



Army West Point Wrestling

ALUMNI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



From the Editor in Chief

By Larry Baltezare '72

First let me welcome you to the Army Wrestling Community. With the help of the West Point Wrestling Club and others, we bring you the inaugural edition of the Army West Point Wrestling Alumni Newsletter.

As quick introduction, I am a member of the Army Wrestling Class of '72. Over the years, I have followed Army Wrestling and when the opportunity presented itself to spearhead an alumni newsletter, I was excited to lend a hand, or in this case, a pen.

The purpose of this newsletter is to promote and strengthen the bonds of brotherhood among Army wrestlers and coaches both past and present, and to connect with the families and friends of Army Wrestling. Collectively these groups constitute the Army Wrestling Community.

The newsletter is designed to function as a centralized hub of news, stories and information pertaining to the Army Wrestling program, the West Point Wrestling Club, and the activities of our Wrestling Alumni. By doing so we hope to keep everyone informed and engaged in Army Wrestling and to facilitate efforts that allow us to remain connected across the Army Wrestling brotherhood.

I hope you enjoy reading our publication!

Do you have Alumni Related News To Share?

Please send contributions to:

Alumni.newsletter@westpointwrestlingclub.org

Inside This Edition

- **COACHES CORNER-** INCOMING PLEBE WRESTLERS AND COMPETITION SCHEDULE —page 2
- **BHAW AND ARMY WRESTLING – ONE CADET’S JOURNEY**—page 3
- **BUILDING A LASTING LEGACY**—page 6
- **WPWC NEWS: RECENT EVENTS & GOLF TOURNAMENT**—page 10
- **THE RTC – ITS REALLY SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT**—page 11
- **WEST POINT’S PAN AM TEAM MEMBERS –** page 15
- **UP THE HILL: PLANS FOR 24/25 SEASON**—page 20
- **ALUMNI NEWS**—page 22
 - Our newest Alumni
 - Command Selections and Promotions
 - Career Updates
 - Transitions and Employment Updates
 - Family News
 - Wrestling Involvement and Recognitions



Coaches Corner

By Army Wrestling Head Coach Kevin Ward

Excitement about incoming Plebes.... As usual we will lean heavily on our kids coming in from USMAPS to step in and contribute early in their careers, and we have a highly touted group coming from prep. Cooper Haase, Brady Colbert, Jake Gilfoil, and David Barrett are all guys who had really strong prep school years last year and should be able to insert themselves into the mix early on. Coach Breese has done a great job developing our guys at prep so we fully expect our young guys to fill any holes in our lineup and to do it well. Just look at three of our freshman NCAA Qualifiers from last year – Basile, Filipowicz, and Stoddard all spent a year with Coach Breese and developed into impact-wrestlers right out of the gate. And when you mix in our strong Direct Admit class, there is plenty to be excited about with this new Plebe class.

Competition Schedule.... Although it's not "officially" released yet, our competition schedule has been set for a few weeks now and we have some exciting events. I'll just name a few:

- Nov 8th – Throw down on the USS Yorktown vs. The Citadel and Gardner-Webb. This will be a really cool event where we compete on the deck of the USS Yorktown alongside a few other college teams.
- Nov 24th – Black Knight Invite at West Point. We expect 9 visiting teams including the defending national champs, Penn State, to attend.
- Dec 6th – We take on Iowa at a neutral location in the St Louis, MO area.
- Feb 14-16 (tbd) – Army hosts Navy at home in Christl Arena this year. We also desire to promote an alumni weekend in conjunction with the dual.
- Feb 22-23 (tbd) – Senior Night as we host Binghamton for a conference dual.

Just like every year, this schedule gives our guys the opportunity to compete against some of the top competition in the country and will challenge our team to rise to a new level as they continue to develop. Stay tuned to the Army West Point Wrestling website for the official schedule which should be dropping in August.

Outlook on the season overall... coming off such a strong finish last year we have plenty of momentum and excitement from which to build. It's important to remember that potential doesn't lead to results without a ton of hard work and belief. We will focus on making progress every day and keep development as the cornerstone of our program. If we can continue to improve each week, we can be in a position to have a better team than we did last season. There will be new faces that must step in and step up, but I'm confident we can get our young guys to BELIEVE in themselves early and contribute when called upon. I'm looking forward to sharing another exciting season with all of you!

- THROW DOWN ON THE YORKTOWN -

Army West Point Wrestling will compete in two dual matches on Friday, November 8th in Charleston, S.C. on the deck of the USS Yorktown.

Join Us to Watch the Action

Tickets are on sale now @ <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/uku2zfa>

BHAW and Army Wrestling—One Cadet's Journey

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

The outstanding and exciting performance of Army's wrestling team this past year is resulting in more and more fans following AMERICA'S Team. However, not all of Army's followers are aware of the team's motto and rallying cry. **BHAW!**

BHAW is an acronym for **B**rotherhood, **H**eat, **A**ttitude, **W**arrior. It represents the character traits that are expected of all Army wrestlers.

BHAW became the mantra for the wrestling team in 2011. During that year, the team, under the leadership of Head Coach Joe Heskett and Team Captains Jimmy Rafferty and Mike Gorman, desired to develop a slogan or credo that would embody what every Black Knight wrestler should be striving for and be reflected in how they conduct themselves as team members and how they compete. With the input of the entire team, and assistance from sports psychologist Dr. Nathan Zinsser, the term BHAW was coined. In 2014 when Kevin Ward became the new Army Head Wrestling Coach, he chose to continue the slogan because the 4 attributes associated with BHAW definitely help in the pursuit of "Chasing Greatness" which is another motivational motto he established for the team.

Cadet and now newly commissioned 2LT Matthew Williams provides an excellent example of how he embraced and lived out the four pillars of BHAW during his wrestling career at West Point. Matt never started the season as the #1 full-time starter in his weight class. However, he continued to work and train very hard every day and eventually not only had the opportunity to be "The Man" but consistently performed in a truly outstanding manner exemplifying the principles of BHAW.

Coach Ward, in commenting on Matt, told NL:

"What we perhaps appreciated most about having Matt on our team is that he was always super reliable and consistent both as a teammate and as a competitor. He was not always the full-time starter, but he filled in when we needed him and always got the job done. Even though he was not "The Guy", his work ethic was always strong, and he was always prepared to step in when needed. As a teammate, he was always supportive of everyone in the lineup, even when they were starting in his weight class, just as you would want a team captain to be." Sounds like BHAW! And chasing Greatness!

We had the opportunity recently to interview 2LT Williams and here is a brief summary of our talk:

Staff Writer Eric Bantz (EB): Hello Matt, congratulations on an outstanding Army wrestling career and your graduation from West Point to include your commissioning as a 2nd LT.

Matthew Williams (MW): Thank you Sir.

EB: Thank you for spending some time with us. Matt, please tell us where you are from and how old you were when you started to wrestle.

MW: I am from Ohio and have basically lived there my entire life. I started wrestling when I was 4 or 5 years old. My dad ran a wrestling club. I would always go to his practices. (ed. Note – Matt's father is a USMA '90 Grad and former Army wrestler).

EB: How did your wrestling go in high school? Did you plan on wrestling Division 1 after graduation?

