



Daniel Igali

Induction Year: 2001

Sport: Wrestling

Category: Athlete



Highlights:

- As a boy, raised in the Ijaw culture and growing up in his hometown of Eniwari, Nigeria, Daniel dreamed of wrestling like his heroes.
- Daniel's heroes when he was growing up were Appah Macauley (a wrestling champion in Nigeria), Nelson Mandela and Muhammad Ali, but as he grew up, he came to realize his greatest hero was his grandmother because of all she had done for him.
- In 1993 and 1994, Daniel became the African Champion after winning the 62kg weight class in Pretoria, South Africa, and Cairo, Egypt, respectively.
- Daniel came to Canada as a member of the Nigerian wrestling team to compete in the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria, B.C. and at the end of the games decided to stay and make a new life for himself in this country.
- Daniel comes from a very large family with 20 brothers and sisters, which made it difficult to leave his homeland of Nigeria.
- In September 1999, Daniel became Canada's first men's world wrestling champion when he won six straight bouts to claim the gold medal in the men's 69 kilograms division at the world freestyle wrestling championships in Ankara, Turkey.



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- At the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia, Daniel became the first Canadian to win Olympic gold in wrestling.
- A new challenge for Daniel: The 69 kilogram weight class that he competed in at the 2000 Olympics has been eliminated and he must now move to a new designated weight category of 74 kilograms and compete with larger opponents.
- Daniel fought back from injuries, including a neck problem that required surgery and continued to pursue his passion for wrestling.
- Daniel Igali has obtained his Masters in Criminology from Simon Fraser University and will pursue his career after the 2004 Olympics in Athens.

