

YOUNG WARRIORS



OAKLEY BORNITZ shows his excitement after defeating his Redwood Valley opponent during Sunday's Tracy-Milroy-Balaton youth wrestling triangular. INSERT: Taylor Squires battles his Redwood Valley opponent. Photos / Per Peterson

Don't let their cuteness fool you, youth TMB wrestlers are as mighty as they are small, and they work hard to improve every time they hit the mat

BY PER PETERSON EDITOR
Eight-year-old Kynlie Bornitz offers up a very simple reason for why she wrestles.

"It makes me feel happy," she said in between duals at Saturday's youth wrestling tournament at Tracy Area High School. "You get to learn a bunch of stuff."

As the team's lone female wrestler, Kynlie has had to get used to going up against boys. While other teams have a girl or two on their roster, it's rare girls match up against each other.

"It's kind of different," Bornitz said about wrestling against the boys.

"It's fun," said fourth-grader Luke Millman said of wrestling. "The Hi-C is one of my favorite takedowns. It's a single leg going into a double leg."

Third-grader Jackson Rolling also likes learning techniques that he can use against his opponents.

"We get to learn cool moves, and it's fun," said Rolling, whose favorite move is called the snap down. "And I get stronger by working on the moves."

The uniqueness of having a female wrestler on the squad notwithstanding, the goal of the Tracy-Milroy-Balaton youth wrestling program is the same as it would be for any other sport: teach the basics and fundamentals — and make sure the kids have fun in the process.

"Just get the kids experience is what we're after," said Eric Squires, one of five coaches of the youngsters, along with Justin Struchen, Andy Nelson, Pete Jacobsen and Chris Bornitz.

One of the challenges Squires and his fellow coaches face with kids so young is dealing with patience, or lack thereof.

"Everybody learns at a different



ERIC SQUIRES (LEFT) and Chris Bornitz are two of the five youth wrestling coaches this year. They are joined by Justin Struchen, Andy Nelson and Pete Jacobson. RIGHT: Parents like Ashley Freeburg get into the matches as fervently as fans at any level.

speed," Squires said. "The focus isn't so much on winning now as much as it is keeping them in the sport, teaching them the fundamentals and teaching them how to compete. That's what it's all about."

The popularity of the sport of wrestling in Tracy has been strong for years, and that is no different today, even though COVID-19 has impacted numbers. Typically, the program includes anywhere from 55-60 wrestlers; with the pandemic, however, that number has fallen a bit.

"We're happy with where we're at; we're 45-50 right now," said Squires. "Coming into the season, I would've taken that all day. I'm really happy with the participation."

...
Karl Campbell, Tracy-Milroy-Balaton/Westbrook-Walnut Grove head varsity coach, said the youth program goes all the way back to his days as a wrestler. Back then, the Jaycees would run practices for two to three weeks every March after the high school season was over.

"We would go to a regional qualifier, which was a front-door, back-door four man bracket," Campbell said. "If



you won that you qualified for the state tournament which was the same thing. There were also some AAU opportunities that I recall Roger Trulock running and later Tom Kuisle, both who were head high school coaches at different points in our history. In the early 90s Chris Kamrud spent a lot of time getting our youth program going. He would load up an old station wagon full of kids and go to various weekend tournaments."

After Kamrud transitioned out, Kendal Cooreman took over a group that eventually finished second in the section in 2006 at the varsity level.

"Kent Cooreman, Chris Schmidt and I began to help with the youth program in the late 90s as well, as we both had sons involved at that time," Campbell said. "It was during the mid-90s that NYWA was starting up. We spent every weekend from January all the way into April at individual tournaments and also did a few dual team tourneys. Kent got our program in on the ground floor of the NYWA youth dual team series, and we have hosted that tournament every spring, with the exception of this past Covid 2020 spring."



IF YOU DON'T THINK these mini Panthers can't take the punishment that comes with wrestling, just ask Nolan Hohler, who took an arm to the face during his dual during Saturday's triangular.