BHAW and Army Wrestling—One Cadet’s Journey

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz ‘72

MW: I went to Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy for HS and we had a good wrestling team and coach. I did pretty well my junior year (ed. Note – Matt placed 6th in the Ohio HS State Championships his junior year) and was looking forward to my senior year but of course, COVID put a hold on everyone’s plans. (ed. Note: Ohio cancelled their State Championships in 2020) I knew I wanted to wrestle D1 early in my high school career.

EB: How did you make your decision on coming to West Point?

MW: Although my dad was a Grad and I had an interest in WP, I initially wanted to keep my options open. Former Army Assistant Coach Ned Shuck reached out to me at the Super 32 of my junior year. I then went to a wrestling camp at WP and was just so impressed with the Army wrestlers who were leading the camp. They demonstrated incredible leadership. It was also my first taste of BHAW and I knew I wanted to be part of it.

EB: You then came to WP and during your Plebe year, you did not really get to compete much at all, again because of COVID. However, during your sophomore (Yearling) year, while not initially being the starter in your weight, you wind up filling in and actually going 23-4, (3-0 in duals) during the season. You defeat your Lehigh opponent helping Army to upset the #15 team in the nation 18- 15, and then you also defeat your Navy opponent two weeks later. How were you able to be so successful with so little prior experience?

MW: The Coaching staff keeps preaching to us about the need to always be ready. The BHAW mentality is real and helps us to practice effectively and to perform to the best of our ability. I was able to start in the lineup because our Team Captain, PJ Ogunsanya (“OG”) was severely hurt. He is an incredible wrestler and was the greatest example of BHAW, even when he was sidelined due to injury! In addition to our coaches, OG and all the other Brothers in the room kept working with me and making me better. I never could have done it without their support.

EB: Your junior (Cow) year you again are not the #1 man in your weight. However, you are selected (along with Ben Pasiuk and Nate Lukez) as a Co-Captain. You also receive the CJ Morgan Award given to the wrestler who is a shining example of what it means to persevere while lifting others up. During your senior year you again initially are not #1 in your weight class. However, also again due to an injury of a teammate, you become the starter. You have a truly great year as evidenced by:

- Becoming a National Qualifier
- Season Record 26-11
- EIWA Duals Record 5-1
- Preserved Army’s victory over Navy during 10th bout of Dual Meet.
- EIWA Tournament: 4th Place
- Named team Co-Captain and earning the Pierce Currier Foster Award for the second time!
- Earn the CJ Morgan Award for a second time

Would you please comment on how you were able to perform at this level?

BHAW and Army Wrestling—One Cadet’s Journey

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

MW: As I mentioned before, I decided on WP when I went to the wrestling camp and was introduced to BHAW for the first time. In seeing the cadet wrestlers, I saw potential for myself. There is no other team in the country like ours. We try our hardest to be a starter but when that does not happen, we still work as hard as we can and we do everything we can to help whoever is representing us. My coaches and my teammates are the best and they all made me better. None of my successes would have been possible without them. I have made friendships that I know will last my lifetime.

EB: Who are some of the people who may have had a great impact on your wrestling career?

MW: There have been quite a few. The list includes my father, my entire family, my high school coach, Dave Bergan (who also helped me grow in my faith), all the Army Team coaches (They have been fantastic), and all my BHAW Brothers in the wrestling room who all made me so much better than I was.

EB: Thank you, Matt, for taking the time to talk to us. Congratulations again on your outstanding West Point career. Good luck to you. We know you will be an outstanding officer and leader. God bless you.

MW: Thank you Sir.



Want to hear more about Army wrestlers and coaches, check out the podcasts on BHAW Radio!

- TUNE IN TO BHAW ARMY WRESTLING RADIO SHOW -

All Things Army Wrestling—Interviews, Match Recaps, Catchups with Old Grads

Available on Spotify, YouTube, Apple Podcast, and Facebook



Building a Lasting Legacy

Contributed by Douglas Williams '90

Introduction:: An air of excitement hangs in the air with the dawn of a new collegiate year and the NCAA D1 wrestling season. Our Black Knights wrestlers return after having completed one of their more successful seasons in recent years as highlighted by a 3rd place finish at EIWA, 6 NCAA national qualifiers and its first All-American since 2008. And then two of our wrestlers captured gold medals in freestyle competition at the U-23 Pan American Games earlier this spring in Columbia. With four of the NCAA qualifiers returning to the squad and excitement about other high potential wrestlers sure to make a line-up debut, what's not to like about the opportunities and possibilities this upcoming year?

Our program has certainly been on an upswing in recent years; besting Navy in six of the past ten duals, improving EIWA competitiveness and lastly, qualifying an increasing number of wrestlers to the NCAA National Championship. A lot of hard work and preparation goes into the process of delivering successes on the mat. As coach Paul "Bear" Bryant once described, **"It's not the will to win that matters-everyone has that. It's the will to prepare to win that matter."** An indelible quote and one that resonates ever more loudly given the quickly changing landscape of D1 athletics. The rise of Regional Training Centers, NIL collectives and most recently, class action litigation resulting in revenue sharing agreements with student/athletes are just a few of the changing dynamics which impact D1 wrestling.

Against this backdrop, Army Wrestling recently undertook a 4-month assessment to refresh its strategy for driving future success - a roadmap to help achieve the "next level of competitiveness". The intent was to gather improvement ideas from a myriad of stakeholder groups and then distill a set of recommendations that would have meaningful impact in areas such as **Recruitment, Spectatorship Experience, Followership, and Engagement with Alumni.**

Recruitment Enhancement: As impressive as our recent pipeline of high-quality recruits has been, there are always opportunities to improve. During the strategic assessment effort, we surveyed ~30 recent recruits to ascertain, through their eyes, how might Army Wrestling improve the overall recruitment experience. Questions were asked such as:

- "What factors were most important to you when evaluating a university/college to attend and continue your wrestling career?"
- "What experiences during your recruitment visit to West Point were particularly positive or detracting?"
- "What were the primary reasons for accepting or declining an offer to attend U.S.M.A.?"

Based upon this as well as other input, several ideas were prioritized. These included:

- Training of cadet hosts to improve quality and consistency of the candidate visit experience.
- Implementation of post visit surveys to improve visibility of a candidate's experience and enable more impactful follow-ups.
- Creation of marketing material that better describes the Army West Point Wrestling experience to prospective recruits and their influencers.

Building a Lasting Legacy

Contributed by Douglas Williams '90

Lastly, we recognize that many of our Army Wrestling alumni have continued to participate in the sport after competing collegiately, either as coaches or in officiating capacities. In the coming months, our intent is to tap into this grass-roots network and expand the promotion of West Point and wrestling opportunities which the United States Military Academy might offer to future leaders of America.

Spectatorship Experience: For those of you who haven't recently attended a home wrestling match at Christl arena, you're missing out! Over the past several seasons, Army has hosted an exciting dual-match line-up to include competition with the likes of Iowa, Penn State, NC State, and EIWA foes such as Lehigh, Cornell and Navy. This upcoming season will certainly be no different. Our goal, however, is not just to host top-notch competitions, but also to create an atmosphere that is enjoyable for spectators and fans alike. We solicited input from spectators and sought their input around "how to improve the overall spectator experience?" Some of their ideas included:

- Improve fan interaction with the cadet/athletes.
- Improve media coverage during home events.
- Improve use of theatrics such as lights/sound.
- Offer promotional giveaways.

