



**WRESTLING UPDATE**

**UPCOMING NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS 2019**

**Winter Youth Nationals Highlights 2019**



**All-American Spring Youth Nationals**  
 MARCH 22ND - 23RD  
 KINGSPORT, TN

**Black Hills Folkstyle World Championship**  
 MARCH 29TH- 30TH  
 SPEARFISH, SD

**Lee Pamulak Middle School Duals**  
 MARCH 29TH - 30TH  
 DES MOINES, IA

**Freshman/Sophomore National Duals**  
 MARCH 29TH - 30TH  
 DES MOINES, IA

**Elementary School Duals**  
 APRIL 12 - 14  
 KINGSPORT, TN

**AAU Scholastic Duals**  
 ESPN WIDE WORLD OF SPORTS  
 ORLANDO, FL  
 JUNE 18 - 24, 2019

The first leg of AAU Wrestling’s national event season kicked off at the Ralston Arena in Nebraska, Omaha with the **2019 AAU Winter Youth Nationals**. If you were looking for a whirlwind weekend filled with high level youth wrestling talent you would not have been disappointed by the caliber of wrestling at this tournament. Teams from all over the Midwest took to the mats in the Ralston Arena on January 5-6, 2019. All-in-all there were 955 wrestlers from 13 states. Each year the level of competition rises at this tournament.

Highlighting the event were two wrestlers out to set Winter Nationals history by becoming 8-time Winter Nationals Champions. **DJ Bonam and Kyler Lauridsen** have achieved this honor, both are members of the Nebraska Boyz Team. The battles for the championship in these weight classes were nothing less than spectacular. Kyler Lauridsen’s match against Nolan Fellers of Iowa went into overtime with Kyler coming out on top for the 8-time win. Kyler has 2 more years to wrestle in this tournament. We will be watching him again. DJ Bonam’s match against Luke Kennan of Wayzayla ended with a pin in the 2<sup>nd</sup> period. DJ is moving on to high school next year, so his time to participate in Winter Youth Nationals is over. Also achieving a milestone at the tournament were Navarro Schunke with the Legends of Gold Team with his 7<sup>th</sup> National Championship and Ignacio Villasenor from Colorado with his 5<sup>th</sup> National Championship. Congratulations on a great tournament to these wrestlers. We can’t wait to see your future accomplishments.

Team Champions in Omaha for 2019 are - Class C (8-12 wrestlers) winner was Ready RP Nationals. Class B (13-17 wrestlers) winner was Team Grind. Class A (18+ wrestlers) winner was Sebolt Wrestling Academy.

New this year was a slight change in the first-place awards. This year the tournament organizers freshened things up a bit with the Challenge for the Chain. Wrestlers across the board seemed excited for this change. Champions were proudly wearing the chain at the end of the tournament. The changes to weigh-in time and addition to two mats proved to be a great success. “The flow of the tournament went extremely well, we are happy about that” stated Dan Vacha tournament director.

If you are looking for a tournament to test the skills of your youth wrestler, AAU Winter Youth Nationals is a tournament to attend.

## **Dan and Kris Vacha**

### **AAU Person(s) of the Year**



The National Wrestling Committee has chosen Dan and Kris Vacha AAU Person(s) of the Year. The couple received this award at Winter Youth Nationals in Omaha in January. When asked how they feel about the award they commented, "It's quite an honor". "We truly appreciate receiving this award in front of our hometown crowd and friends". They both say the reason they run the Winter Youth Nationals, is the wrestlers. Kris states "It's all about the kids". Congratulations to you both! AAU wrestling truly appreciates your efforts.

## **Newly Elected WRESTLING CHAIRMAN – WES CREASON**



Wes Creason is the newly elected chairman of AAU Wrestling. Wes has been coaching in Iowa for 40 years and has been involved in the AAU organization for 31 years. He has coached numerous AAU teams in Iowa, the United States, and in Russia. This summer in June he will be taking a team to Kosovo. Wes was the vice-chair in Iowa while helping host the AAU World Championships and Middle School Championships. He currently helps run the AAU Middle School National Duals and the AAU Freshman/Sophomore National Duals.

Wes states "I enjoy everything about wrestling there is. I have grown to understand the friendships developed, and the benefits gained from competing in the sport of wrestling are endless".

Wes succeeds long-time chairman Bob Johnson of South Dakota who passed away in October of 2018.

