

Cairns competitor claims bronze in US

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IT might have been in the middle of winter, but 12-year-old Cairns judo player Regina Pittard has returned from the USA's largest annual judo tournament sporting a bronze tinge.

Pittard was part of a trio of young players from Cairns Southside Judo Club who joined more than 800 competitors at the US Judo Winter National Championships, held in

Los Angeles, California this month. Competing in the Under 52kg 11/12 Year Old Girls' division, Pittard's first bout was against the 2018 and eventual 2019 gold medallist.

In a tough and physical contest, which Pittard only narrowly lost, she sustained an injury that set her back for the remainder of the day.

However, she showed courage to win her next two bouts, before a close defeat in her fourth and final bout of the

division. Coach Luke Ronlund said Pittard's performance, which secured the bronze medal, was "outstanding".

"She can well be proud of her bronze medal as it could easily have been a silver based on that last fight," he said.

"To do what she did while carrying an injury shows that she has that very special quality needed in any top competitor. She has genuine courage with powerful, intrinsic motivation to excel at any cost."

Alongside Pittard, siblings Anneliese, 10, and Hein, 14, Ronlund also competed with the Cairns Southside Judo Club team.

Ronlund said he was pleased with his young team's performance at the tournament. "The young Cairns Southside players have demonstrated that Australians can be competitive against some of the best young junior competitors from across the USA," he said.



BIG EFFORT: Cairns competitors Hein Ronlund, 14, Regina Pittard, 12, and Anneliese Ronlund, 10. Picture: BRENDAN RADKE