

January 8, 2010

Hi All,

Hope everyone had a great holiday season and a happy new year.

Fourteen Saskatchewan female high school wrestlers, one university wrestler, two coaches and six chaperones travelled to San Diego for a training camp and competition from Dec 27 - Jan 5. The main camp was held at La Jolla High School with the University of Alberta Team as training partners. Shane facilitated the training which included technical instruction, position work and lots of scrimmage. Our girls held their own with the University athletes and trained extremely hard. A highlight was a run after the morning session to La Jolla children's beach. This area was previously used by families since it was in a cove and the water isn't too deep. However, a number of years back the seals started using it as a shelter to hide from predators. Since then, the seals have taken it over and now lay around and sunbathe away most of the day. Spectators can get quite close and see them in a semi natural habitat.

After focusing on freestyle the girls got their first taste of Folk Style at a clinic hosted by Trevor Keifer who coaches the San Diego Hot Beaches Wrestling Club and has coached the USA Jr. National Women's Team to the Worlds the last few years. Although the standing is the same the ground work is completely different. The ref doesn't ever stand you up, you can't grip your hands around the torso and there are no exposure points unless you are in a pinning position. We then had some matches with a local girl's high school team in which we proved to be quite competitive regardless of the style. Much thanks to Trevor, his two assistant coaches and girl's team for putting up with what they probably thought were strange questions.

The girl's team had a great start to the New Year with a run on the boardwalk of Mission Beach in San Diego followed by the 2nd Jr. Huskies-Sask Polar Bear Swim in the Pacific Ocean. The water was warmer than expected and some of our girls stayed in and screamed for around 30 minutes. It should be noted that everyone went in the water including the parents.

This was followed up the next day with a tournament in West Covina California (30 minutes east of LA). It had 260 girls in 12 weight classes. Our girls did great considering they only had a 2 hour clinic on folk style (which is very different than freestyle). All of our girls won matches and progressively got better as the tournament wore on. Some highlights included:

- Silke Svenkeson winning a match 21-18 even though she never got taken down. She had 6 cautions mostly due to starting wrong on the bottom (one more and she would have been out)
- Ashley MacNeil planting a tough American on her back with a beautiful arm throw after she had nailed her on a fireman's. The spectators were in awe of her technical ability
- The toughness of our girls - Brittany Johnson wrestling 4 or 5 matches even though she hadn't been on the mat for a couple of months due to a broken bone in her arm, Taylor Follensbee running on a bum knee and competing through the pain, Victoria Kent jamming her back in her second match then wrestling 5 more only to lose in the consolation semi.
- Kelsey Gsell being the wrestler of the tournament. In the semi she beat the California champ (10-1 then pinned her) who had beat the Oregon and Washington champs earlier in December. The California coach (also her dad) told me that she had never had 10 points scored on her. In the final, Kelsey pinned her opponent in 20 seconds. Pretty impressive.
- Coach Shane figuring out half way through the tournament that you can choose to stay standing at the beginning of the 2nd or 3rd periods and it doesn't cost a point. The rest of the coaches figuring out that we didn't know what we were doing so they kept deferring choice to us knowing we would stay standing or they could escape for a point.

Team result - 3rd place

Individual results

Kelsey Gsell - Gold

Hannah Franson - Silver

Kelsie Boszak - Bronze

Alex Delgado Lopez - 4th

Silke Svenkeson - 4th

Other Team members

Taylor Follensbee

Melanie Haanen

Laryssa Barry

Lauren Shyluk

Brittany Johnson

Ashley MacNeil

Raelene Anderson

Kelsey Jess

Victoria Kent

Kathleen Kent

Coaches

Pam Ewanishin

Shane Bradley

Chaperones - Thanks to them the team got there and home safely:

Leona Boyer

Grant Franson

Kaylene Franson

Richard Shyluk

Dale and Sandra Svenkeson

It was a great trip all around and our Sask athletes presented themselves as wonderful ambassadors for the sport...on and off the mat.

Shane Bradley

Canada Games North Coach