# 2018 AAU National Wrestling Awards

AAU Wrestling Person(s) of the Year  
**Dan & Kris Vacha – Nebraska**

Outstanding Wrestler Official -International  
**Jake Love - Montana**

Outstanding Folkstyle Official  
**Tony Guerrero - California**

Outstanding Pair Official  
**Darlene Grainger – Virginia**

Superior Performance  
**Don Barnett – Tennessee**

AAU Wrestling Special Service Award  
**John & Melissa Kramer -Tennessee**

Friends of AAU  
**Troy & Janelle Jensen - Montana**

Coach of the Year  
**Todd Miller – Middle Atlantic**



## **Shane Gorder Elected as Vice-Chairman of AAU Wrestling Committee**

Shane Gorder of Montana is the newly elected Vice-Chairman of AAU Wrestling. This is a new board position on the wrestling committee. Shane has coached wrestling for 30 years as a middle school and AAU coach in Sidney, Montana. He is also the chairman of the Montana AAU Wrestling committee. Shane has coached numerous AAU teams. He coached a Montana Team in Germany in 2016 and is currently part of hosting a German exchange team in Montana this summer. Shane has 6 children and is the owner of Gorder Trenching and Gorder Ranch. He also serves as Richland County Commissioner. "I am excited to serve on the National Committee as Vice-Chair. I look forward to working with the committee and am honored serve with the national board" - Shane Gorder

AAU WRESTLING EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS: Chairman: Wes Creason – Iowa; Vice Chairman: Shane Gorder: - Montana; Secretary: Larry Lujan – New Mexico; Treasurer: Cindy Trombly – Michigan; Pairing Chair: Karen Wilson – Michigan; Folkstyle Official Chair: Dave Bennetts – Montana; International Official Chair: Blake Love- Montana; Hall of Fame Chair: Darrel Lauderdale- Southeast; Media Chair: Lisa Gorder – Montana; Information Technology Chair: John Salter – Tennessee; Members at Large: Don Elsea – Southeast; Terry Williams – Montana; Don Barnett – Southeast; Ron Peterson – Iowa; Chris Saylor – South Dakota; Jason Lloyd – Iowa; John Kramer – Southeast; John Latham – South Dakota

# MEET AN EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER – Lisa Gorder, Media Chair

## The Power of the Sport of Wrestling

This article was written by Lisa Gorder, National AAU Wrestling Media Chair – It is published in WIN magazine February 2019

It's wrestling season! Can you feel it in the air? This time of year, in our home, it brings excitement and work. As the wife of a wrestling coach for - wow - 30 years! I've learned to adapt, and it's also become my passion too. This sport of wrestling has the power to change lives. It has changed mine and my family's right down to the core.

I met my husband in high school. He was a wrestler and I was a cheerleader at the time. I hadn't paid a lot of extra attention to wrestling until I went to watch him wrestle. His mother was there. Let me tell you, that was eye opening! Wrestling mothers, they are unique, and they are passionate! As I watched my new boyfriend wrestle, this lady was whistling, yelling, and jumping up and down. I was rather surprised, well shocked, when she fell down the stairs in her exuberance for cheering for her son (my future husband)! You know what? Today, I know exactly why she was so adrenaline driven. Nothing, yes nothing, is like seeing your son or daughter competing on a wrestling mat. This sport is so addictive in its very nature. It's a one on one battle. There is no one out there to help your wrestler but themselves. Let's be honest, as a mother, if we could we would be out there for them, we would. So, if screaming "Get off your back" or "Get up" will help, then by all means, it's a wrestling mom's job.

That day was the beginning. What a journey it has been. Immediately after high school my husband became the assistant wrestling coach at our middle school and over the years, he has been the head coach of our AAU program, the Montana AAU State Wrestling Chairman, and now the National AAU Wrestling Vice-Chair. He has provided our family with a wrestling history and a passion. It did take a while for me to get on board. I said, "Maybe this sport isn't for our kids". It was so hard to watch so many losses, but as the work continued, the tables turned. We have learned so much from those losses and we have shaped our children into amazing young men and women with the sport of wrestling.

We have had some of our children in our local AAU wrestling program from the time they were as young as 3 years old. We have 4 boys and 2 girls. In our home we have had wrestlers, cheerleaders, wrestling managers, coaches, and referees.



Brodie and Brielle Gorder – ages 3 and 4

Over the years, our family has shared so much with the sport of wrestling, and wrestling has given us so much in return. We have had heartbreak, celebration, moments of brilliance, and moments of silence. The emotions that this sport pulls from the heart are so raw and strong. It's honestly hard to describe unless you are one of "us", the wrestlers, moms, dads, coaches, and families.

