

Wyoming freshman inspires others to face fears

Publisher's Note: One of the best ways we can showcase the sport of wrestling in WIN Magazine is to tell the personal stories of wrestlers and coaches. And how the sport has impacted them and driven them to reach their destiny in life. Below is the story of a Wyoming freshman wrestler named Seamus Casey you won't soon forget.

By Bill X. Barron, RMN Events

What would it take for you to confront your greatest fear? Do you possess the fortitude to not only face that challenge — and then to turn it into one of your strongest



Photo by Will Buckman

Seamus Casey has inspired others with his “Dream of 13” Triathlon.

assets? When just ten years old, Seamus Casey of Gillette, Wyoming, began climbing at a local recreation center. “I took it on because I was terrified of heights,” admits Seamus. Just the same, he progressed rapidly; by age 11 he had ascended Devil’s Tower on rope belays and just a year later he conquered the Grand Teton.

This personal shift in perspective parallels Seamus’ wrestling journey from a not-so natural athlete to a Wyoming 2019 state runner-up at 106 pounds, this year’s only 4A freshman state finalist.

Seamus relates: “I was not very good at first. For me, the sport required grit and determination more than athletic ability. Wrestling, like climbing, presented me with adversity and struggle. I have always had to work hard to earn success. With no one to blame but myself, wrestling shaped me into the person I am.”

Seamus set the Campbell County Rec Center’s climbing tower record for consecutive trips without coming off the wall. Yet, increasing that bouldering record to 57 was not enough. With a larger objective in mind, at age 13, Seamus created the “Dream of 13” Triathlon.

“The training was tough, but in order to break my bouldering record (78 times to equal a mile), ride 65 miles and climb Devil’s Tower on three consecutive days, I had to get ready. I decided the best preparation would be intensive wrestling camps, which I did every other week all summer long; when not wrestling, at night I bouldered 20 laps on the climbing wall and by day cycled 20 miles,” he said.

Seamus continues: “With the Folds of Honor Foundation, I found a way to combine my love for climbing to thank those brave men and women who make the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. The Foundation provides scholarships to children and spouses of fallen or disabled service members. My event would raise funds for thirteen scholarships (\$65,000) for military families who have sacrificed so much for my freedom. I chose the number “13” because there are thirteen folds in the flag that is handed to the families of deceased soldiers, and I was also turning thirteen that year.”

The Folds of Honor website says “Our motto says it best. Honor Their Sacrifice. Educate Their Legacy.”

On May 16, 2019, Seamus hopes to raise another \$5,000 by climbing 867 feet to the summit of Devil’s Tower twice in one day (13 pitches). Just as Seamus does through his efforts to acknowledge our debt to veterans, RMN Events opening ceremonies always recognizes the unselfish contributions of our service men and women.

For Seamus, “The RMN atmosphere is like no other: the hype, the energy, the fun, the light show, the music. The annual Wild West Championships, in my home-town of Gillette, has improved the level of competition in our youth program, while bringing in competitors from many different states. It has introduced many young wrestlers to a ‘big-time’ wrestling environment that most would not otherwise experience.”

“My grandfather served in the military and my dream has always been to serve my country,” says the young Wyoming grappler. “I have the greatest respect for those who have risked it all to give us the life we share.” In preparation toward this end, Seamus has attended wrestling camps at the Naval and Air Force Academies, where he earned respectively the Camp Spirit Award and the Gatorade Outstanding Teammate Award.

One of 51 middle-school students selected as state representatives for the Prudential Spirit of Community Award, this earned him a paid visit to Washington, D.C. For Seamus, the trip’s “highlight was laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.”

This experience spawned an on-going speaking tour which included the Folds of Honor National Gala & Patriot Cup Golf Tournament in Owasso, Okla., as well as a keynote speech for the “Ripple Effect” Leadership Conference sponsored by the Colorado High School Activities Association at Colorado State University. Recently, he addressed 650 students at Moffat County High School in Craig, Colo., to help them “find their own passion and use it to solve problems in their community.”