While many of these ideas have since been implemented, one additional and perhaps more strategic recommendation surfaced. This idea consisted of hiring a dedicated "Brand Manager" who would be responsible for developing high quality promotional content, design and execution of marketing campaigns and strengthening ties with fans to include those living within the Hudson Valley area. To do so, Army West Point Wrestling will need to raise funds and plans to do so in the coming months.

Amplify Followership: For non-revenue-generating sports such as wrestling, the importance of cultivating a strong base of supportive fans has never been more important. Rob Koll, current head wrestling coach at University of North Carolina and former head coach at Cornell and Stanford described in a recent interview the criticality of building a support base, particularly as a step to long-term program sustainability. During our strategic assessment we took a long look at how to improve followership. We evaluated what sort of informational wants and needs existed across multiple fan groups, explored communication channel preferences and preferred timing of information distribution. We also benchmarked quality of content across peer groups. Some of the more compelling findings included:

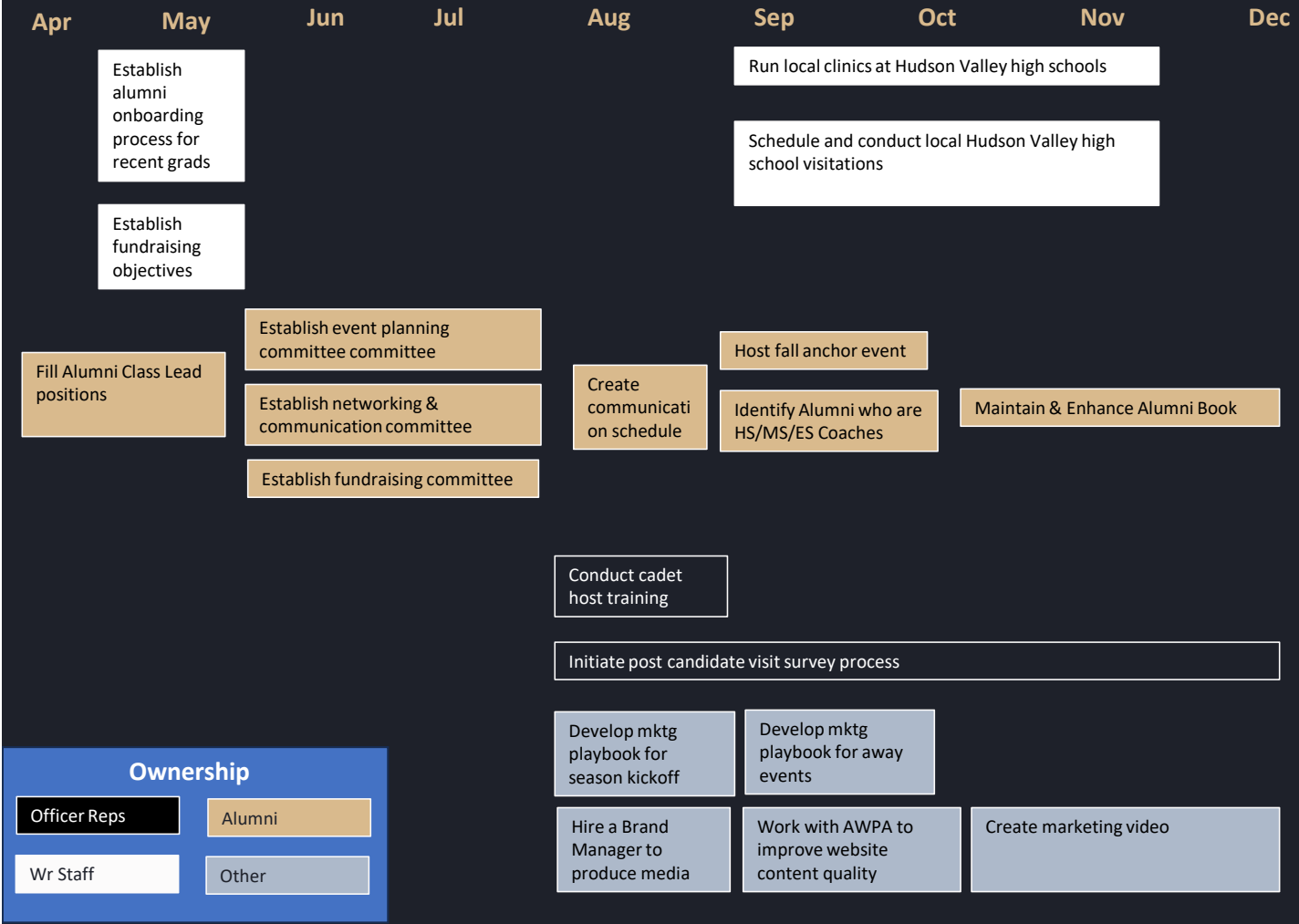
- The need of omni-channel marketing capability given the wide range of personal preferences.
- Increasing quality of media content as the bar for differentiation continues to rise.
- The importance of leveraging alumni networks at the grass roots level.

We've taken these and other ideas into consideration as we look to strengthen the followership of "America's Team". As previously mentioned, the hiring of a Brand Manager will be critically important to this effort as well as nurturing spectator experience. Furthermore, we have launched a quarterly Alumni Newsletter and have established a more procedural approach to communication management.

Building a Lasting Legacy

Contributed by Douglas Williams '90

Strategic Initiatives Roll-out Plan (2024)



Illustrated Above: Sample Set of Initiatives Outlined in the Strategic Plan

Building a Lasting Legacy

Contributed by Douglas Williams '90

Engagement with Alumni: Ultimately, our alumni base is perhaps the most critical enabler of future success. An engaged and supportive alumni organization is cultivated over time by developing meaningful relationships and offering opportunities for involvement. During this project, focus group sessions were conducted with our alumni base in order to capture ideas to advance engagement and collaboration within the Army Wrestling alumni network. Many wonderful ideas surfaced. In the more immediate term, several key steps are being taken to advance alumni engagement.

- Recruitment of Army Wrestling Alumni Class Leads. Class Leads serve as promoters and coordinator of wrestling related alumni activities within their respective year groups. Ideally, we would like to secure at least one Class Lead for each year group but recognize this may not always be possible. Significant efforts have been made over the past few months to recruit class leaders for open positions. Presently, 45 of the 65-year groups targeted have Class Leads appointed. Openings exist for the following classes: 60, 61, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 73, 74, 75, 77, 81, 83, 86, 00, 22, 23.
- Establishment of Alumni Committees. Three committees have been formed. These include:
 - ◇ Networking & Communication Committee: The intent of this committee is to advance networking amongst former Army Wrestlers and enable exchange of information between Army West Point Athletics and the Army Wrestling Alumni network. Example activities facilitated by this committee include development of an Alumni Bio Book, Army Wrestling Alumni Newsletters, Career Mentoring, Class Affiliation Programs, and the promotion of alumni activities and match attendance.
 - ◇ Events Committee: The intent of this committee is to select, schedule, plan, and support Army Wrestling alumni events. Examples of activities facilitated by this committee include Coordination of Fall and Spring events, Class Alumni Weekends at West Point, In-season Social Receptions at Army Navy, EIWA, and NCAA Championships.
 - ◇ Fundraising Committee: The intent of this committee is to spearhead fundraising initiatives to include strategic design of fundraising campaigns and promotion efforts.

