

Young wrestlers honing their skills

Mat Club prepares youngsters for competition

By Bill Rhoades
Spilyay Staff

Wrestling can be a lonely sport for the ill-prepared, but members of the Madras Mat Club are honing their skills at a young age and learning to be prepared for one-on-one competition. Participants are also exposed to a group atmosphere, which comes with the territory whenever you have 55 youngsters sign-up for a local program.

"We really have a bunch of kids out," said third year director Rodney Smith. "We have a lot of kids coming back and we also have a lot of little kids."

Enrollment at the mat club is up nearly 20 percent this year, a figure coaches find encouraging.

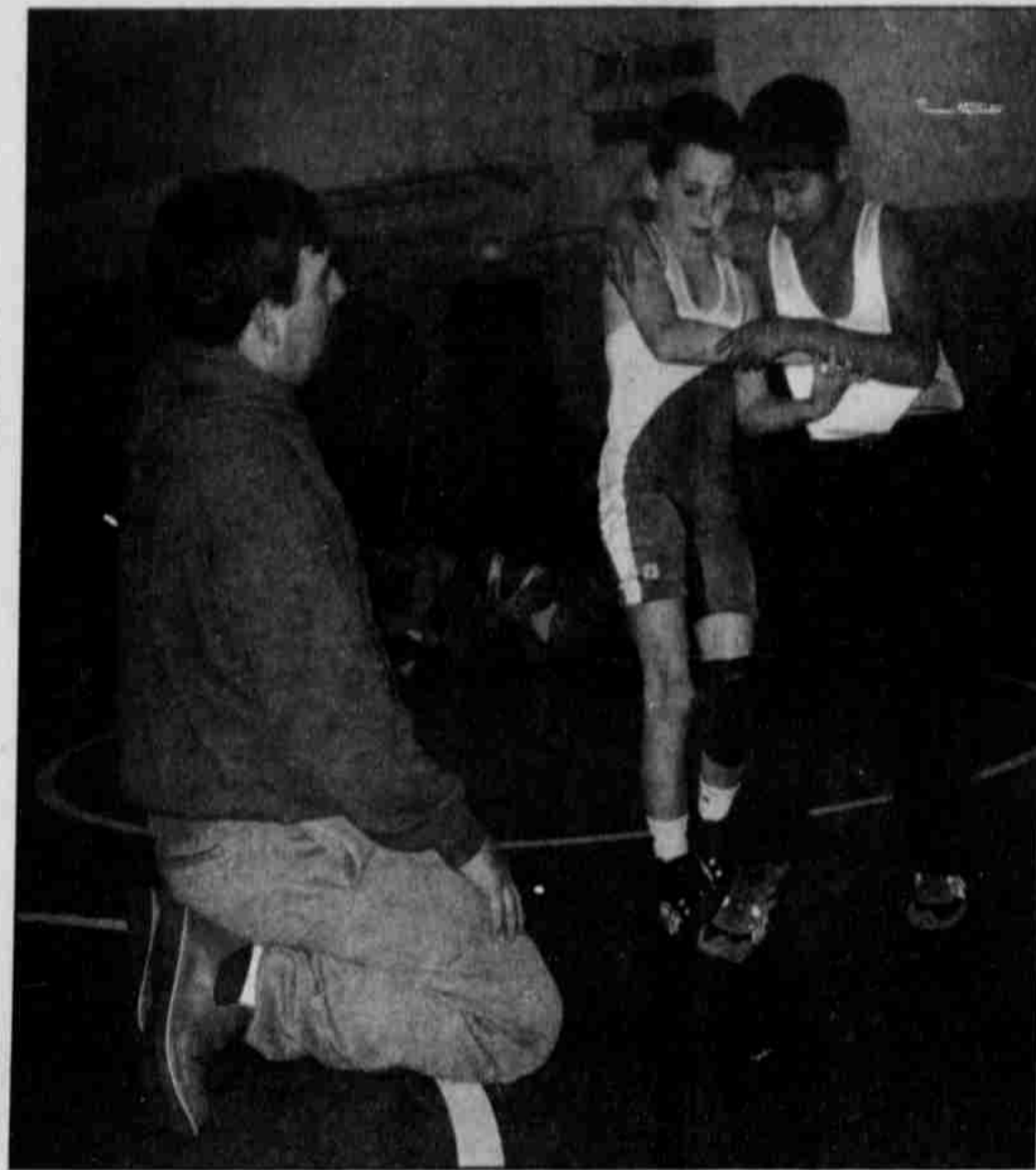
Smith is also happy to report that 15 tribal members have turned out for this year's team, another substantial increase from a year ago.