“The greatest gift my father has given me was getting me into wrestling when I was in first grade,” Seamus said. “It built my character, taught me how to face adversity

The Inside Trip

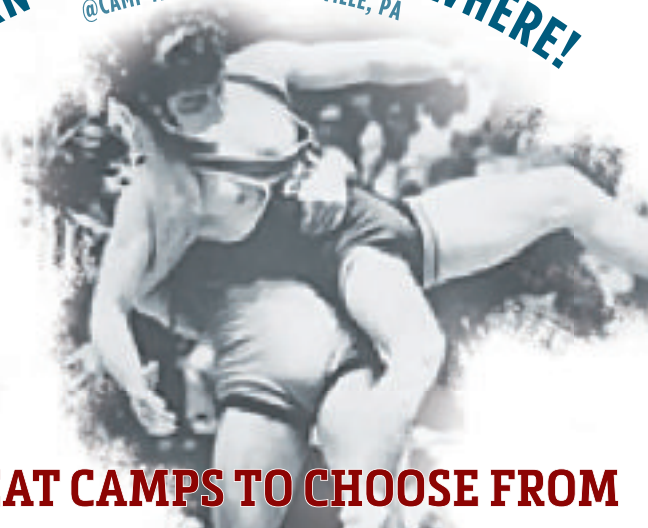


WIN Publisher
Bryan Van Kley

MEAN GENE MILLS PIN 2 WIN WRESTLING CAMPS

LEARN TO PIN FROM EVERYWHERE!
@CAMP MAPLE LAKE, FORKSVILLE, PA

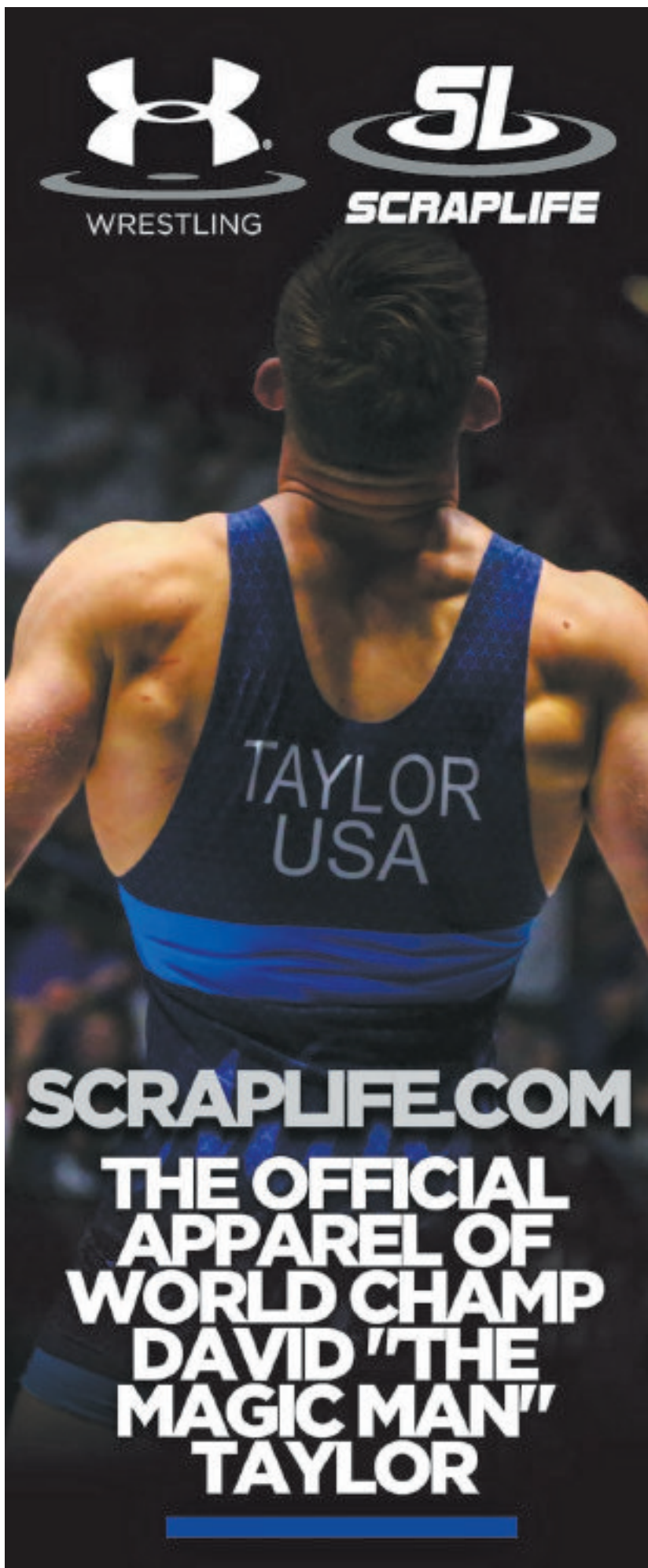
- 2019
- JULY 7-11
- JULY 11-14
- JULY 14-18
- JULY 7-14
- JULY 11-18
- JULY 7-18




