

# Killick top of the pile for April

by **Sam Munnery**

JUDO star Zoe Killick has been crowned the winner of the Crawley News/Nationwide Sports Award for April in recognition of her achievements both on and off the mat.

Killick, 13, has hit the heights of late, earning bronze medals at the British Schools National Championships, the Orange and Under Sussex Open and at the Sussex Trials - which earned her a place in the county judo squad.

The Ifield Community College student also came fifth at the competitive Kent International tournament and was part of the team when her club, Kin Ryu, won silver in a team event.

But aside from her achievements on the mat, Killick has also won praise for her help in developing Kin Ryu's younger members and for her assistance with many aspects of competition days.

She was nominated by Kin Ryu coach Lisa Harrison, who praised the teenager for the "hard work and dedication she

has shown to her sport and her club.

"Zoe has been at the club for the last five years but this last year she has just changed completely," said Harrison.

"She has started working really hard and now she is reaping the rewards.

"The club has changed hands in the last year, from the British Judo Council to the British Judo Association, which has made a big difference because she can now go into events she wasn't able to before.

"But also, when we are taking little ones away to Kent and Tunbridge Wells, Zoe comes with us to help out on the tables or sit at the edge of the mats. She'll help them with their belts, get coffees or generally do anything she is asked."

Killick, from Langley Green, took up judo five years ago after "falling in love" with the sport when watching it for the first time.

She sometimes trains up to

three times a week with both junior and senior club members, which has helped her attain the Eighth Mon, or orange belt two.

The teenager said she enjoys "improving and learning new things" in both the senior and junior environments.

"With the juniors I get to help a lot and with the seniors it's a bit harder," said Killick.

"I think sometimes the little kids look up to me and they like to learn the throws that I know - even though they aren't meant to".

"It makes you feel better that you can help them improve."

And Killick agrees with Harrison's belief that more regular competition has helped her progress.

"Lisa has helped to improve me in competitions because that is something she is used to," she said.

**The future's orange:** Zoe Killick receives the Crawley News Sports Award for April from Neil Twelves of sponsors Nationwide

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by Stuart Douglas

