group of pupils how he had got to where he is today through sheer hard work and dedication to his sport. He spoke of the sacrifices he had to make in his social and personal life. This has certainly paid off as he is now the US, French, Swedish and German under 80kg champion.

Damon took the pupils through a series of warm up and reaction exercises before going into different types of kicks. Charlotte Luxon (S5) said: "It was great to get involved and I found him very motivational. I really enjoyed the workshop and thought it was great to have someone successful come and give something back to his community".

Principal Teacher of PE, Scott Fraser added: "It was inspirational to see a former pupil return and share the experiences of his Olympic training. It sends the message out that anything is possible if you have the correct mindset and the commitment to succeed. We hope that more pupils follow in Damon's footsteps".