6 GREAT CAMPS TO CHOOSE FROM

WWW.GENEMILLS.COM

See page 50: INSPIRATIONAL FRESHMAN





 WRESTLING **SCRAPLIFE**

SCRAPLIFE.COM

**THE OFFICIAL
APPAREL OF
WORLD CHAMP
DAVID "THE
MAGIC MAN"
TAYLOR**



(Photos by Will Buckman and Paul Casey)

With a passion for rock climbing, Casey was also a runner-up in state.

with courage and how to face defeat with dignity.”

Pursuing his own dreams, Seamus plans to become a high school state champion, to be a High School Nationals All-American, and to compete for either the Navy or the Air Force. He also “wants young wrestlers to have the same experience I had with a father who encourages me and holds me accountable, but who is also a good friend. Instead of living his own dream of glory through me, he just helped me achieve my own goals. If I have a problem, I can always come to him as a teacher, coach, and dad.”

Paul responds: “Seamus is simply one of the hardest working people I have ever met. He’s humble, possesses a big heart, and as tough as he is, he is extremely loving. His character shows through – he wants to do what’s right. He’s comfortable in his own skin. A kid everyone likes, Seamus makes friends with kids from all backgrounds.”

“Wrestling has given me the confidence I show in public service and throughout the rest of my life. I now have the drive to be the best in whatever I do,” Seamus said.

Wrestling, as life, has taught Seamus to “trust in the process. Drill everything, work as hard as possible, and to keep working hard despite the outcome. A loss or setback teaches you to work that much harder. As I reach for higher levels, each step is humbling, teaching me to

grow. Some people think that what I have done is amazing, but I am really just an ordinary kid who found a way to use my passion for climbing to help somebody else. It’s that simple.”

“On the final leg of my ‘Dream of 13’ triathlon,” Seamus concludes, “when I summited Devil’s Tower, I was able to reflect on the difficulties and triumphs of the previous days. I thought about the impact this journey has had on my life, in comparison to the lives I hoped to help improve.

“I came to the conclusion that the debt we all owe to our fallen and disabled soldiers will never be paid, but that I will personally continue to try to make the lives of their families easier, in any way possible, and I will not stop until all thirteen scholarships are filled.”

Louis L’Amour developed many of his Westerns in places like Wyoming, where the land and the fend-for-oneself lifestyle revealed the “manner of man” within each life-hardened individual. Just like his predecessors, Seamus has discovered at an early age he has within himself a person of character. His own Western legend in the making, he has remained reachable, teachable, and likeable. For Seamus, the goal is to embrace the climb more than to celebrate the summit.

To learn more about Seamus’ “Dream of 13” project and to contribute to families of veterans, visit: www.seamuscasey.org. ■

BEING A DAD, From page 11

Now, when I am gone, I am super worried because EllaJo doesn’t quite understand why her dad isn’t coming back at night to help put her to bed. And she can’t just take care of herself. She is completely dependent on Megan and me.

I can start to sympathize with all the old-timers from my younger years because now the young guys come to camp and see me giggling with the phone in my face as I watch EllaJo do something for

the first time; wishing I could be there.

It takes a toll on us, but the passion and drive to be great now will set an example for EllaJo to follow when she is older because she will watch me chase my dreams.

(Dake is a 2018 World freestyle gold medalist and four-time NCAA champion for Cornell. Follow him on Twitter @ KyleDake444.) ■