Moving Forward: “With this refreshed strategic plan in hand, we are excited about the possibilities and opportunities that lie ahead,” commented Head Coach Kevin Ward. “While having a vision and plan to get there doesn’t necessarily guarantee success, it does improve the odds significantly. The rate and pace of change within Division 1 sports is unprecedented and thus necessitates a need to be proactive and deliberate in preparing for the future. Thus, I am confident the fruits of this assessment will be quickly recognizable.” For those of you interested in getting involved in one way or another, the recruitment door is always open. Feel free to send an email to Doug Williams @ doug.williams@westpointwrestlingclub.org.

A special **shout out** to all our alumni who participated in the development of the strategic plan and those who have volunteered for committee leadership roles.

- Strategic Plan Development: **Will Webb '72, Douglas Williams '90, Brian Rowan '09, Joe Metz '24**
- Newsletter Editor in Chief: **Larry Baltezare '72, Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72 & Jack Wedholm '18**
 - Fundraising Strategies: **Tom Abraham '65, Ray Ritacco '72, Dave Clolinger '94**
 - Fundraising Promotion: **Jim Latham '80, and Hannibal Bray '94**
 - Networking & Career mentoring: **Scott Smith '92, Jordan Thome '13, Tyler Rauenzahn '14**
 - Alumni Bio & Profile Book: **Ben Celver '00, Dan Ciccarelli '03, Austin Milster '07**

West Point Wrestling Club News

By LTC (R) Todd Messitt '87

What a year for West Point Wrestling – nationally ranked team, BEAT Navy in their house, EIWA team trophy, EIWA Coach of the Year, an NCAA All-American, multiple age-group Freestyle National Champions and two Pan-Am Games Champions! We also count three NCAA Academic All-Americans and two alumni that qualified for the Olympic Trials. You'll read all about these accomplishments throughout this first installment of the Army Wrestling Alumni Newsletter as we reach out to connect with our Brotherhood of Army Wrestling Warriors.

The coaching staff has done a tremendous job, and our Cadets answered the call by putting in the hard work to make all this happen, but we also recognize the importance of West Point® Wrestling Club (WPWC) in the development and success of our athletes to compete on the national and international stage.

The WPWC supports Army West Point Wrestling and our athletes by providing resources above and beyond the programmatic budget. The cost of college athletics has skyrocketed, and DoD cannot afford to keep up. If we want our teams and athletes to remain competitive, we must supplement with additional resources. This is particularly critical as Army competes with mega-funded programs at the elite level. The WPWC narrows this gap by providing additional coaches, world-class training partners, and the funds needed to travel to national and international competitions.

We are seeing the success of the partnership between Army West Point Wrestling and the West Point Wrestling Club as evidenced by the incredible 2023-24 season, but as Coach Ward will say "We're only getting started!"

Don't Miss the Opportunity

14th Annual WPWC Golf Scramble , September 6th & 7th

Register online <https://www.westpointwrestlingclub.org/golf/>

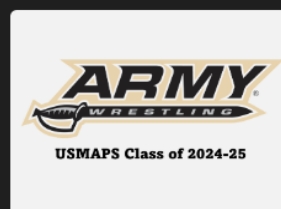
SEPTEMBER 6TH & 7TH, 2024

14th Annual Golf Scramble

PRESENTED BY



MADE POSSIBLE BY



The Wedholm Family, McGuire Chevy, Prep Class 24-25, and Spicer Rudstrom, PLLC

The RTC—ITS Really Something to Talk About

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

Army West Point wrestlers Lucas Stoddard '27 and Charlie Farmer '26 both recently won gold medals at the 2024 U23 Pan Am Games in Rionegro, Colombia. This is one more clear example of the recent ascent of Army Wrestling not only on the national but even the international stage. It also represents further evidence of the West Point Wrestling Club (WPWC) and Regional Training Center (RTC) are helping Army West Point wrestlers succeed in achieving their dreams. For Army Wrestling fans not totally familiar with the WPWC and RTC, we would like to introduce you to it and review its importance.

The WPWC includes wrestlers of all ages (youth through senior RTC) and ability levels. It has, as its main purpose and goals to:

- Support Army West Point Wrestling in the quest to build champions on and off the mat.
- Develop a World Class RTC by developing World and Olympic Medalists in both Freestyle (FS) and Greco-Roman (GR) Wrestling by providing elite coaching, high level training partners and world-class facilities.
- Engage and connect with the Army Wrestling community by bringing together Alumni, Family and Friends with a shared passion for Army Wrestling.
- Grow Wrestling by providing K-12 athletes the opportunity to develop physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially through the sport of wrestling.

Our RTC focuses on preparing wrestlers for Freestyle (FS) and Greco Roman (GR) competitions and there are qualifying for an athlete to be in our RTC.

USA Wrestling is the governing body of wrestling in our country. USA Wrestling charters all RTCs. The WPWC is chartered by USA Wrestling. The USA Wrestling Mission and Purpose Statement for RTCs states that "The purpose of RTCs is to allow individuals to reach their full human and athletic potential. The RTCs provide qualified youth athletes and Olympic hopefuls access to elite level coaches, high level training partners, and world-class facilities in a safe local environment. RTCs should mirror USA Wrestling's mission, vision, and values. Our RTC certainly does.

A key focus of an RTC is to raise the relevancy of wrestling on college campuses. Within NCAA rules, RTCs provide additional opportunities for college coaches to further develop and enhance their individual program. This cooperative effort strengthens the connection between the Olympic movement and college athletics.

Virtually all major (as well as some smaller) college wrestling programs are now affiliated with an RTC. RTCs provide interested college and post graduate wrestlers with a place to train and receive high level coaching in the international styles of wrestling. This is an obvious benefit for the undergraduate wrestlers who can obtain further experience by learning from more senior wrestlers. The RTCs are also a venue for specialized training in FS and GR wrestling as well as women's FS wrestling. Some previous rules prohibiting training between collegiate wrestlers and RTC wrestlers have been eliminated. RTCs also provide opportunities for undergraduates to attend certain training and competitions and an opportunity to continue their sport after graduating.

Our West Point Wrestling Club RTC has recently had an unprecedented level of success. Several cadet athletes have either won or placed at National level competition to become FS and GR All Americans. In addition, four RTC athletes earned the right to represent the USA in the 2024 U23 Pan Am Championships that was held on June 21-23 in Colombia. Two of our RTC athletes earned gold medals as well as two 5th place finishes at this international tournament. Due to their previous outstanding performance in our National Championships, two of our RTC

The RTC—ITS Really Something to Talk About

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

wrestlers (Lucas Stoddard and Sophia Macaluso) will represent the USA in the 2024 U23 World Freestyle Championships taking place in October of this year in Albania. These results are indeed impressive and to learn more about the WPWC and RTC, we reached out to the President of the WPWC/RTC, LTC (Ret.) Todd Messitt '87 to understand what they did and what's next.

