

For the past eleven years, Mr. Harlow has been a key part of the success for the wrestling team. He has taught PE (physical education) to all grade levels, human sexuality to middle schoolers and tenth graders, and world religion to ninth graders. He was introduced to St. Mary's while he was coaching wrestling at Zama High School, a DoDD school (U.S. base school). When the wrestling coach from St. Mary's stepped down, Mr. Harlow was asked to step in. Initially, he was hesitant on accepting the new position as he has built the wrestling program from Zama from the ground up. In the end, after talking it out with his wife, they decided St. Mary's would be a good place to move to. As a representative of the diplomat, I was able to conduct an interview with him.

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Could you share any lessons you have learned over the years?

"I've realised how lazy I am. I always thought [when I was in school] that I couldn't be in music and sports at the same time. Well, my dynamics were different too because I usually had a job; a lot of students in America work, so it made it a little more difficult. I wish I'd really put more effort into worrying about my education, including sports and fine arts, than I did. It's a product of working here, seeing these kids who are highly motivated to do so many things. They [SMIS students] spend their whole day here, and still have to travel a long way to get home. It only took me fifteen minutes to get home. So that's been an eye-opening experience. As a parent, it's been valuable having my kid go to school here. I see the value of education; it tells me and gives me the realization of what I need to do as a parent to help my son and daughter excel. All the things that they need to be a part of. It taught me that I need to continue my education, and not just be stagnant, always be changing and improving yourself as a teacher, and looking up to the teachers who are always pushing themselves, and see what they do well, and figure out a way to make that a part of your routine whether it's at school or outside of school. It's also taught me to stay in shape and to exercise. Those are some things I've learned as a PE teacher. I don't like sitting down, that's why I teach it, so I can be moving around all the time."

What was your best memory/proudest moment at St. Mary's?

"There's been a lot of them, obviously the easy tangibles are winning Far East four times, just having some really good teams for wrestling. When it comes down to it, there's so much more than that. Being a teacher here, it's been great because I've been provided with everything I really need for teaching and coaching, and I've really grown to appreciate and respect the kids here for what they're able to accomplish because they're able to do so much. Those [things] are not easy to find in schools; kids that are motivated like this, the atmosphere that they have here, and accomplishing the things I do as a teacher and a coach. But, I would say the one thing that obviously sticks out, our biggest accomplishments are winning Far East, not only as a coach, but helping to provide leadership or help with Coach Yabui and helping him continue the success that we've had."

"I always look back and have all these memories of things I've done. Probably my best memories are of people I've taught with. A lot of the people, I just respect them so much, and that made it part of why I wanted to come here. You have teachers from all over the world, and getting to work directly with Mr. O'Hagen for eleven years has been great. It's driven me and motivated me

to be a better teacher. He's a really good teacher and he works really hard. And a lot of the other teachers that I've worked with, we do so much stuff outside of school, whether we go to concerts, or go hang out on weekends, or we go camping together, ski trips, and all that. Those are the memories I'm going to remember the most."

Mr. Harlow also claims that students have never really been a problem for him, and there's never been any downsides to his job, although he has faced challenges in planning his courses. Overall, he says, "I've always gotten what I wanted." Meaning, he got the five best classes he could possibly get as a PE teacher anywhere.

Where do you plan to go now that you are leaving? Do you see yourself continuing to coach wrestling?

"So we are going to transfer to an army base in Vicenza, Italy. It's a fairly large school system, it's got quite a few kids and it's a DoDDs school. It's 45 minutes west of Venice. So we're making our way to Europe as we'd plan to a long time ago. We're going to Italy, and we know it's going to be extremely slow-paced compared to what it is here. We've spent the summer in Italy a few years ago with a friend who teaches in a school over there and it is really slow. There's no convenient stores, for the most part it's going to be farmland, there's no public transportation. There's one train stop there in Vicenza, but from what I hear, don't ever rely on the train times. It's not like in Japan, that's just the way things are in Italy. But it's a beautiful place, it'll be more like what I'm used to from back in Oklahoma. There's so many things to see in the area. It's going to be easy to go to Venice, 45 minutes away, Milan, two hours away, mountains right behind us, and there's a beautiful beach an hour away. And another thing is that you're so close to so many other European countries."