Mike Coyle and Chris Schmidt ran the program for a few years, too, said Campbell. Other who have championed the program are Tom Byrne, John Carlson and Rick Johnson.

"They turned a lot of focus towards the dual team aspect and were able to qualify several youth teams for the state NYWA youth dual tournament," said Campbell. "The kids on those teams were the guys that have been on our last three section champion dual teams and state dual top four teams."

Campbell is a firm believer in "feeder programs," but said they have to be done right, and that includes making sure participation is high.

"All you have to do to see the impacts of not having numbers is look at several of the dual teams that we have faced this season that can not fill

a lineup," Campbell said. "For us, that has started in the youth program, kids hanging out with their friends, learning wrestling, competing together and having fun."

Campbell said getting kids involved early allows them to develop the skills that give them a chance to be highly competitive by the time they hit high school. A strong youth program, he added, needs a lot of parental support group and committed coaches.

"We have been fortunate to have that cohesiveness in our program for quite some time," he said. "Our entire varsity staff worked the duals last Sunday, and our youth coaches are very supportive of our high school program. Our success as a high school program the last few years has a definite correlation to our youth program."

Wedding: Lucas and Kelly tie the knot

Continued from page 13

she walked down the aisle, wearing a sleek mermaid-fit dress with asymmetrical lace from Essence of Australia.

"I felt like I didn't see anyone in the crowd the whole time because I was so about her," Lucas said.

"I remember during the ceremony trying to look back on the family just to see smiles on people's faces, but you couldn't really tell because everyone was wearing masks," said Kelly. "I was like, 'I don't know if they're paying attention or looking at us.' That is something that I regret when it comes to having a wedding during COVID but we didn't want to wait to get married."

Having a ceremony outdoors and during COVID meant

giving guests the choice to go inside a warm building on-site to warm up and eat with a dinner option of chicken or roast beef paired with glazed carrots and potatoes from Baune's Catering.

"The catering company had their own thing they had to do for restrictions. You had to stand up and they put all the food on paper plates and you just walk through the line holding paper plates. They had to scoop the food and serve it for you," Lucas said.

Another wrench that was thrown at the couple was the COVID exposure "scaries" for the bride.

"I had to quarantine two weeks before the wedding because

ing exposed to someone," Kelly said. "We were like, 'Do we do it or do we call it off?' It was a last-minute scare. We were like, 'What if the groom gets it or the party gets it?'"

Although things may have been done a bit differently than during pre-pandemic times, the wedding went off just fine, and it helped that the new couple had their families supporting whatever decisions they decided to make for their nuptials. When the ceremony was over, there was an immediate sense of calm that took over the pair. Every decision they made leading up to their matrimony worked out in their favor and it's no question that fortune will be on their side as their love story continues to unfold.

No Better Place. No Better Partner.

Love may be the ultimate destination, but why stop there? Tie the knot somewhere extraordinary, and share the exhilarating travel experience of a lifetime together.

Southwest Coaches, Inc.
Southwest Tour & Travel
1500 Travis Road, Marshall, MN
(800) 669-1309
email: swcmar@starpoint.net
www.swestourandtravel.com

Travel Southwest & Go With The Best!

Start your new life together with pieces to make your house a home!

- INDOOR & OUTDOOR PAINT
- TOOLS • SMALL APPLIANCES AND MUCH MORE!

MIDWEST SUPPLY OF TRACY
Locally Owned & Operated

Hwy. 14 • Tracy, MN • 629-3428
Open Mon-Fri, 8-5:30; Thurs., 8-7 p.m.; Sat 8-5 & Sun. 11-3

DELI COUNTER SPECIALS

For Bridal Showers & More...
Perfect For Special Occasions

- Sandwiches Platters • Fruit Trays
- Meat/Cheese/Veggie Trays
- Home Style Salads/Desserts from the Deli
- Home Baked Buns, Breads & Rolls

WE ARE YOUR LOCAL GROCERY STORE!
Food Pride
The Kind of Store You Want Us to Be.

Open 7 Days A Week 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.
West Morgan Street
Tracy, MN • 629-3434