



worldskills
UK Alumni

Katie Watson: Restaurant Service

Competed in: WorldSkills Calgary 2009 – Team UK
Awarded: Bronze medal
Home town: Hamilton
Region: Scotland
Date of birth: 01/04/1988
Age at competition: 21
Employer: Gleneagles Hotel
Learning provider: University of Strathclyde

Qualifications

- Working towards Academy of Culinary Arts Award
- BA Hotel & Hospitality Management



What was your route into Team UK?

Katie first competed in another competition 'Young Chef, Young Waiter' and achieved 2nd place. Ian Whittaker, the Training Manager / WorldSkills Expert, spotted the potential that Katie had and completed an assessment of her skill while she was at work in Gleneagles Hotel. Katie was then invited to the Squad Selection for WorldSkills in which she achieved success and progressed to the Team Selection. Katie was competing by herself but still had to meet the WorldSkills standard at the Team Selection. She put on a fantastic performance and beat the standard; Katie was then awarded her place in Team UK.

Why did you choose to get involved with WorldSkills?

Katie worked with Julie Doig, the WorldSkills 2007 Team UK competitor in Restaurant Service. Having seen what a fantastic experience Julie had with WorldSkills, Katie decided this was something she couldn't miss.

What training did you undertake as part of your journey to WorldSkills and what impact did this have on your life?

Katie completed training every week leading up to WorldSkills; this included some on the job training at work and working in a selection of different restaurants, bars and hotels. Katie worked with experts in the industry to build an extensive range of knowledge, skills and experience.

"The training was fantastic. It was hard work though and I had to put my life on hold. I don't think I had a day off in six months so it was a huge commitment."

What was WorldSkills like?

"It's unlike anything I've seen before - it was massive! Thankfully I didn't find it that nerve-racking though as I had some great training and both the team and team leaders were there supporting me all the way."

What did you have to do during the competition?

Katie completed four modules, a different one each day of the competition. The Restaurant Service competition tests competitors in fine and casual dining, banqueting and bar work. The competition is unique at WorldSkills as the competitors work with real guests made up from official delegates and observers at the competition.

Who inspired you during your journey to WorldSkills?

"Ian, my training manager, was a huge inspiration during my training. He was with me all the way and it felt like we were on this journey together. That level of support really encouraged me to keep going and keep learning."

What did being part of Team UK and competing at WorldSkills mean to you?

"It just meant everything to me!"

How did it feel to win the Bronze medal?

The nature of Katie's competition meant she could not build a picture of her progress during the competition. Whilst competing Katie could only see the work of five other competitors so she had no idea what the result would be.

"When I heard my name called at the closing ceremony I was so shocked, it was amazing!"

What has competing done for you both personally and professionally?

"The training has put me five years ahead of where I was when I started, I have learned so many new skills and it's really built my knowledge. As a person I'm much more confident and I could see myself maturing throughout the journey."

What is the dream?

"I'm going to continue to work hard and learn new things, which will hopefully move me up the career ladder. One day I really want to be running my own hotel."

Would you encourage others to get involved in WorldSkills?

"Yes, absolutely, 100%! I'm trying to find someone from work that is suitable to make it three Gleneagles employees in row."

What do you think of the event being held in London in 2011?

Katie is keen to stay involved with WorldSkills and has become the Alumni Activist for the 2009 team. She is also helping with the next competitor's training and will be judging their work at the competitions.

"I really can't wait for WorldSkills to come to London, I'm very excited."



For more information about the WorldSkills, UK Alumni, contact the UK Skills communications team:
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