

# Legends of Gold helps wrestlers believe in Pack's purpose

By Bill X. Barron

Increasingly so in today's world, a person is not always held accountable for his or her actions. To counteract this societal shift, Terry Pack has a direct answer: "Wrestle. There you cannot run away from your shortcomings. You cannot blame others but only accept responsibility for the actions you alone take."

In 2010, Coach Pack founded Legends of Gold in Beresford, S.D. Their credo is: "Wrestling prepares a person to fight the game of life. The wrestler is the one athlete that must meet their opponent and do battle completely on their own."

Legends of Gold derives its name from a painting of six Olympic gold medalists that he once sold in order to support college wrestling programs. Now hanging in the National Hall of Fame, it features portraits of Dan Gable, Dave Schultz, Tom Brands, Kenny Monday, John Smith, and Bruce Baumgartner.

One of 13 Olympic Regional Training Centers in the country, Legends of Gold's Sport & Recreation Center has 13,000 feet of dorm space in addition to 15,000 for practice and events. This unique facility allows Legends of Gold to host national team camps as well as elite-level competitions. For the club's young wrestlers who train there, it's a constantly replenished source of gold-level inspiration.

Terry's coaching career began in Neosho, Kan. — first at the high school, then Neosho Community College, where he trained Randi Miller, the first black female to win an Olympic medal, bronze at 63 kg in 2008.

Named NJCAA National Coach of the Year, his NCC men's team won the very first national junior college championship in 2000.

"Though I have been out of the college scene for 20 years now, former wrestlers bring their kids to the camp or help out as clinicians," Pack said. "What's most important to me is connection; these wrestlers make a personal effort to return. These intangibles of coaching are more meaningful to me than any championship."

In 2020-21, Legends of Gold won the overall team championship in three Midwestern Rocky Mountain National tournaments: Cosmic Clash, Monster Match, and The Wild West.

But the real reason Terry's club patronizes RMN Events began when his son was five, where he developed an ongoing personal connection to its CEO, Ed Gutierrez.

"Ed is one of the original sportsmen, one who does

ipation, Terry is "proud to live in a state where there is the opportunity for free choice. I do it because I love wrestling.

"As a sport, we fought for and are now blessed with a second chance to keep it in the Olympics after almost losing it. We have to keep our passion for the sport alive.

"That's why what RMN does is most relevant today. People keep coming back to events that are done right. RMN recognizes that call to excellence. Parents want to know that tournaments care about their families. And you know that if you come to Ed with a question, he listens, and he will treat you fairly."

Pack was also happy with how RMN dealt with the pandemic over the past year.

"After tracing contact information for over 20,000 visitors to our facility, there have been just two confirmed cases," he said. "The fact is that the safety net that we and tournaments like RMN employ is working. The pandemic is no reason to quit living your life."

Borrowing lessons learned in the Marines, Coach Pack believes that "kids get more out of structure and discipline. Parents and kids appreciate a solidarity of purpose. Every day before practice, we stress that you need to understand what you are drilling today. In the end, only you control what you get out of practice.

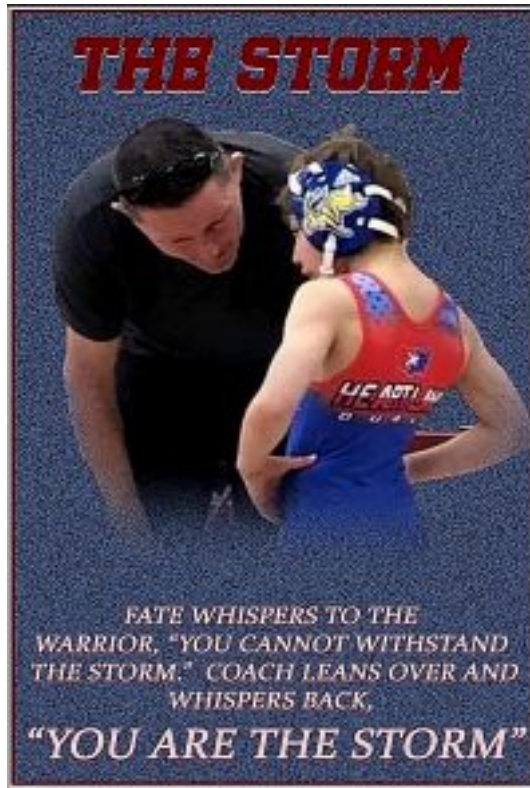
"There are too many options nowadays. Today's youth struggle just to have a conversation because they rely upon social media. They have not learned the importance of shaking hands and looking people in the eyes. They've forgotten or never learned how to fight through difficult situations.

"For the kids of today, discipline holds them accountable and creates good citizens. In the long run, if kids are prepared for the road ahead, they will experience success and develop meaningful relationships.

"Wrestling is one of the few sports where you can get ousted quickly. It teaches kids to fight through things that are hard, to take responsibility for their own actions, and to learn self-accountability."

Throughout a life in which Terry has never ceased to yearn for excellence, he has learned: "Wrestling and life are all about risk and reward. The greater the risk, the higher the reward. Each day you must take new risks in the practice room, in the weight room, and on the mat.

"The more you put yourself in uncomfortable positions, the more you will get out. There is no reward without risk taken. Ultimately, risk will be your reward." ■



(Legends of Gold photo)

This is one of the motivational posters and messages that Terry Pack (left) has created in working with young wrestlers at Legends of Gold.

what he does for the right reasons," Pack said. "He and his sons have the best interests of every kid at heart. Their unparalleled awards incentivize hard work. They hire the best officials. Honestly, I would follow Ed and RMN to the end of the road."

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