"I don't currently have a job there, so I will be applying for jobs, obviously with the school system, to try and get a teaching job if one opens up. I will be substituting. There is also a team center on base where they do a lot of activities and sports, so I'll be applying for jobs there, and I'll probably need to further my education, so I'm looking at maybe starting a master's degree, and after that the future is travel. We may not stay in Italy, we may move to another country a few years down the road. More than likely the plan is to have the kids graduate from there and then decide after that if we want to move on to another base."

Do you have a few words you would like to leave your colleagues and/or your students with?

"It's been the best eleven years of my career so far, teaching and coaching at this school with all these people; they're great people, great teachers, great administrators, and great friends. I hope they stay in touch and I hope they continue to make the school better for the students. I hope wrestling continues to excel and win. I'm sure with Coach Yabui, that will be the case. There may be a little bit of drop with some of the middle school kids but it will kick back up and it should be fine."

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As a wrestler myself, and a PE student of Mr. Harlow's for the past eleven years, I think I can say on the behalf of his other students and wrestlers that we are extremely lucky to have had such a motivated and fatherly figure as our coach and teacher. We wish him the best in his years down the road, and we thank him for everything he's done for St. Mary's.



Wrestling

Article by: Nishant Chanda

Picture by: SyouNam Thai, Nishant Chanda, and Stars and Stripes

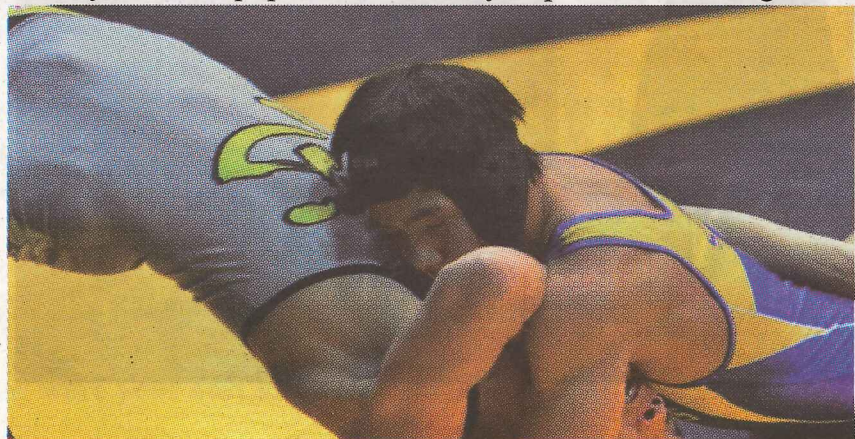
Going beyond expectations is remarkable, and that is exactly what the 2016~2017 Wrestling Team did. The season started with 40 out of shape high school students, and ended with 37 wrestlers, who have not only won titles, tournaments, and bouts, but have also come away with life skills. Through challenges regarding practice times and venues, and wrestling without a heavyweight, Titans Wrestling was able to brush off all the disadvantages and setbacks they had and take four out of the five important titles.

