

## Jioje makes Golden lift at regional meet



*Eric Jioje receiving his gold medal for the 120kg weight class win.*

**E**ric Jioje is an academic by day but turns into a power athlete as soon as he hits the gym after work.

If you catch a glimpse of Jioje at the Fiji National University (FNU) Nadi Campus, he surely will be wearing a radiant smile and conversing fluently either in his mother tongue Rotuman, English, itaukei or Hindi to students.

Jioje recently represented Fiji at the Oceania Regional Powerlifting Championship in Gold Coast Australia where he scooped a gold medal in 120 weight class.

“I was really thrilled with the win. It was a lot of hard work, but at the end of the day it paid off handsomely,” said Jioje.

Jioje, who is also the President of the Fiji Powerlifting Association (FPA) said he hopes to continue to inspire others to take-up some form of strength training and keep a healthy life-style.

The Head of School for Hospitality and Tourism Studies at the College of Business Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS) became a strong advocate to living a healthy lifestyle after losing his father at an early age due to sickness related to non-communicable disease.

“I am a strong believer in following a balanced lifestyle. There is time for little indulgence occasionally, but this should be done in moderation,” the Rotuman native stressed.

Jioje who turned 50 recently said there’s no age barrier to training and keeping healthy.

“Many older people are worried about their balance. However, people underestimate the strength part of it. Strength and balance exercises are crucial to any routine,” he said.

Jioje said the win could not have been possible without the support from the Fiji National University.

“FNU has been a loyal supporter of the Fiji Powerlifting Association and I’m forever grateful to that as through this partnership we have been able to lift the sport in the country,” said Jioje.

Despite his busy schedule at workplace and home, Jioje devotes his free time managing the affairs of FPA.

Growing up, Jioje said he was always fascinated by body building and maintaining a healthy life-style. He said he continued his passion when he was a tertiary student with the then Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT), which is now the College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) under FNU.

“I also looked up to one of my uncle who was seafarer, his muscles and fitness level really motivated me. However, my passion shaped into reality when I joined the university as a student,” he said.

Jioje’s first international outing was during the 2003 South Pacific Games which was hosted by Fiji.

“It was a proud moment for me to don the Fiji jersey and represent our nation. I barely missed the bronze medal, but I was happy with my achievement.”

“It motivated me to push myself further and I really enjoy power sports,” Jioje said with a deep sense of satisfaction.

Having represented at many international meets spanning more than a decade, Jioje was approached in 2016 to take the helm of FPA.

Jioje said he’s passion for sports were the main factor that prompted him in taking on the challenging role.

The senior lecturer’s main focus is to prepare a strong 15-member Fiji team to participate at the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa in July.