



International Influence

Wrestling gives Trucksess chance to minister

STORY BY ALLISON SUESSE / PHOTO SUBMITTED

SPIRIT LAKE—David Trucksess' time in Mongolia last summer was more than a vacation to see a new country.

The 16-year-old junior at Spirit Lake High School garnered new wrestling skills outside the realm of American style.

"I'd never been out of the country before. I was more interested in it because of that, and I like to wrestle a lot. Getting to wrestle new guys in other countries was pretty cool," Trucksess said. "It was a mission trip, too, so I got to share my faith in Jesus Christ with them."

The son of Kurt and Cindy Trucksess was gone for two weeks in June and has been implement-

ing what he learned since the Spirit Lake wrestling season.

The camp, put together by the group Athletes in Action, convened in Mongolia's capital, Ulaanbaatar. The athletes spent a week training and doing mission work. Trucksess worked with other campers from the United States and from Mongolia who ranged from middle school students to collegians.

Working with wrestlers from another country expanded Trucksess' knowledge of the sport. Mongolians typically wrestle freestyle, which is different from the folkstyle American high school wrestlers use.



DAVID TRUCKSESS (second from left) has a meal with his fellow wrestlers during a mission trip in Mongolia. The Spirit Lake High School student learned new wrestling techniques and experienced a new culture while also doing mission work.



SPIRIT LAKE HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR David Trucksess (third from left) traveled to Mongolia for a wrestling mission trip. He got to know wrestlers from Mongolia and the United States and learned new techniques for the sport.

“They were a lot more upper body. They only wrestle freestyle, and they did a lot of different moves,” he said.

Trucksess has wrestled all three years of high school, and this year the 152-pound athlete is state ranked sixth in Class 2A by The Predicament. It is his first year of being ranked, and he attributed the standing to the new skills he developed overseas as well as being a veteran to the sport.

“It opened my eyes a little bit to some of their upper-body moves,” Trucksess said. “Over here usually we don’t go over that kind of stuff very much. That was kind of the bigger take-away.”

His coach at Spirit Lake, Andrew Lundgren, has noticed a difference in the way Trucksess has wrestled this season.

“He was able to learn, get a different type of mat experience,” Lundgren said, adding that he has noticed that Truck-

sess has employed more upper-body strength.

“Any time you do that it’s going to give you an advantage,” Lundgren added. “He’s a strong kid and he can use those upper-body throws and moves in his high school matches.”

Although the focus of the trip primarily was on wrestling, Trucksess had the opportunity to develop spiritually as well.

The first stop on the ministry portion of the excursion was a prison in the capital for youth under 18 years old.

“We played basketball there, and then when we were done, some of us shared our testimonies with them,” he said.

The week after their time in Ulaanbaatar, the campers traveled to a remote rural area in the Mongolian mountains where they spent their days training.

Each day, campers ran following a

trail around a hilly area and then had breakfast. The group then worked on wrestling skills and trained before an hour of downtime. They would have another wrestling session before lunch and then have a camp game, usually soccer or football. They ended the day with more wrestling and down time where they sang songs and shared testimonies.

The country itself, though, was not what Trucksess expected at all.

“They have Wi-Fi in some places. In the cities it was more advanced, but out in the country, you’d have people who would ride horses and dirt bikes to get around, and you had your fair share of luxury there too,” he said. “There would be people with Range Rovers.”

Sharing an interest in wrestling was the common thread among the campers, despite language and cultural barriers. But spending time with athletes from across the globe made it evident they were not so different from one another.

Trucksess noticed all wrestlers shared the same concerns about maintaining their weight class, which became clear during meal times.

“It was really fun to sit down and eat with them,” he said. “Some of them who have to cut weight, when they eat they just love it. You share that mutual feeling with them.”

The international travel provided Trucksess with many memories.

“To actually go to a different country and experience it how it really is, it was pretty cool to see that,” he said. □