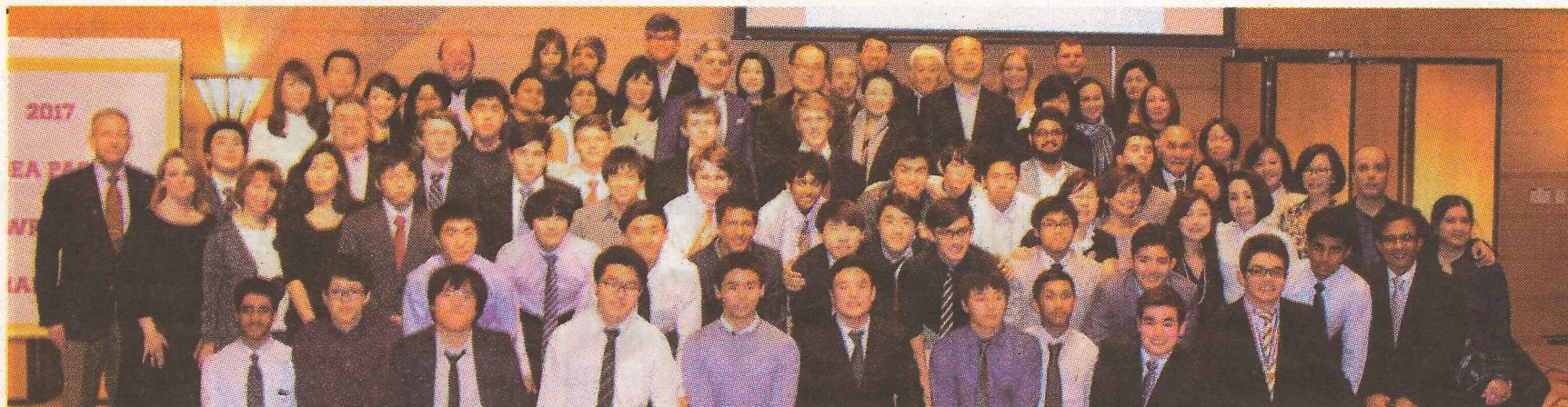
“40 kids is A LOT” says Mr. Yabui. It means the Titans were the biggest team in their league, maybe even in the world. This came with pros and cons: pros being that it showed wrestling has gained in popularity. Cons being that mat space was lessened, and managing the team, in general, would get harder. At the beginning of the season, wrestling was not in a good position. Practice venues were changing from cafeteria, to outdoors, and to the weight room. This proved to be one of the biggest challenges of this season. The problem with changing practice times and venues is that it is unpredictable. It is crucial that in a sport such as wrestling, that the team gets its own place to practice. This is because wrestling is hands down the most mentally draining sport there is. Having predictable practice times and venues is essential in lowering anxiety levels, which in wrestlers, are already quite high. Not only do wrestlers have to worry about their upcoming matches, practices, and nutrition/diet, but as any other student who participates in sports, a wrestler also has to pass all of his classes. “You need to have predictability and consistency ... Wrestlers should be able to come at 15:40, wrestle hard, and leave” says Mr. Yabui. The changing of practice venues also means different work outs. The equipment available in each place is different, which means wrestlers are subject to even more unfamiliar environments further increasing anxiety levels. Equipment that is very important in making the

team better, and improving their conditioning, such as H.I.R.T.S. (high intensity rope training system), battling ropes, and weight bags are not available in venues other than the MPH. Another problem when practicing in venues such as the cafeteria is the fact that the team has less area to practice. This means either the wrestlers get densely packed in the room, which is dangerous, or they break into groups, on or off the mat, which allows less time for wrestlers to get mat time.

When asked about coaching philosophies, Mr. Yabui very firmly said, “I believe wrestling is a sport for everybody.” The reasons for this are 1) the level and fair playing field, 2) one becomes a part of a family and something he can be proud about, and 3) going through a wrestling seasons imparts valuable life skills in one. The league that the Titans wrestling team belongs to is shared with CAJ, ASIJ, Zama, Kinnick, E.J. King, Kubasaki, Seoul American, Edgren, Yokota, and some others, a mix of DoDDs and private schools. The level of wrestling for each wrestler is in his hands. Every school has wrestling as a season and not a year long activity; therefore, anyone can succeed. Also, the majority of wrestlers begin their wrestling careers in high school, which means everyone has an equal chance of winning. Ask a wrestler what it’s like to be on the team, he will say, “It’s like being a part of a family.” After wrestling each other, wrestlers get close. Your wrestling partner will eventually be your best friend for life. The last thing Mr. Yabui talked about was about the life skills learned from wrestling : resiliency, work ethic, and delay of gratification. In other words, anyone who has gone through even just one season of wrestling will come out a different person. Whether he is an undefeated Far East champion or an athlete with no wins during the season, both take away something valuable from the season. “Winning is not the end goal, learning life skills is more important than winning,” says Mr. Yabui.