Interview with LTC (Ret) Todd Messitt

Staff Writer Eric Bantz (EB): Congratulations on the outstanding performance of the RTC. When were the WPWC and RTC established? Was the RTC part of the WC basically from the beginning?

TM: Thank you. Both the WPWC and RTC were founded in 2011 to help develop our Cadet-athletes.

EB: I would like to get right to it. How have your RTC wrestlers been able to achieve so much success in such a short period of time?

TM: It took a tremendous amount of hard work from the athletes as well as the coaches, the administration, and our supporters. We were extremely fortunate in finding the right coaches and wrestlers to build our program. Our coaching staff has been truly remarkable. Coach Ward and Coach Green have helped bring in excellent assistant coaches for the RTC. Coach Green coached our wrestlers in Ohio for the Nationals and in Colombia for the Pan Am competition with great success. Coaches Steve Bleise, Jeff Breese, Fabian Gutierrez, John Stramiello, and Mike Rogers have all greatly contributed to the development and improvement of our wrestlers and are continuing to do so. We are also very confident that newly hired Army West Point Assistant Coach Taylor LaMont will also be a blessing to our cadet wrestlers as well as the RTC.

EB: What are your plans for the future?

TM: As resources permit, to bring in more athletes and coaches who are a good fit for our RTC. Through the WPWC & RTC, we would like to expand the training and competition opportunities for our cadet wrestlers outside the collegiate season. A stronger RTC obviously helps develop our cadet wrestlers. This is indeed the bottom-line purpose of the RTC.

EB: That is great. Thank you for your time and educating us about the RTC and WPWC today.

TM: My pleasure. Thank you. Go Army!

- Continues on Next Page -

Recent WPWC RTC Athlete Achievements:

May 2022- US Senior Open GR Championships:

PJ Ogunsanya – 2nd place - 72 KG

May 2022- National U20 GR Championships

Mikey Altomer – 1st place at 82 KG

June 2022 – U20 Pan Am Games GR Championships

Mikey Altomer – 1st place at 82 KG

Dec 2023 - Senior National Open Women's FS Championships

Vayle-rae Baker – 1st place at 53 KG

June 2024 – National U23 FS Championships (Men):

Lucas Stoddard – 1st place – 125 KG

Charles Farmer – 2nd place – 57 KG

Austin Kohlhofer – 7th place – 97 KG

April 2024 – National U23 FS Championships (Women):

Sofia Macaluso – 1st place – 57 KG

June 2024 – National U23 GR Championships:

Joseph Couch – 4th place – 55 KG

Wolfgang Frable – 4th place – 97 KG

June 2024 – U23 Pan Am Games FS Championships (Men):

Lucas Stoddard – 1st place – 125 KG

Charles Farmer – 1st place – 57 KG

June 2024 – U23 Pan Am Games FS Championships (Women):

Sofia Macaluso – 5th place – 57 KG

June 2024 – U23 Pan Am Games GR Championships:

Joseph Couch – 5th place – 55 KG

The RTC—ITS Really Something to Talk About

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

Next, we reached out to West Point Head Wrestling Coach Kevin Ward (KW) to obtain his thoughts about the RTC.

Interview with Head Coach Kevin Ward

EB: Congratulations Coach Ward on the outstanding performance of the 2023-2024 Army Wrestling Team and your selection as the EIWA Coach of the Year!

KW: Thank you. I was so proud of the team. Obviously we would not have been nearly as successful without the outstanding efforts of our wrestlers and the very hard work of our assistant coaches, staff, administration, and supporters.

EB: Coach, the WPWC and RTC have also had outstanding recent success. Our alumni would just like to ask you to make a few general comments about our club and training center.

KW: The WPWC and RTC are difference makers for our program. They just allow us to do things and provide excellent coaching and workout partners that we would not be able to do otherwise. It is like surrounding your team with semi-pro athletes to help train with them and coach them. It is a "No Brainer" that we need to continue to fund the WPWC so that we can continue to reap the benefits. NCAA rules do not allow the athletic department to fund certain things, so the WPWC is the only way. All seriously competitive programs leverage this and we are making huge gains by leveraging it as well.

EB: Thank you Coach Ward!

Finally, we reached out to Army Associate Head Wrestling Coach Scott Green (SG) to get his perspective about the WPWC and RTC.

Interview with Associate Head Wrestling Coach Scott Green

EB: Coach Green, congratulations on your coaching and the outstanding performance of your wrestlers at both the U23 National FS Tournament in Ohio and the U23 Pan Am Games FS Tournament in Colombia in June.

SG: Thank you. The wrestlers really performed well and did great.

EB: Coach, we are discussing the WPWC and RTC today. What do you believe has been the overall effect of the RTC on the Army West Point Wrestling Team?

SG: I'd say that adding RTC athletes and coaches has broadened our guys' perspective and given them more resources for their training.

EB: Do you believe having our RTC helps with recruiting high school wrestlers to come to West Point?

SG: Allowing young athletes that are RTC qualified to experience our facilities and team culture is absolutely a positive impact. It pulls back the veil a little and gets them on post. We think it is a good program with USA Wrestling. It also shows kids we are serious about the international styles when we have success at Pan Am's or wrestlers on the world team.

EB: Recently we have had tremendous success at the U23 competitions. Will there be a move to increase participation in the senior level tournaments?

The RTC—ITS Really Something to Talk About

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

SG: I think we are recruiting more guys with FS and GR success, so it follows that we will get more guys that want to compete at this level. We have sent guys to the Bill Farrell (Nationals) every November since I have been here (to compete for) U23, U20. A rising tide lifts all boats. When they see Chuck and Lucas and Valye and Sofia and Joe getting opportunities, it makes our guys believe that they can achieve at that level also.

EB: Do you have plans to recruit more male and female resident athletes/coaches to the RTC?

SG: We sure hope so. We can build an incredible program here, but like everything else, we need to fund it. So that's the trick. We have had Mike Rogers around the past few months wrestling with our big guys and I think people have seen improvement there. Adding him will help. He is married to Olympian Jen Page. We have regular inquiries from senior level athletes that want to come and train here. It is just a matter of figuring out what we can offer them and what they can offer us and making the matches that make the most sense for the club and for the team.

EB: Coach, would you like to make any closing comments about our RTC for our readers?

SG: First of all, it is not a coincidence that Charlie, Joe, Vayle, and Sofia are all about the same weight. Secondly, quite simply, without our RTC, we do NOT have two Gold Medalists at the Pan Am Games!

EB: Thank you very much Coach. It is always great to talk to and learn from you!

SG: My pleasure, contact me anytime.