At times this sport has tested us all. In wrestling there are weight classes, and yes, a wrestler has to make his designated weight. This can be one of the most emotional and tumultuous times in a wrestling home. Over the years, as I said, "You can feel it in the air". You literally have a change of emotion when it's wrestling season. It gets serious. Making weight is crucial. It's a lesson in self-discipline. It makes me smile now that my oldest boys are now referees for the sport and I only have a six-year old wrestler now. Today it's not an issue, but it will be again.

The wins and the losses my wrestlers have endured have molded them into the hardworking men they are now. I have no doubt. Even our daughters, one who has wrestled a bit, both of them have watched the discipline of wrestling. We have all learned from this sport. It is not something I expected. I had no idea the impact any sport, especially wrestling, could have on a child. I personally grew up involved in softball, swimming, cheerleading, volleyball – honestly, none of them prepared me for being a wrestling mom. The dedication that a wrestler must have to be successful is a test in stamina.

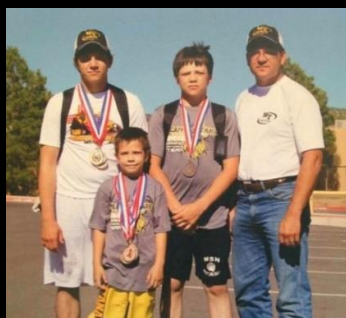


Brady Gorder, Shane Gorder, Brennan Gorder

Some wrestlers are naturally talented, but in all honesty, as I have learned through the years, most great wrestlers are built. They learn every day. They push themselves and work when no one is watching to find success. I was constantly amazed by my boys' drive to succeed in the wrestling room. A mental toughness that is built in this sport is something they carry into adulthood. When challenged in their lives today, they have a "Don't Quit" mentality. Make no mistake though, I was always as proud of them, win or lose. Looking back, those losses were stepping stones and success wouldn't have been possible without them. The character and strength that is built in an individual is something a wrestler will never forget. The greatness they achieve may not be on a wrestling mat, but in lessons they have learned. We have had many wrestlers in our home, traveling with us, all personalities and backgrounds. It always is amazing to me when a wrestler, years later, stops to say, "Thank You". It's heartwarming to know something we did, whether it was my husband coaching, driving them to a tournament, cooking a meal, or simply cheering for them. You never know how one simple thing can make a difference in a life.

Over the years, I have had other parents ask me "Why are you so supportive of wrestling"? The answer is simple - just look what this sport has given to my family. The lessons we have all learned through the years. The wrestling family we have formed. In our family, we have had to deal with more than just wins and losses. We have lost a child. Five years ago, our 8-Year old son, Brodie, was killed tragically in an ATV accident. He was an amazing wrestler. At the start of this wrestling season, Brodie would have been 14, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader in his dad's middle school program. I daily think about what might have been.

Brodie started wrestling at age 3. He quickly evolved into an aggressive and talented wrestler. His brothers motivated him. He was like a sponge. He wanted so badly to be just like them and he looked forward to wrestling for the Sidney Eagle Wrestling Team. As a 3-year old he was already wrestling in AAU National championships and in the 5 short years he wrestled, he traveled all over the country with his brothers, had attained more medals and trophies than most high school wrestlers and he even had a national championship in AAU. When our family lost Brodie, the amount of support our community and our wrestling family gave us was absolutely amazing.



Brennan, Brodie, Brady, and Shane

What I know about the loss of our child today, is that I will never ever be the same. The strength I have had to have - it is not easy. I have had to listen to my own advice to my wrestlers. I can hear myself saying in my wrestling mom voice - "Get off Your Back" - "Get up"!

It's never easy, each day I had to do this, just to move after we lost him. I lean on lessons learned through this sport everyday - and I have never wrestled.

Brodie changed our lives in the very short time he was here on this earth. He is still changing lives today. We have a non-profit organization that we have formed to give back to youth. We host wrestling tournaments, fun runs, give 4-H projects, support community events and college scholarships. Foreverwrestle.com and the Brodie Gorder Memorial Project, they are all about everything that Brodie loved.

Today as I write this, I'm motivated to share our story because of my children and the power of wrestling. Wrestling is a sport, but it is so much more. It is life building, it is life changing. The Gorder family is proof. We are so honored and proud of our unique wrestling story. We have amazing stories, funny stories, and a lifetime of memories with amazing people with wrestling. The future is exciting and bright. Our youngest wrestler is only six, lots of learning, time on the mat and cheering left to do. We will continue to encourage children with their dreams. I have to thank my husband for his involvement in wrestling and his dedication and I have to thank the sport wrestling for helping me to remember to get up when I am down.



We do have the power to change lives through the sport of wrestling.

Lisa Gorder - AAU Wrestling Media Chair

