

Taylor Lamont (left) captured his fourth Utah state high school championship for **Maple Mountain High School last** winter. Taylor and his brother Grant, with three state titles, were trained by their father Craig and now share that knowledge with kids at a local wrestling club.

Taylor Lamont eager to share a love for the sport taught by dad

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Taylor Lamont

By Bill X. Barron, Associated Wrestling Press

hat circumstances allow one to succeed both on the mat and in life? For Utah's Taylor Lamont — who proclaims, "wrestling has played a huge role in my life, how I think, how I live," — his journey begins and ends with the extended wrestling family who has pushed, supported, challenged and invited him to succeed beyond where any of them have

Family and religion are foremost in Utah; anyone who wrestles is family and everyone takes their wrestling seriously. For Taylor, a four-time Utah state high school champion, and brother Grant, a three-timer, for Maple

Mountain

and now teammates again at Utah Valley University, family begins with their father Craig, now USA Wrestling's Vice Chair for Kids & Cadets.

(Mapleton),

"(His) special quality is knowing how to push me while letting me make my own decisions," Taylor said. "He allows passion to take over.

"Dad allowed passion to take its own course. He would push me to work harder but never forced me to do anything. The true difference between good and great wrestlers is that the great ones still love the sport. Those who have too much success or pressure to perform early in their career burn out; they never learn to LOVE the sport."

Now Taylor transfers these lessons of the heart while leading prep lessons with the up-and-coming wrestlers at his father's Champions Club. Taylor and Grant's generation under Coach Justin Judkins — another father figure in Taylor's life — made Maple Mountain High into the best program in the state, under which Jason Chamberlain

became an NCAA finalist.

The Lamonts now are determined that the success does not stop with them. In Taylor's perspective, good technique is that which can be replicated.

"Kids need to focus on learning their own series, mastering 2-3 moves from each position, so eventually they can take down anyone

in the country with their go-to move," Taylor said.

Taylor wants his young proteges to "learn to love the sport as I do. I check in on kids to let them know I care, to make sure they want to come to practice. Overall, kids learn better when they follow their heads and their hearts."

Growing up, Taylor loved going to Rocky Mountain National tournaments. He believes that "they are a ton of fun, with tough competition. It was fun to travel all



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over, win big trophies, parade with the other champions. Having fun is what makes kids fall in love with the sport."

When he is not leading youth practices four times a week, Taylor is training to be the best of the best. While he still confesses that he loves folkstyle, and continues to pursue that style in college with four future years of eligibility, his UVU coach Greg Williams has attracted a Regional Training Center, where Taylor and others can train year-round.

Recognizing that Taylor's Olympic aspirations are beyond where his college wrestling can take him, Coach Williams also supports Taylor and other teammates training in the Olympic styles through the RTC. What does he still have to learn in order to get to the next level?

"I have to take more risks," Taylor asserts. "I am hard to score upon and take down, so when I wrestle guys with the same style, it's hard for me to score."

Having just completed his fifth consecutive year on the U.S. Greco World Team, three as a Cadet before earning a Junior bronze medal in 2016 and finishing fifth this year, Taylor is totally focused on making the 2020 Olympic Team. In fact, he is prepared to sit out a year of college competition

And 2020 is not the pinnacle of his dream as Taylor intends to compete all the way through the 2028 Games in Los Angeles. While Taylor realizes that the U.S. still



In addition to wrestling at Utah Valley, Lamont Taylor (left) also hopes to qualify for the 2020 Olympics after competing in three Cadet and two Junior World Championships in Greco-Roman.

has to catch up with the world in Greco, he is encouraged by the 2017 Junior Freestyle Team's first World Championship since 1999 with two finalists, as well as by the Junior Greco Team's fourth-place finish.

"USA Coach Matt Lindland has the Greco program on the rise and people are going to take notice!" Taylor said.

For Taylor wrestling and family are never far from home.

"(Grant and I) have a special rela-

tionship; we're not only brothers but best friends," Taylor said. "We wanted to be on the same college team. We build upon each other's success, never get jealous of one another, and we actually listen to what the other has to say."

Taylor and Grant were most recently juxtaposed on adjoining mats at the University Nationals, where both finished second to experienced NCAA two-time qualifiers. Of course, both had the same father-coach, who "wants me to be great but knows it has to ultimately come from me," Taylor said.

Craig is always in their corner, yet he encourages the brothers to develop their own unique styles; thus Grant is more the brawler, while Taylor is more the technician

In Taylor's life, his good fortune has continued with his recent marriage to his high school sweetheart, Bailey.

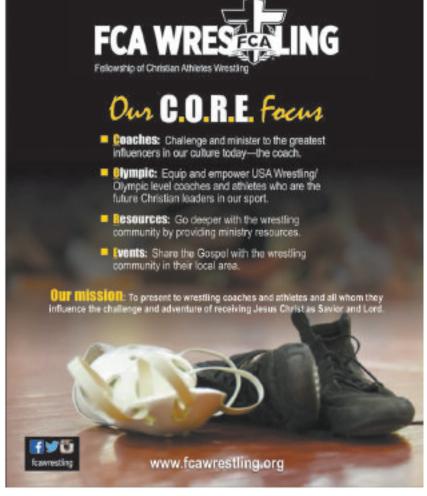
"The greatest blessing in my life right now is Bailey — we have known each other all our lives," Taylor said. "She knows how to push me and she makes me the right food; she takes care of me just like my mother did for many years. For some, marriage pulls them away from the sport; in my case, Bailey wants me to be an Olympic champion, sometimes I think more than I do!"

Taylor believes wrestling has played a huge role in his life.

"It's the best way to teach people to work hard, not just in wrestling but also in academics and in one's career," Taylor said. "The sport has taught me discipline — cutting weight, getting up early to work out — but it's also about friendship and teamwork.

"Yes, wrestling is an individual sport, just you and an opponent, but there's something to be said for practicing together and making lifelong friends. Youth coaching has further changed my life, as I am now motivated to help kids learn the same lessons I did from the sport of wrestling."





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