

BEAT THE STREETS TORONTO

FALL 2016 NEWSLETTER



IMPACTING YOUTH
THRU WRESTLING

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Spring and summer ushered in some amazing things for BTST. While we worked towards building a more consistent program, we were blessed with great opportunities to grow our programs and reach even more students. This newsletter is a recap of all the wonderful things that happened at BTST and a look at all the awesome achievements of our student athletes!

You will learn about new developments in our Mentorship Program, the phenomenal growth of our Educational program and the transition of our Regional Program (now called Club Program). You will also hear from athletes as they share their experiences from tournaments they competed in over the last five months.

We've grown a lot this year and we are grateful to everyone who has donated time, energy as well as funds, to be able to continue the work we do. As the summer winds down to a close, I can personally say that we evolved to a new level where we can offer better programming and deliver improved content to help more individuals develop into healthy, positive and contributing members of our communities.

It is also my pleasure to announce that we have a new website: www.btstoronto.com. We are grateful to our admin crew who donated a lot of their time to help us look professional and present a clear message. I can't thank you enough for everything you've done. Please visit our site and get familiar with it and check out our latest [video](#). There will be a lot more to come as we continue to evolve.

Our coaches have done and continue to be amazing! **Gen Morrison** has been a wonderful addition, **Kriz Zehkov** has been an amazing contributor and to **Jeremy LaTour** and all our instructors – thank you for your wonderful work in our Educational Program. **Bernard Sanchez** has done amazing work with the **West Humber Team** and helped with our development of our Club Program. Special thanks to **Leonid Kilimnik**, a very supportive member of the team who did a great job helping us with our facilities.

And a big thanks to **all the parents** who put in the effort and traveled long distances with their kids to participate in the development of the BTST program. We are all part of building something substantial for the community of Toronto and for the sport of amateur wrestling.

Thank you!
Neal Ewers
Executive Director



Rio2016



CONGRATULATIONS!

To all the athletes, especially the Canadian wrestlers, who participated in the Rio 2016 Olympics!

At BTST we understand the hard work, dedication and preparation it takes to succeed at that level and compete at that level.

Hats off to all of the work you do and all the time you put in. We hope that the next generation grows and builds on what you've already accomplished.

REGIONAL (NOW CLUB) PROGRAM

This summer, we've kept up with our regional practices across the city at various locations and we've seen the bonding and community that is formed through a shared passion and shared experiences. We've witnessed athletes grow more confident and hungry for new challenges—showing initiative in their development by seeking advice on new ways to improve and asking questions about off-mat training and nutrition. Thank you to the schools and people who supported us with training facilities and permits:

SHAWN KING & STAFF @ SILVERTHORNE COLLEGIATE
VICE PRINCIPAL ALBERT CHO @ CENTRAL TECH SCHOOL
COACH LEONID KILIMNIK @ NEWTONBROOK CI
KAPOW!



GOTHAM CITY GIRLS TOURNAMENT 2016

In May we saw a group of six female athletes travel down to the Big Apple for the Gotham City Girls tournament hosted by Beat the Streets New York and run by Jackie Davis, their Women's head coach. Teams from all over the US as well as Mexico and Italy took part in the tournament.

It was a fun time for all the athletes and coaches, showcasing some stellar performances with multiple athletes taking home some hardware. The focus for the four day weekend was about developing self-awareness as a competitor, self-confidence in one's abilities and being present in each moment of the competition. In between all the wrestling talk, it was a fun, lighthearted and exciting way for the athletes to bond with each

other and the coaches, catch a Yankees' game and take in the excitement of Time Square for the first time.

Thank you to **OAWA**, for working with us to bring a solid team to the tournament. We are very happy that many young ladies from Ontario showed a strong presence at the tournament.

A very special thank you to **Taylor Prokosch**, our team manager, and **Ryan Morrison**, trainer for the Toronto Maple Leafs, who donated his services and came along as our Team Ontario Trainer. It was a great experience to see him work with our athletes.



GOTHAM CITY GIRLS: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“My favourite experience was working with other wrestlers (the 2 girls from Italy Enrica and Eleni) I learned a lot from the way they wrestled. Something I also learned was a new ground move that Gen taught at the camp, although I am still working on it I feel like it will be very good to use in a match!”

SHANTAY SLATER



“My favorite part of the Gotham tournament was when I did a throw that I had never learned and never done because I never felt comfortable throwing and I just did it and didn’t think. It showed me that I need to be fearless when I wrestle and take risks. The whole experience helped me find who I am as a wrestler.”

JAYDEN SPARKS



“My favourite experience at the Gotham city tournament was getting to wrestle the Italian girl (Eleni) for my final match it was nice seeing how different she wrestle compared to all the other wrestlers I wrestle at that tournament. I learned a couple different moves while I was there at the practice including the ground move that coach Gen taught. That was personally the only move I could see myself doing during a match.”

DEJAH SLATER

OHIO STATE FAIR 2016

The end of the summer brought another opportunity for both boys and girls to travel down to Ohio to compete. For some, it was their first time traveling outside the GTA. It was a learning experience for everyone involved as they took on new opponents and courageously tried their hand at folkstyle and greco wrestling for the first time ever.

