

Stuart Greer

Skill: Welding

From: Grimsby
Competed in: WorldSkills 2007, Shizuoka
Employer: Doosan Babcock
Result: Medallion for Excellence

Qualifications

- 9 GSCE's
- City & Guilds NVQ 2 Welding
- City & Guilds NVQ 3 Welding
- Licentiate of City & Guilds (LCGI)



It was perhaps inevitable that Stuart would get into welding as a career and it is certainly a case of like father, like son, as his dad has been a welder for over 20 years. What Stuart couldn't have estimated though was being one of the youngest members of Team UK, heading to Japan last year as the UK competitor for Welding at WorldSkills 2007 and bringing back a Medallion for Excellence.

So welding was something that Stuart always wanted to do?

For Stuart, as he has known welding since he was little, it seemed natural for him to follow in his father's footsteps, so he started an apprenticeship in 2003 and hasn't looked back since.

But what about competing, how did Stuart get involved?

Well this was actually through his employer, Doosan Babcock, which has always actively encouraged its employees to participate in competitions. So three years after joining the company, Stuart began competing in national competitions and it wasn't long before he won his

place on Team UK. "It was amazing to have been chosen for the team. Even though I'd worked really hard to get to the selection event I was still surprised when they told me I'd won my place!"

How did Stuart cope with the training for WorldSkills?

Stuart says that training was really intense, taking all his effort and concentration. It was made easier though by the support of his colleagues. As Stuart says:

"At one point I was training for 12 hours a day, seven days a week, which was exhausting, but I knew I had to do it to make sure I was up to the skill levels I needed to be to compete at WorldSkills."

What did Stuart think of Japan?

Well it was certainly unlike any place Stuart had been before. "I've never been to the far east so I was really excited about that and when we arrived

although I was sad to be leaving my family so far behind I really loved Japan, which helped me settle into what I had to do."

So how did Stuart cope with competing at WorldSkills?

For Stuart the knowledge that so many people were there to compete in a skill that he enjoys so much was exciting. "Competing against the World's best focuses the mind. There were so many people there but it was just nice to know that they were showing an interest in what I was doing. It put my nerves at rest."



And what about being part of Team UK, what was that like?

Well, Stuart felt that having the team there for support really helped him.

"All the members of Team UK were great people. Most of us didn't have family or friends with us, so the team and the team managers become your family. They know what you are going through and we all helped each other if we were ever feeling down or stressed. Strong relationships built up and those bonds we formed are still there. I think we'll always remain good friends."

And what about now Stuart's back at work, as anything changed?

Stuart says yes.

"Since I got my Medallion for Excellence, the rest of the staff keep giving me all the hard jobs! They say 'he's good, he'll do it!' But really I'm very grateful for this. There's more expectation for me to do well at work but I love this. I like rising to the challenge and I want to keep improving in what I do."

What advice would Stuart give to others thinking of taking part?

Stuart's quick to answer. "Do it. The benefits are really worth it. You've just got to give it your best shot, make sure you put all your effort into it and just do the best you can.

"If you make it onto Team UK competing at a WorldSkills event, there's really nothing else like it. It's an amazing event and you get to meet so many people from across the globe who all share your passion. It's something you'll never forget."

So what now for Stuart?

Well, Stuart continues to be the very best he can be. He wants to work his way up the company and become a supervisor and knowing how good Stuart is and the ability he has to grow and improve, we know he will do well.

A word with Stuart's employer: Kevin Jones, Chief Welding Instructor, Doosan Babcock

Doosan Babcock has been involved with competitions for years and it's something the company will continue to do. On average, for each WorldSkills, the company enters anything from 4 to 7 competitors into the competitions.

Why does Kevin get involved with competitions?

The answer is simple. "Doosan Babcock has always been committed to training so it is a natural progression to enter our learners into competitions. For as long as I have the backing of the company I will continue to

enter employees into competitions. I'm very supportive of SkillWeld, who consistently do a superb job in organising the regional heats and finals with minimal support and ultimately for WorldSkills."

What would be Kevin's advice for other companies thinking of getting involved?

Kevin has sound advice. "Companies should be aware that training a competitor takes a lot of organisation and does disturb their actual work. In terms of financial backing it can also be costly because you are paying the competitors wages when they are training rather than producing work for the company. But there are certainly benefits too."

So, what does Kevin believe are the benefits to a company in taking part?

For Kevin there are benefits both personally and for the company.

"Personally I get great satisfaction from sharing my knowledge and experience with each learner. For the company, it helps our reputation and promotes us as one of the leading training providers."

And what does Kevin think of WorldSkills coming to London in 2011?

"I think it's great for the UK. We now need to strive for perfection and tap into sharing best practices across the country and sharing it with our candidates."

For more information, please contact the PR Team, UK Skills: 020 7612 9260