**Vice-President Development**

**Report to the 2019 OAWA AGM**

It’s been a great year for the development of wrestling in Ontario, with athletes from many clubs getting opportunities to see competition from outside of their own areas.

Early in the summer of 2018 the Guelph Wrestling Club again hosted the Ontario Cup. This is a great event for our developing age group and Canada Games stream athletes. Thanks to Guelph for continuing to host the Ontario Cup. Prior to the Ontario Cup OAWA hosted a development ODP camp at St. John’s Kilmarnock in Breslau. This was a really nice camp and thanks to the Regional Coaches who participated, as well as Bill Hogarth for both sponsoring the camp as a legacy of the 2017 Nationals in Windsor and for jumping in and helping run camp sessions.

Later in the summer of 2018, Team Ontario participated in two American tournaments: The Grand River Rumble in Lansing, Michigan, and NUWAY Summer Nationals in Atlantic City, New Jersey. We sent 20+ athletes from 8+ different teams across Ontario to the former tournament, and 20+ athletes from 10+ teams to the latter. Athletes were represented from 6 different regions of the province, from age 6 to 18. Ontario entered a total of 8 dual teams across the two tournaments. The wrestlers got a huge number of matches between dual meets and individual tournaments at both events, which is crucial for their development and raising the overall level of wrestling in Ontario.

In October, we held a training camp in Hamilton with clinician Gene Mills. Turnout was very high, with 90 + athletes participating from age 10 to 18. This was a great experience for all kids involved to learn from a very experienced and high-level technician, and to get to train with other athletes from across the province.

In December, we held a second training camp the day after the Matmen Classic with recent World Champion Yowlys Bonne Rodríguez, and Jesus Rodrigues who had traveled from Cuba. This provided wrestlers involved with an opportunity they’d rarely get otherwise to learn high-level wrestling from a different perspective. Great opportunity for both the Ontario participants and the athletes/coaches from outside Ontario who participated.

We also took athletes to Las Vegas in May 2019 for American nationals, which again included dual meets and an individual tournament. As well as a trip was taken in April to Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Looking to the future, we’re hoping to build on the trips and begin to have a core group of kids represent Ontario in the states in preparation for the upcoming Canada Summer Games.

We’ve gotten a lot of positive feedback in the last year about an inclusive and forward-thinking Team Ontario, reaching out to all corners of the province and recognizing the value of getting as many matches in different places as possible, and focusing on the goal of having athletes who are more prepared for international competition. This is developing a stronger and more well-rounded Ontario. I hope we can continue in this direction in the future. Also looking forward to the 2019 Summer Camp, this year held in Guelph and co-hosted by the Guelph Wrestling Club.

-Jeremy LaTour

VP Development, OAWA