Joe Couch entering the coliseum at the Pan-American Games in Rionegro, Columbia



Lucas Stoddard & Charlie Farmer holding USA's team trophy at the Pan-American Games in June

West Point's U23 Pan Am Champions

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

Army West Point Wrestlers Lucas Stoddard ('27) and Charles Farmer ('26) both won Gold Medals representing our country at the 2024 Under 23 Pan Am Games Freestyle Wrestling Championships on June 21-22 in Rionegro, Colombia. The two wrestlers had earned the right to enter the Pan Ams due to their outstanding performance at the 2024 U23 USA National Freestyle Wrestling Championships in Geneva, Ohio on May 31 – June 2, 2024. Lucas finished first in his weight class by going 6-0. His performance earned him the right not only to represent our country in the Pan Ams but also to be America's representative at the upcoming 2024 U23 World Championships on October 21-27 in Tirana, Albania. Charlie also excelled in Geneva. He finished the tournament 5-1 and was a finalist in his weight class as well. Due to his performance in Geneva and the deferral of another wrestler, Charlie earned the right to represent the USA in Colombia for the Pan Ams.

In Colombia, Lucas, wrestling in the 125 KG weight class, defeated Jorawar Dhinsa of Canada 2-1 in his Gold Medal match. Earlier he had defeated opponents from Puerto Rico, Peru and Venezuela. He had earlier lost one match to Dhinsa but reversed the outcome in the championship match.

Charles wrestled in the 57 KG weight class in the Pan Ams. He defeated Treye Trotman of Canada in his Gold medal match by a score of 7-7 (criteria). Charlie had earlier scored tech fall victories over his opponents from Puerto Rico and Ecuador.

We asked Army Head Wrestling Coach Kevin Ward and Associate Head Wrestling Coach Scott Green who coached the Army wrestlers in Geneva and Colombia to comment on Lucas and Charlie.

Here is what Coach Ward and Coach Green had to say about Lucas Stoddard's performance at Nationals and the Pan Am Championships.

KW: Lucas has shown an incredible amount of growth, progress, and maturity in his wrestling. He put it on display at the U23 National Tournament and in the Pan Am Championships. He is starting to realize his potential and what he is capable of doing. He is motivated to improve in the areas he needs to in order to be a national title contender. What is very exciting about Lucas is that now he gets the opportunity to train and compete with our nation's best wrestlers. It is an amazing opportunity for him to grow alongside the best wrestlers in the country.

SG: Lucas wrestled great in Colombia. He made some small adjustments which enabled him to reverse an earlier loss to his Canadian opponent and win the Gold Medal. He wrestled 5 matches which will help him at the World tournament in Albania in October. He has shown great improvement in his wrestling since last year. He learned a lot at the NCAA tourney last year and has increased confidence this year. At the Nationals, he actually wrestled progressively better in every match in which he competed. Only one point was scored against him during the entire tournament. He twice tech'ed the Lehigh heavyweight who had beaten Lucas twice during this past wrestling season. This is a testament of what Lucas is all about. He still has so much potential. The sky is the limit for him. He had a game plan and he went out and executed it. It is what we want our Army wrestlers to do, and it is what our country expects our Army officers to do.

Here is what Coach Ward and Coach Green had to say about Charles Farmer's performance at Nationals and the Pan Am Championships:

KW: We are just really happy for Charlie to experience the success he has had this summer because he has been a relentless worker in the wrestling room. He has worked as hard as anybody in the room whether he was the starter or not. His work and effort are starting to pay off for him in competition. We expect him to be a big contributor this coming season.

- Continues on Next Page -

West Point's U23 Pan Am Champions

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

SG: Charlie is a great example of the guy who keeps swinging the ax as hard as he can even though he may not be in the starting lineup. He keeps going and now the trees are starting to fall. Charlie has always had a bigger view than just being the starter in his weight class. Even when he was not starting, he has always been a great teammate. He wrestled at the U20 Nationals in Las Vegas last year and had some good wins and a few close losses and failed to place. Now his dedication and hard work are paying off. He was awesome at the U23 Nationals in June and wins a Gold Medal at the Pan Ams! He practices every day at 0545 HRS and nobody works harder than him. We are excited about his future.

We were also fortunate to be able to speak with Lucas Stoddard (LS) about his experiences at the U23 Nationals and the Pan Am Competition. Here is what he had to say.

Staff Writer Eric Bantz (EB): Congratulations Lucas on your outstanding achievements both in Geneva, Ohio at the Nationals and in Colombia at the Pan Ams. What are your thoughts about your performance at these events?

LS: Thank you very much. First of all, I just want to thank everybody who has helped me. There is no way I would have been as successful without the help of so many people. I cannot overstate how grateful I am for the help of everyone. All of our coaches at West Point are fantastic. This past month especially Coaches Green, Bleise and Breese kept tutoring me in wrestling and teaching me so much Freestyle technique! Austin Kohlhofer and other team members worked out with me constantly and I owe them so much for their work with me. The entire Army Wrestling Team supported me. My tactical officers worked with me to work out my military training schedule (including Camp Buckner) so I could get some wrestling practice in while completing my military requirements. Coach Breese drove me between Buckner and Arvin Gym on a regular basis. LTC Messitt was great in organizing my training and schedule, getting me a passport on short notice, and doing so many other things that had to be done before I could travel overseas. The West Point RTC coaches and athletes and LTC Messitt have been very helpful to me and my teammates. It has definitely been a team effort. I also would like to thank the many people on the USA National Team in Colorado who helped me after I won in Geneva and before I went to Colombia. Mike Rodgers, Chance Marsteller, Tony Cassioppi, Mason Paris, and Joe Russell are some of the National and RTC team members and coaches who helped me while I was now practicing with "USA" on my singlet.

EB: Lucas, that is awesome! Were you surprised by your success in winning the Gold Medal?

LS: I think I have a two-part answer to that question. First of all, I always am confident and expect to win. However, secondly, the truth of the matter is that Geneva was only the 2nd Freestyle tournament I entered in my life! I had entered the Under 20 Nationals last year and finished 3-2 and failed to place. However, I say again, the coaches and other wrestlers taught me so much Freestyle technique these past few months. I knew I had gotten much better but without live competition I was unsure of just how much I had improved.

EB: Let's go back in time. We know you are from Ohio. When did you start wrestling?

LS: Yes, I am from Burton, Ohio which is not far from Cleveland. I think I started wrestling before I could talk. I had an older brother who wrestled, and my parents had me always go to his practices with him.

EB: Did your brother continue to wrestle in college?

LS: No, Sir. He was a good wrestler but developed great talent in theater, music, and the performing arts so he shifted in that direction. I could not sing or dance so I figured I better stick with wrestling.

EB: Tell us about high school. How did you do in wrestling and were you recruited early for West Point?

West Point's U23 Pan Am Champions

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

LS: I certainly was not a "big time" recruit. No school really recruited me until after my junior year when Army contacted me after I placed 3rd in the State Tourney as a junior. I actually wrestled 191 lbs. at that time. Army's assistant coach at the time, Ned Shuck, was who reached out to me. Coach Shuck subsequently left to be Head Coach at Bellarmine and Coach Green then contacted me and carried the ball. I appreciate him doing that. (ed. note: Lucas won the State Tournament his senior year).

EB: You have shown remarkable improvement in your wrestling while at West Point. You achieved better results after wrestling the Canadian HWT a second time in Rionegro. You also reversed the outcome this year after initial losses against other good HWT wrestlers (including Lehigh and Navy). You were one of the co-winners of Army's "Most Improved Wrestler" of the year this past season. How do you explain this ability to get better and defeat opponents who have beaten you in the recent past?

