

Weekly Sport

ARGUS

Gary stars in his new sport

IT is always sad when someone has to retire early from sport through injury but Gary Hicks has turned his own heartache into a triumph.

The 32-year-old father, who retired from rugby aged 29 due to a back injury, took his seven-year-old son Lewis to the Martial Arts and Fitness Centre in Maindee, Newport, and decided to have a go.

Now, 18 months on, Gary, who was a Newport first team prop for nine years and also had spells with Cross Keys and Pontypool, has become a national tae kwon do champion.

Hicks Snr, who is in the heavyweight division, has now been asked about his availability for the British team for the world championships next year in Malta. His new sporting career

saw him win the British United Martial Arts Championships title for his discipline in Worcester.

The building contractor from Lliswerry said: "There were novice, intermediate and advanced levels at the championships and I was in the intermediate.

"I've been doing it for a year-and-a-half now after I took my son along for the first time.

"I knew this was a good set-up for children but there was also an adult beginners class, which I joined, and it progressed from there.

He trains two or three times a week. "I'd like to progress through the system and get my black belt."

Gary Gasor, the centre's chief instructor, said: "Gary enjoys the competitive side from his rugby days and it's nice to see it has found another sport

that he can get enjoyment from.

"The good thing with him is that, even though he is a big guy and, when you look at him he probably looks a bit intimidating, he's actually a really friendly and easy going guy.

"As far as where he goes now, we will have to sit down and have a chat because he has spoken to Richard Hopkins, who runs the World United Martial Arts Association, and he has already been asked if he wants to be a member of the British team.

He's also been asked if he wants to fight at the World Championships.

But it is not all training and competition.

Hicks said: "There is a good atmosphere and a good social side. You have a bit of fun and it's good to be involved."



GARY HICKS: Champion performance

Sport In Brief

BOXING: Mohammed Nasir (pictured), of St Joseph's ABC, who won the Commonwealth Federation title in Glasgow in August, was again outstanding for Wales in winning a gold medal in the Tammer Cup.



The tournament was held in Finland and featured boxers from Russia, the United States and Latvia.

Nasir was pick of the Welsh team and named boxer of the tournament.

CYCLING: Magnus Backstedt has vowed to have another crack at the world one-hour derry record of 66.114 kilometres at the Wales National Velodrome, Newport, after failing in his attempt on Saturday night. He was officially given a distance of 58.035km, which meant he completed 233 laps of the arena at an average speed of over 65kph.

SQUASH: Newport Squash Club's first team maintained their unbeaten start to their Premier A campaign with a comfortable 4-1 victory at Cardiff Firsts.

The latest success gives the team a ten point lead at the top.

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