

## Northern Ireland Steps It Up In Russia

The ITF World Championships were held in St. Petersburg, Russia between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2009. Eighty three countries were represented with eleven hundred competitors. The Northern Ireland ITF Coach Mr. Leo Maguire was present with a national team of three competitors; Mr. Michael Maxwell (II Dan), Mr. Stephen Fitzsimons (II Dan) and the new boy on the team, Mr. John Mitchell (I Dan). John and Michael competed in the 'Patterns' section of the championships and later Michael and Stephen competed in the 'Sparring' sections. Michael Maxwell remained in the competitions until the 'quarter final' stage of his weight category (-57 kg) and Stephen Fitzsimons narrowly missed out the 'quarter final' stage in his weight category (-78 kg). Stephen Fitzsimons also entered the 'Special Techniques' section.



Northern Ireland Team: Stephen Fitzsimons (L), Michael Maxwell, John Mitchell and Mr. Leo Maguire (NI ITF National Coach)



Michael Maxwell (blue) going for it in the quarter finals.

Stephen Fitzsimons in blue takes out South African at St Petersburg



The team are now preparing for the British and Irish Championships taking place later this year and also the European Championships to be held March 2010 in Italy.