



Overtime School making impact;

by Bryan Van Kley

World Team members went Overtime

There are only a handful of clubs in our country who are consistently producing our current World Team members. So it's obviously significant when a club which is less than five years old, emerges on the scene and puts two guys on the seven-member 2006 U.S. men's freestyle team.

Sean Bormet's Overtime School of Wrestling, located in Naperville, Ill., has things cooking and is grabbing titles in tournaments from the World Team Trials to the Cadet Nationals and everything in between. The wrestling school is located in the western suburbs of Chicago.

Bormet's three star pupils that are making headlines are: Donny Pritzlaff (163 pounds), Andy Hrovat (185) and Clint Wattenberg (185). The three are all formally affiliated with the New York Athletic Club, but have trained regularly with the two-time University



of Michigan All-American and his staff at Overtime.

All three made the finals in the Trials in late May, with Pritzlaff and Hrovat winning spots on the U.S. team. Hrovat had to defeat Wattenberg, his friend and training partner for his first World Team berth.

“It was exciting,” Bormet said about the trio’s success at the Trials. “I knew going in that these guys had certain goals.”

Pritzlaff and Hrovat have had long-standing relationships with Bormet. As an assistant at the University of Wisconsin in the late 1990s, Bormet was responsible for recruiting Pritzlaff to wrestle for the Badgers. But Bormet headed east back to his alma mater before Pritzlaff won his two NCAA titles.

And it was during Bormet’s short stint (1999-2000) in Ann Arbor that he coached Hrovat, moving to Chicago before Hrovat graduated as well.

“For me, it’s a great way for me to finish what we’ve started in the final stage of their careers,” Bormet said.

Bormet, who made the NCAA medal stand in 1993 and 1994, was put in a precarious position when last year he also started working with Wattenberg through the NYAC. After Wattenberg downed Hrovat in April at the U.S. Open, Bormet knew there was only one solution for putting the two 185-pounders on the fast track to success.

“I told them both their best chance to make the World Team was for them to work out with each other,” Bormet said. They did just that, and both ended up being good partners for the smaller Pritzlaff, who was knocking on the door for a world-level opportunity at 163.

Bormet started the Overtime School of Wrestling in March of 2001. He got the idea in the spring of 1998 while recruiting Pritzlaff in New Jersey. Bormet attended one of Pritzlaff’s workouts at Coach Ernie Monaco’s club The Edge.

“My mind moved to how much I would have loved to have that when I was a kid,” Bormet said. Having grown up on the south side of

Chicago, Bormet figured that a club format like Monaco's would work in an urban wrestling-rich area like Chicago.

While in Ann Arbor, Bormet and his wife, Teri, then a student in the Wolverine Ph.D sociology program came up with research surveys to more accurately see what the level of interest was in the Chicagoland area.

After getting good feedback, the Bormets moved to Chicago. In the fall of 2000, Sean hit the pavement, attending numerous high school and youth tournaments to make contacts with wrestlers, coaches and parents.

Overtime opened its doors in March, 2001, in a 3,000-foot facility in Tinley Park on the south side. As the club grew, a lot of things have changed. They have now moved into a new 12,500-foot building in upscale Naperville, a west-side suburb. The club has grown to about 120 wrestlers. The building features nearly three full-size wrestling mats, a strength and cardio training area and a lounge for parents.

Many of the training sessions are set up for individual instruction, but group sessions are also offered. Wrestlers pay anywhere between \$900-\$2,150 a year, depending on the type of training program. Bormet has four former collegians on staff: Kerry Boumans, John Kading, Mike Castillo and Ben Heizer to work with the club wrestlers. Boumans is full time, the other three are part time. Overtime also employs a full-time strength and conditioning coach, Jason Patrick, and an athletic development coach in Pete Arroyo.

After being over in Europe over ten times on various tours, Bormet had a chance to look at clubs there and here in the U.S. Taking features he liked from different situations, he created a unique atmosphere at Overtime. There is careful screening when a wrestler applies to make sure they are serious about their training, being willing to train year round.

Most of the wrestlers come to three sessions a week, with the training scaled back to once a week during the high school season. Overtime put 13 wrestlers on the awards stand in Fargo.

Overtime also has a strict "closed-gym" policy on their workouts, meaning parents are not allowed to watch practice.

"It creates a more focused environment for the athletes. It's more comfortable for them to make mistakes and be uninhibited on the mat," Bormet said.

To me, that seems like one of the smartest things you could do when running a club. Just imagine how those car rides home from a

workout would go when a dad just paid good money to have little Johnny receive instruction, only to feel that his son didn't give 100 percent. That athlete may not be so excited to go the following week.

The club is also unique in offering instruction for all age groups. Similar to to the way Russian or European clubs are run, wrestlers could literally have one coach throughout their entire career.

Bormet said having continuity from the coach's corner was a goal at Overtime.

"It takes several great coaches in an athlete's career. But it was one of our goals to have a home base," Bormet said.

The former Wolverine team captain said that being able to coach kids from the elementary level all the way through high school or beyond allows a coach to really get to know the athlete, learn how that athlete handles situations emotionally, know their technique and the know the legacy and history of that particular wrestler's goals and career.

I asked Bormet if it was possible to replicate this format in other areas of the country. He said it takes someone who is patient enough to make good long-term decisions, similar to starting up any other small business and "a great wife who understand the sport and understands the time and effort required," Bormet added with a laugh.

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