LS: Well, again, I have to go back to the great coaching and training I am receiving. I am so thankful, as I mentioned before, for all the time and effort all my coaches and teammates have been pouring into me. My training in the Olympic Training Center really helped prepare me for the Pan Ams. Before I wrestled the Canadian in the finals, Coach Green kept telling me to "Trust my training." He was confident that I would reverse the outcome from our previous match, and he coached me great.

EB: Are there any memories from the Nationals and the Pan Ams that you would like to share with our readers?

LS: At the Nationals, I felt I was wrestling "loose" and not being overly concerned with results but just doing my best. I believe that was helping me wrestle pretty well. Then, right before I was going to wrestle in the finals, Charlie Farmer said to me: "Hey, if we win this match we get to wrestle in the Pan Ams in Colombia and the World Championships in Albania representing the USA." I had no idea of that! I admit that caused me to be a bit anxious! Fortunately it all worked out!

In Colombia, I will always remember the pride I felt wearing a singlet overseas that said "USA" and being able to represent my country and the Army Wrestling Team. Coach Green always says we are "America's Team." He is right. The Army represents the entire country, and every state has an abundance of Army veterans. I truly feel we are AMERICA'S TEAM!

EB: Nice. By the way, do you have any nick names on the wrestling team?

LS: Oh, yes Sir! Two that come quickly to mind are "Forklift" and F-250 (because, like the Ford truck, they say I can pull or push anything!)

EB: Again, congratulations Lucas on your outstanding performance. You have certainly made us all proud. Is there any last thing you would like to mention to our readers?

LS: Yes sir! Absolutely! One word – "Gratitude!" Just as I mentioned at the beginning, I want to repeat how thankful I am to EVERYONE who has helped and is helping me in my journey here at West Point.

EB: We want to thank you Lucas for taking the time to share with us. You have been great and it has been a pleasure for us to get to know you better.

We were also fortunate to be able to speak with Charlie Farmer about his experiences at the U23 Nationals and the Pan Am Competition. Here is what he had to say.

- Continues on Next Page -

West Point's U23 Pan Am Champions

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

EB: Congratulations Charlie on your outstanding performance in both Geneva at the Nationals and in Colombia at the Pan Am Games!

CF: Thank you, Sir. It was a great experience!

EB: Charlie, please tell our readers a little about yourself. Where are you from? When did you start wrestling?

CF: I am from Coal Valley, Illinois. I went to Moline HS. My dad started me in football and wrestling when I was about 8 years old. My wrestling coach in juniors thought he saw some potential in me and told my dad that he should enroll me in the "Young Guns Wrestling Club." My dad did this and I think I did not score a takedown at Young Guns during my first 6 months there! However, I persisted and improved! I continued training at Young Guns until heading off to West Point!

EB: Were you heavily recruited by West Point?

CF: I am not sure I would call it "heavily recruited" but Army's assistant coach at the time, Ned Shuck, did reach out to me.

EB: During your first two years at West Point, you were not always the #1 man in your weight class. Your coaches, however, have all commented on how hard you have continued to train even when not always starting. Was this a large factor in how you did so well this summer?

CF: Absolutely! I believe my success this summer was due to the culmination and combination of several things. Our coaching is incredible. I love my team. My workout partners are great. We work hard. I love my training. It is second to none. Our RTC and its athletes and coaches have also really helped me. I have learned to go one match at a time. When I was in Colombia, I was super confident that no opponent could match my training and my pace.

EB: Again, you reached the finals at the Nationals and you won the Gold Medal in Colombia! Please comment on your outstanding success. What do you attribute it to? What was your training like? Who were your work out partners and coaches?

CF: Before the tournaments I was being taught a lot more freestyle technique. Besides my Army Team coaches and teammates, I also benefited GREATLY from the RTC coaches and athletes. Fabian Gutierrez coached me and taught me so much and was also a great and constant workout partner! My other RTC training partners Joe Couch, Sofia Macaluso, Val Baker, Cooper Merli and others all worked with me and made me better. Cadet ('26) Joe Couch (GR 55 KG) also did well in Geneva and finished 5th in Colombia as well.)

EB: What was the first thing you thought of when you found out you were going to Colombia?

CF: My very first thought was "I don't have a passport!" And we had a very short time window to get one! I thought for a moment that I might be the first wrestler in history who had to forfeit in a tournament not due to injury but due to "No passport!" LTC Messitt was super in taking care of this issue as well as so many other things. Our tactical department was also helpful.

EB: Please also comment on your match with the Canadian for the Gold Medal. Were you surprised that you took first place at such a prestigious international tournament?

West Point's U23 Pan Am Champions

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

CF: I never go into a match thinking that I am going to lose. Coach Green kept emphasizing for me to trust my training. One match at a time. He told me that I did not have to change but just to keep going after him. Except for a short period in the match when I let up a little (which allowed him to score), I believe I pretty much followed Coach Green's advice. Again, I repeat that I was very confident during the Pan Ams that no opponent was going to match my training and my pace.

EB: How did you feel after you won the Gold Medal?

CF: It was awesome! I felt so much pride in representing the United States. I loved hearing the National Anthem! I will also always remember doing it with my teammates and close friends Lucas, Joe, and Sofia.

EB: What are your next goals?

CF: I want to be an NCAA champion!

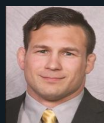
EB: That is awesome. Do you have any last words you would like to share with our readers?

CF: Yes, sir. I am extremely grateful for everyone who has poured into me here at West Point. Please accept my sincere thanks. And also: GO ARMY!!! BEAT EVERYBODY!!!

EB: Thank you very much Charlie. Congratulations again. It has been a delight getting to know you better. We wish you the best of luck in the future.



Charlie Farmer elevates his opponent at the U23 National Freestyle Championships in Geneva, Ohio



News from “Up the Hill” (USMAPS)

By WPWC Head Wrestling Coach Jeff Breese

Our schedule like every year is a work in progress into the summer. Such is the nature of not being a D1 team but trying to compete as much like D1 athletes as possible. For context, the NCAA Qualifying system does not count matches against USMAPS as Division I matches and therefore they are looked at as wasted matches to other Division I coaches. That makes scheduling a little bit tricky at times. We can't just schedule a dual with another EIWA team or enter a D1 invite (including Black Knight Invite). So, we get a little creative.

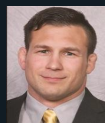
My top priorities for the schedule this year were:

- Strike a balance of strong D1 events with D2 and D3 events.
- Put ourselves in more dual meet situations.
- Reduce the number of all-day open events.

It is important to strike a balance of D1 events and events with smaller programs during the Prep year. We want to be challenged often. However, sometimes athletes just need a week against D2 and D3 competition to remember that they are pretty dang good wrestlers. Good results at the D1 level do not always come immediately, so it is good to have some success against D2 and D3 opponents develop confidence. If the results are immediate at the D1 level, then an event against D2 and D3 opponents can be used as an opportunity to build confidence in new skills. So, balance in our schedule matters.