BTST extends a thank you to **Bernard Sanchez** for joining us and assisting with coaching and to **Kalon Sparks** for donating his time to be our team manager. And a special thank you to all the parents who helped make this possible. We are so proud of the community that is shaping around the Beat The Streets program and the dedication we've seen from the

wrestlers throughout the summer. We look forward to watching their hard work pay dividends as they take on the fall and winter season as leaders on their school wrestling teams.



“For the Ohio State Fair my favourite thing was getting to wrestle boys. And the team was really supportive no matter what the outcome of the match was. The wrestlers on the team really helped me to have a fun time and not put so much emphasis and pressure on winning or being the best. That being said it wasn't unfocused and “whatever”. It was work hard and do your best, have fun and if you win awesome if you lose you learned. It was one of the most positive tournaments this year for me.”

JAYDEN SPARKS

“Ohio was my first tournament outside of Ontario and I had a lot of fun getting to know my teammates. Although my matches didn't go how I would have liked for them to have, there is often a lot more to learn in losing than winning. Losing showed me how much I wanted to win and how hard I need to work to achieve my personal goals. All that has honestly made me very excited for this coming school year.”

SIMI JAYEOBA

COMING UP

This fall BTST will undergo some changes as we are adapting to more effectively achieve our mission and vision, which is to focus our efforts in underserved communities and help young people get opportunities and access to training where normally they would not have access.

Our aim is to build a strong wrestling community in the GTA. We also aim to build

strong individuals through our programs, help them develop great character and empower them with the tools they need to be successful both on and off the mat.

We are grateful for everyone who has helped us along the way. Thank you to all those who have donated their time, efforts and funds to help us positively impact the lives of youth.



REFLECTIONS ON MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Since the launch of our mentorship program in early spring, we have witnessed the flourishing of the athletes involved both on and off the mat in their dedication, focus and sense of belonging at BTST. Fifteen athletes participated in the launch of our program and each one has expressed a desire to continue with the program.

In post-season evaluations, all the athletes noted that their mentor has encouraged and made them feel proud of their efforts, more courageous to take on new challenges and helped them gain new ways of tackling their problems. Beyond the mentor-athlete relationship, we've seen friendships deepen between the athletes as they support each other towards their goals and shared experiences.



GRIT CHALLENGE

In June, BTST hosted their first ever GRIT Challenge, a full day event where athletes pushed their physical and mental capacities to the limits. The challenge consisted of team events that demanded individual efforts from each member, putting to practice the G.R.I.T. themes of Guts, Resilience, Initiative and Tenacity.

In all 23 athletes who participated, we saw a new passion for pushing the limits of one's potential unfold. The athletes rose to the challenge, tackled each event with maximal effort and uncovered a level of toughness and determination that was rewarding to each of them and inspiring for the mentors and coaching staff to witness.





EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

In May and June, we visited four schools in two neighbourhoods. We were warned that these schools would be challenging but with an amazing team, off we went.

The first school, **Eliah Middle School** in Jane and Finch, was amazing. We met a boy whose life was harder than we could imagine, but what a positive outlook. He worked hard and encouraged others to work just as hard. With his help and leadership, classes ran smoothly, in spite of it being twice the size we were normally use to.

The second school was **Oakdale Middle School**, also in Jane and Finch. A little bit tougher than the last, and it would try us a little more. We started with the lowest participation rate we had seen all year, 50%. Rather than be frustrated, we decided to run the best class possible. Those participating loved it, and we knew they would encourage others to participate. Sure enough, the next day there was an increase in participation, and every day after that. By the end of the week, we believed we have found the most athletic school yet and some of the most promising young wrestlers.

The final school in the Jane and Finch area we went to was **Brookview Middle School**. It was by far the toughest school in the toughest area we would visit. Only a quarter of the kids participated in our first class, and those who did participate were unfocused. The rest of the class tried to play basketball. We didn't let it get us down so we continued to push through. We let the kids kneel and wrestle on the first day to try and get the others interested, and it worked! This got over half of the kids playing basketball to join our class. As the week went on, more kids took part and we met some great students!

Our last school of the year was **North Kipling Elementary School** in Rexdale. Although we were a bit tired after our three weeks, we were soon re-energized when we walked into one of our best schools by far. Although we heard that this was a very tough neighbourhood, the children excited, our first class started with full participation and a teacher was willing to participate. Our gymnastics component was a big hit with both boys and girls. As the week went on, we met some gifted students, both as athletes and wrestlers. This was a great way to finish our year and we can't wait to come back next year and continue to make a difference.

THIS YEAR WE WILL BE FOCUSING ON MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS THAT ARE FEEDER SCHOOLS FOR HIGH SCHOOLS WITH ESTABLISHED WRESTLING PROGRAMS.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED WITH OUR EDUCATION PROGRAM PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE WWW.BTSTORONTO.COM OR CONTACT NEAL@BTSTORONTO.COM.





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