

the Olympians

Park wrestles for better training facilities

By KARIM HAJEE

When you first think of wrestling, a huge, over-powering figure probably pops into your mind. Fortunately, the Hulk Hogans and Randy Savages of the world will not be participating at the upcoming Olympic games in Seoul this fall. Instead, amateur wrestlers from all over the world will be taking part in what is perhaps the oldest sport in existence—Greco-Roman wrestling.

Canada currently has seven national training centres for wrestlers, one of which is headed by John Park who teaches Greco-Roman wrestling at York University and the Metro Toronto Wrestling Club. All seven centres are part of the Best Ever programme which was established two and a half years ago, and as a result of his involvement in the programme, Park was selected to the fifth coaching team that will travel to Seoul. However, Park feels that since none of his wrestlers will be taking part in the international fiesta, it may be wiser for him to stay home and prepare for the next championships. "Rather than concentrate my efforts towards Seoul, in a coaching capacity I would rather prepare for other things and get people ready for the 1989 world championships," Park explained.

Although many of us got into the odd scuffle during recess, or tried to pin a friend or sibling as a child, only a few ever think of pursuing the activity as a sport. If we do, it's not until we reach high school that we make the move, mainly because high school offers some basic training. For John Park, it was a lack of height and weight that got him involved in wres-

ting, which is one of the advantages of wrestling. No matter what height or weight you may be, your opponent is always going to be of relatively the same size. "It offers young people of all different shapes and sizes the opportunity to compete because you can compete at a certain weight class," Park said. "So being too small for football and basketball, I naturally turned to wrestling."

After wrestling at the University of Western Ontario and Guelph University, Park wrestled with the national team until 1980. During that year he made wrestling a full time activity, only to be disappointed when Canada



boycotted the 1980 Olympics, which ultimately led to the end of his career in competition. His involvement in wrestling would continue with the Ontario Amateur Wrestling Association where he acted as technical director.

Park has been coaching for seven years now, four of them at York. He explains that he came to York because he had to be affiliated with a university in order to be with a national training



HUMAM SAKHINI

A Rare Breed: John Park teaches Greco-Roman wrestling at York University and the Metro Toronto Wrestling Club. Because of his involvement in the Best Ever programme, Park was selected to the fifth coaching team that will travel to Seoul. However, Park would rather stay home, and prepare his wrestling squads for the 1989 World Championships.

centre. York happened to be in the neighbourhood and in need of a coach. Although Park has coached the team to an OUA championship, and a second place finish at the CIAU's, the University has not responded to Park's success. Currently, the team has to train off campus because of inade-

quate facilities. Consequently, Park and his wrestlers have had to raise their own funds in order to pay the rent.

For a native of Scotland who made his way to Ontario via Nova Scotia, John Park has come a long way; but he always seems to fall short of the Olympics. Indirectly though, there may be hope. Park presently coaches Paul Hughes, the designated back-up for Gary Bohay, who wrestles out of Vancouver. Hughes will fill in for Bohay at the 62kg level should anything happen to prevent Bohay from competing.

The 22-year old student has made wrestling a top priority this year, and plans on returning to school next year to complete his Sociology degree. Much like his coach, Paul Hughes got involved in wrestling nine years ago at the high school level, in Etobicoke. A native of Great Britain, Hughes has made a firm commitment to wrestling for the next four years. With his parents firmly behind him, Hughes worked his way to an OUA championship; he was also a CIAU champion during the 1985/86 season, and a Commonwealth Games champion in 1986. Prior to his memorable 1986 season, Hughes captured a bronze medal at the 1985 World Espoir Championships.

While being a back-up may be disappointing for some, Hughes prefers to put it behind him and concentrate on the next competition. "I'm not really waiting it out," he said, "I'm just going

on, doing a lot of competing and seeing what happens." The next major event for Hughes and Park will be the US national championship, to take place at the end of this month.



HUMAM SAKHINI

John Hughes: As a designated wrestler, John Hughes will fill in for Gary Bohay at the 62 kg level, should anything happen to Bohay.

Park and Hughes became involved with wrestling simply because they enjoyed it. And while they'll miss the Olympics this time around, it is likely that they will be there the next time the opportunity arises; after all, if at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

Murray in sync for Seoul

By JAMES HOGGETT

If you needed one word to describe Pat Murray, that one word would be dedicated.

Murray, former president of Synchro Canada, will be travelling to the '88 Olympics in Seoul as the manager of the Canadian Synchronized Swimming team. Murray's role as manager will be to provide support for the three swimmers and one coach that make up the synchro squad.

"We have the potential to win two gold medals," says Murray, "one coming from Carolyn Waldo in the solo event, and another from the duet team of Waldo and Michelle Cameron." Both Waldo and Cameron are currently the reigning duet champions. The United States will be Canada's only major competitor that might prevent them from taking these two gold medals at the '88 Games.

Murray describes herself as part of a dying breed of volunteers that are key to Canada's national sports programme. "There is a great lack of dedicated volunteers today that is needed to run a national programme," says Murray, "and that number is getting less and less."

According to Murray, the lack of volunteers has changed the tone of Canada's national sports programme. "Sports has become more professional in the last four years," says Murray, "in that professionals have had to pull up the slack that the lack of volunteers have created."

The problem is that Canada still needs volunteers to run their sports programme as it is far too expensive to have professionals take over completely. The synchronized swimming programme, Murray points, is a prime example. Without volunteers the synchronized swimming programme would have problems continuing since

it cannot afford professional full-time staff.

Murray was born and raised in Agincourt and attended school at Agincourt Collegiate Institute. Upon graduation from high school, Murray attended the University of Toronto and graduated with a degree in Physical Education. Murray then went to the University of Alberta where she received a Masters of Science in Physical Education, and finally arrived at York University in 1973.

Currently, Murray has taken on the responsibility of Men's Athletic Co-ordinator, while Dave Chambers is on Sabbatical. This is not the first time Murray has filled in as an athletic co-ordinator. Two years ago she took over for Mary Lyons as Women's Athletic Co-ordinator while she was on sabbatical.

Murray, along with her "pinch-hitting" duties, also coaches the Yeowomen Synchronized Swim team, a position she has held since arriving at York. In addition to her coaching



duties, Murray also teaches synchronized swimming, badminton, as well as serving as a part-time instructor for a course in growth and development, and human and exercise philosophy labs.



BABAK AMIRFELIZ

A Pensive Moment: Pat Murray, former President of Synchro Canada, will be travelling in the 1988 Olympics in Seoul as the manager of the Canadian Synchronized Swimming team.

Murray did not become involved in synchronized swimming until she came to York. "In high school I did some synchronized swimming," says Murray, "but not in a high-level competition, just as a recreational swimmer."

Asked whether the political situation in Seoul is a concern, Murray replied, "I haven't really given it much thought, but if I happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, there's nothing much you can do about it. I look at the excitement of the Olympics as having a higher profile in my mind, it is a once in a lifetime opportunity," she added.

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