Madras Mat Club, an affiliate of USA Wrestling, has operated under its current format for the past three years, a spin-off of the Jefferson County Matt Club that used to include wrestlers from Culver. Members are 6-13 years of age and skill levels range from beginner to those who are nearly ready for a spot on the high school team.

Following the USA Wrestling schedule, the club rolls out its mats in early November, practicing twice weekly throughout the season, which runs until the end of February.

"We have them run and stretch, and we work them pretty hard," said Smith. "They're sweating by the time practice is over."

A coaching staff made up of Smith, his brother Spud, Dave Whittaker, Sean Jaca, Rod



Alire, Joe Monroe and Paul Brown offer individual instruction in the basics of wrestling.

They teach the young grapplers about rules, procedures, scoring, technique and all of the basic moves. During workouts the wrestlers are typically separated into small groups that match them up in terms of age, size and skill level.

The same is true during

competitions. Wrestlers are grouped into two-year age divisions and then placed into a weight class and experience category. The idea is to develop skills from the ground up, pro-



In the photograph at top, Spud Smith offers wrestling advice to youngsters. In the photo above, Mat Club Director Rodney Smith does the same.

Photos by Bill Rhoades

viding as much practical experience as possible along the way.

Wrestlers have the option of competing in weekend tournaments staged around the state. They travel with their families or arrange for transportation through someone else in the club.

All of the matches are scored, although emphasis is on participation at the early stages.

Most of the competitions feature four-man brackets with medals going to the first place finisher and runner-up. Everyone who competes is assured a ribbon.

Smith said some members of the club travel almost every weekend. Others may choose to attend one tournament and then confine their efforts to the twice-weekly practices.

Coaches try to promote tournaments held within the central Oregon region, particularly the Jan. 26 event held in Madras. Last year the local event drew 160 wrestlers, some from as far away as Portland.

"People come from all over," said Smith. "The sport has been booming and the kids keep getting better."

For anyone interested in joining the club, entry forms are still available during Tuesday and Thursday evening (6-7:30 p.m.) practices held at the Buff Elementary Annex just south of Madras High School.

Registration for USA Wrestling affiliates is \$35.

Coaches generally confine their instruction to topics that can be directly related to wrestling, but Smith points out many of those lessons have applications for other sports.

The self-reliance and mental disciplines taught in wrestling are attributes an athlete can put to use in any other sport.

"It's an individual sport that teaches self-confidence," said Smith. "Wrestling helps kids in all sports."

Astoria takes basketball tourney trophy

By Orlando Doney
Spilyay Staff

Two weeks ago, the boys' varsity basketball team hosted the Bob McKenzie Memorial tournament in the Buffalo dome. The first game pitted Astoria against the Henley Hornets. Both teams were trying to improve their won-loss record in Madras and to see where they stood against competition from other conferences.

Astoria has a history of playing solid basketball and this year is no different. Rated 5th in the state in the 3A polls, Astoria made quick work of Henley in the first game Friday evening.

Henley rebounded the next day as they played Sisters, and went home with the third place trophy.

The Hornets are a young team due to graduation of several players from last year's team.

While the Outlaws were undermanned due to some of their players who are participating in the state 3A football playoffs.

The struggle for Central Oregon bragging rights extended to include Sisters, still considered a young school, but that did not deter them from playing hard. Madras sent Sisters to the consolation game Friday evening with a resounding loss.

Saturday's championship game between Madras and Astoria saw the Buffaloes fall behind early. With strong defense and hustle, Astoria held an 18-12 lead at the end of the first quarter.

Behind consistent outside shooting, Astoria led at halftime 50-34. After the intermission, Madras returned to the floor and went back to what they do best, applying pressure on the ball, challenging every pass, and playing aggressive defense.