Last season (2015~2016), the team literally won everything. Three seniors, all of them Far East champs, left their place to a new team. Mr. Yabui says that this year’s season was more about setting appropriate goals. Winning was almost an expectation last year, but this year, what was expected was that wrestler never miss a practice. As for his expectations this year compared





to last year, Mr. Yabui said that instead of winning three or four titles like last year, this year he thought two or three would have been more realistic

According to Mr. Yabui, this year's team experienced unexpected success, and this was thanks to three important factors. One was the strong commitment wrestlers gave during the Christmas Break practices. These practices started at 9:00a.m., finished at 11:00a.m., and after a lunch break, resumed at 13:00, before ending at 15:00. These practices were conducted everyday except for Sundays until December 30th, and resumed on January 3rd. The very welcoming thing about these practices was that predictability and consistency was there. Wrestlers knew how hard the training would be, what their training would be, and for how long they would be training, and a large group of wrestlers who showed up consistently to all practices. During the break, Mr. Nick Spatola came over from the Unites States to hold a three day intensive camp. This camp was another key step in helping the team accomplishing what it did. The second important factor was that Titans wrestlers got exposure to a higher level of Japanese competition along with clinics held by numerous olympic level wrestlers. The results of these competitions were Titans getting their butts kicked, but the experience was very valuable. Once the Titans came back to their league, everything seemed easier. The third and final reason for the success was the leadership of the two captains. The captains this year were Ryo Osawa and Chang Young Lee. They had each been through six years of wrestling. Along with them were wrestlers who had experienced success from last year: Eshan Singhi, Tatsu Matsumoto, Rio Lemkuil, Tatsu Tanaka, Austin Koslow, Mitchell Krcelic, Alex Patton, and Shane Koslow. Finally, parent support was crucial as well. The wrestlers were served healthy snacks after all their 70+ practices. The parents came to watch the wrestlers during tournaments, and some even flew with the wrestlers to Korea, providing much-needed support. The 1st Alumni Homecoming also happened at the Kanto Tournament.

The three factors show how being in SMIS wrestling feels like being a part of a family.

Sei-shin-it-tou (精神一到) was this year's slogan/motto. It means "with strong will, you can accomplish anything". After dropping the Kanto title in February, varsity guys stepped it up. Instead of sulking about their loss, they worked hard through the remaining practices and set a goal of taking Far East. A strong display of will was shown by Jong Pyeong Lee, Tatsu Matsumoto, and Austin Koslow. They had opponents who could beat them. Titans win percentages were all over 50% except for Titans vs. Kinnick. The poor statistics against Kinnick meant that when the team did win, it won at the right time and place.

Mr. Yabui's worst memory of the season ties in with the mistimed victories and losses. He says his worst memory was when Tatsu lost in the finals. It wasn't only Tatsu who was inches away from success and could not make it, but his loss was the closest. The score was tied halfway through the match, but he was not able to come out on top. Mr. Yabui's best memory was Chang Young Lee taking his 4th Far East title. Although hw is happy for everyone's wins, especially the other four Far East champs, Chang Young's win was monumental. He is the 1st ever Titan to assume that status, and there are only two others who have achieved it. Although the spotlight is on Chang Young, Ryo Osawa was extremely close as well. He made the finals every year, but couldn't win the first two years. Both captains ended their seasons undefeated and as Far East champions. The team as a whole celebrated many victories. Their accomplishments are: back to back Far East duals, 4th straight Far East individual champions, back to back league champions, back to back Beast of the East champions, won Kinnick invitationals, won Zama invitationals, and 2nd place at Kanto. Chang Young Lee became Titans' 1st four time Far East champ, Ryo Osawa ended his career with two Far East titles, Rio Lemkuil (junior) now has two Far East titles, Shane Koslow and Eshan Singhi won Far East this year.

