Elite Athlete Programme

Mitchell Barguss

Mitchell's connection with Celtic Leisure stretches back more than two decades. His judo journey began around 25 years ago in Sutton, before later continuing in Neath Port Talbot, where he trained with local coaches and clubs including Neath Knights and Port Talbot Judo. His passion for the sport also led him to help establish a judo club at Celtic Leisure's Glynneath facility, which continues to operate today.

Like many athletes, Mitchell's journey has not been without challenges. A neck and shoulder injury forced him away from judo for several years, while he also faced challenges with his mental health during this period. Determined to rebuild his fitness and wellbeing, Mitchell returned to training with support from his personal trainer, Campbell Bourne, as well as teammates at Pontrhydyfen Saxons Touch Rugby Club.

His return to competitive sport gathered momentum when Nigel Bowley and the team at Sentai Judo welcomed him back to the mat. After several years of hard work and preparation, Mitchell entered the Welsh Closed Championships in the Under 66kg category, where he secured a gold medal and earned selection for the Welsh Judo Team.

Now competing on the national stage, Mitchell is preparing for his next major challenge, the British Championships in October 2026. As part of the Celtic Leisure Elite Athlete Programme, he will have access to facilities across Celtic Leisure to support his ongoing strength and conditioning programme as he continues to pursue his sporting ambitions.

"My next challenge is the British Championships in October 2026. I'm so grateful to Celtic Leisure for backing me with their facilities and personal trainers over the next 12 months. I couldn't do this without the people around me and the support I have received."

We are delighted to support Mitchell on the next stage of his journey and look forward to celebrating his future achievements both on and off the mat.

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