Thus started a second half comeback. Unlike the first game of the season against Crook County that ended in a two point Madras victory in overtime, Astoria was able to leave town with the Bob McKenzie Memorial Championship trophy and a 77-69 victory over the White Buffaloes.

MHS sports schedule

Upcoming events for Madras White Buffaloes teams:

Girls Basketball
Dec. 18 @ Mt. View (F/JV/V) 5:15/5:15/7:00 PM
Dec. 19 @ Sweet Home (F/JV/V) 5:45/5:45/7:30 PM
Dec. 22 HOME vs. Henley (F/JV/V) 12/1:30/3:00 PM

Boys Basketball
Dec. 15 @ Cascade (F/JV/V) 5:45/5:45/7:30 PM
Dec. 18 HOME vs. Mt. View (F/JV/V) 5:45/5:45/7:30 PM
Dec. 20 HOME vs. Sisters (F/JV/V) 5:45/5:45/7:30 PM
Madras Wrestling
Dec. 15 @ Mac High Tournament (JV/V)
Dec. 21 @ Summit (JV/V)
Dec. 28 @ Culver (JV/V) 7PM

Freshmen and Sophomore Wrestling
Dec. 12 @ Culver 5 PM
Dec. 19 @ LaPine 5 PM

Madras girls varsity host holiday tournament

This weekend, Dec. 14 and 15, The Madras White Buffaloes will host another tournament. This time it will be the girls' varsity that will be playing. Invited are Cascade, Sisters, and Philomuth.

The first game will be Sis-

ters playing Cascade at 5:45 p.m. while the Lady Buffs takes the court against Philomuth at 7:30 p.m.

On Saturday, Dec. 15, the consolation game will be at 12 PM, and the championship game will start at 2 p.m.

Remember to wear a Blue shirt, sweatshirt to the game to fill the gym in a sea of Blue as you cheer the Madras White Buffaloes at all of their home games. In a late addition, the girl JV team will participate in the Bulldogs Varsity invita-

tional in Culver. They will play Dufur Friday afternoon at 3 p.m. Culver takes on Bonanza following the first game.

The consolation game starts at noon, on Saturday while the Championship game will start at approximately 2 p.m.

MHS girls again defeat Grant Union

In a game that took place in January or February about 10 years ago. Grant Union of the Greater Oregon League made a house call to the Buffalo Dome on Dec. 7.

Though the years have passed and Madras is now in the Tri-Valley league, the results are the same. Madras 58, Grant Union 36

Once the ball was tossed up for the tipoff, the Lady Buffs established the tempo of the game and the Prospectors were playing catch up the rest of the night. After the first quarter, Madras led 17-10. When the teams went into the dressing rooms for halftime, the White Buffaloes led 36-20.

As the second half started the defense for both teams took center stage as only each team scored 9 and 8 points respectively. Madras led 45-28.

The fourth quarter and the score let the players on the bench get some valuable game situation experience for both teams.

Time expired and the scoreboard showed a final score of 58-36 in favor of the White Buffaloes. Nicole Main led Madras scorers with 16 points on 10 of 16 shots while going two for two from beyond the arc.

Madras boys travel to Culver

This afternoon, the freshmen boys take center stage with a game against the Bulldogs in Culver. Tip off is at 7 p.m.. Prior to the start of the boys' game, the freshmen girls will tipoff at 5:30 PM.

This will be the only game this season when the freshmen boys and girls team will play in the same venue.

MHS wrestlers visit Estacada

Madras Wrestlers participated in an 8-team invitational at Estacada on Dec. 7. Tony Hansen of Madras took first place in the 130 pound division by scoring two pin falls and a technical fall on his way to the title. Placing third was Orrin Beals in the 103-pound division while Jacob Struck placed third in the 140-pound division.

These scores helped Madras come in sixth place with a score of 100.

Winter scene

It has been a snowy holiday season so far, with snow falling, at least in small amounts, about every other day since Thanksgiving. The snow has made for some scenic vistas around the reservation. The photograph at right was taken recently at HeHe.



Photo by Dave McMechan