Additionally, balance in event format matters. Open tournaments are the most common way to get a lot of matches in a redshirt or developmental year. They serve a need for sure. I will save my dislike of the format of open tournaments for another time. The positive of them is if you have a good day you can wrestle 6 matches. The negative of them often is you can wrestle 6 matches in one day over the course of 12-14 hours in the gym.

We have worked to try to get some dual meets on the schedule this year. There is nothing to replicate the excitement and pressure of a college dual meet with all eyes on you, except wrestling a college dual meet with all eyes on you. I think it is important to try to put our Prepsters in that situation as much as possible prior to the first dual meet in a Black Knight singlet. We want dual meets to be old hat for our Prepsters, so they just come out swinging for Coach Ward and crew. We have found some willing dual partners for this year, but it wasn't easy.



News from “Up the Hill” (USMAPS)

By WPWC Head Wrestling Coach Jeff Breese

That all said. Here is what we have and what we are working on.

Confirmed:

- November 3- Princeton Open
- November 16- Shorty Hitchcock Millersville Open December 8- Bob Quade Open
- Dec. 22- Wilkes Open
- Jan. 10- Franklin and Marshall Open
- Jan. 18- Jim White Duals (Washington, PA) Jan. 26- Mat Town Open II
- U20s in Las Vegas in April

Here is what we are still working on:

November 9/10- We hope to be going to George Mason Duals. Pending confirmation and funding. Other alternatives include a couple opens. We tried to get into Journeymen Scramble, but for reasons listed above we didn't get an invite. All of our February schedule remains up in the air. We could be taking a trip to Colorado to dual Air Force Prep and wrestle at Colorado School of Mines. Again, pending funding and approval. We hope to host a tri-meet at home with some other RTCs. February is always the toughest month to schedule. More updates to come.

Lastly, just a reminder that our Prepsters are largely supported by West Point Wrestling Club. USMAPS provides some budget for us, but anything we want to do in addition such as trips to Colorado and Vegas are funded by WPWC. All USMAPS staff salaries are provided by WPWC, not USMAPS. So, if you do give to WPWC, remember that you are supporting our developmental year at the Prep School. A developmental year that has paid huge dividends the past few years. We had four underclassmen NCAA Qualifiers last year. All spent a year at USMAPS.

Now that you know these things please consider making a contribution to the WPWC.

- REMEMBER THE DATE -

Army West Point Athletics Giving Day is on Tuesday, December 3rd!

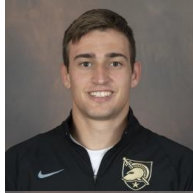
This special one-day event is an opportunity for the entire West Point family to unite in support of the programs they are most passionate about.

Alumni News

Meet our Newest Army Wrestling Alumni



Logan Brown
Field Artillery
424th Brigade, Ft Sill OK



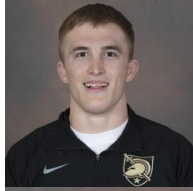
Daniel Lawrence
Engineers
11th ACR, Ft Cavazos, TX



Tyler Morris
Infantry
101st AD, Ft Campbell KY



Dominic Carone
Field Artillery
82nd AD, Ft Liberty NC



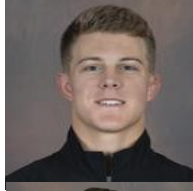
Nate Lukez
Aviation
Marine Corps



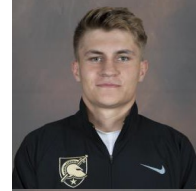
Ben Pasiuk
Field Artillery
25th ID, Schofield Barracks HI



Tanner Craig
Field Artillery
7th ID, JBLM, WA



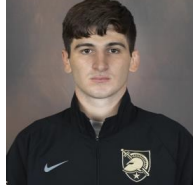
Joseph Metz
Transportation
4th ID, Ft Carson CO



Julian Sanchez
Field Artillery
7th ID, JBLM WA



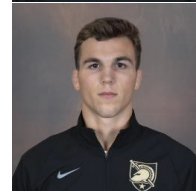
Thomas Deck
Field Artillery
82nd AD, Ft Liberty NC



Mark Montgomery
Armor
1ID, Ft Riley KA



Dillon Sheehy
Air Defense Artillery
1st Cav, Ft Cavazos TX



Matthew Williams
Infantry
10th Mtn, Ft Drum NY

Recent Command Selections

- **T. J. Sikora '02** has been designated to take command Of US Army Cyber Protection Brigade at Ft Eisenhower in January 2025.
- **Jon Anderson '06** (and Army WCAP alum) recently took command of 1-26 Infantry Battalion at Fort Campbell.
- **Ed Gibbons '07** is designated to take command of 2-1 Infantry Battalion 2nd BDE 2nd Infantry Division at Joint Bass Lewis/McCord.
- **Connor Sanders '07** has been designated as an alternate for BN command.
- **Andrew Grella '19** will be going to Ranger school at the end of the summer then will PCS to Hawaii to take command.

Alumni News

Advanced Schooling

- **David Farr '17** headed out from Ft. Eisenhower in June to start his PhD program in data science at Washington State, as a cyber officer.
- **Graham Ratermann '19** just finished Robin Sage and will receive his Green Beret this summer. He will then PCS to 5th SFG.
- **Peter Strassfield '19** just completed MCCC.
- **Harrison Young '19** is attending MCCC.
- **Austin Harry '19** is finishing his time at Ft Campbell and then will attend CCC.
- **Ethan Tursini '19** is in SOF CCC at Ft. Liberty and competed in the USASOC Best Combat Diver Competition.
- **Jed Smith '21** was recently selected for SFAS and is expecting his first child.

Transitions

- **(Thomas) Whitney Gibson '84** retired after 20 years of military service and 18 years at Shriners hospital in Greenville SC as Pediatric Orthopedic Surgeon.
- **Rocco Caywood '19** transitioned out of the military and is working at Quaker Window & Doors.
- **Zachary Maxwell '19** transitioned out of the military and is looking for employment opportunities.
- **Lane Peters '21** was recently selected for service in the 75th Ranger Regiment.



Alumni News

Family News

- **Gavin Berkley '19** got engaged to Linsey Kelly.
- **Rocco Caywood '19** recently married Dakota and they are living in Missouri.
- **Zachary Maxwell '19** is engaged to Maddie Nelson.
- **Bobby Heald '21** is getting married in November.
- **Beau Guffey '21** and wife are expecting their first child.
- **Ben Pasiuk '24** married his fiancé Crissy on June 1st in Carrollton Ohio.
- **Logan Brown '24** got married on June 22nd just outside of Dallas Texas.

Wrestling Involvement & Other Recognitions

- **Jim Diehl '76** was inducted into the Virginia Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame for his service as a wrestling referee.
- **Kirk Landon '11** coached Janiyah Johnson to the 155 pounds title at the 2024 USMC Junior and 16U National Championships in Fargo this past summer.

- Next Issue of the Army Wrestling Alumni Newsletter—November 2024
- Suggestions/Ideas for Content?? Please Let Us Know What You Think!!
 - Alumni News should be sent to Larry Baltezare
@ Alumni.newsletter@westpointwrestlingclub.org