

Future wrestling champions

Annual Grant Schoen Beginners Tournament draws 242 youth wrestlers

By Bret Corner
News Graphic Correspondent

GRAFTON — In what has become one of the largest youth wrestling meets in the area, the annual Grant Schoen Beginners Tournament, held Feb. 7 and hosted by the Cedarburg Matdogs, continues to grow with 242 wrestlers participating from 32 teams.

All competing wrestlers, which came from as far away as Verona and Sheboygan, were first- or second-year wrestlers at an event designed to get kids from kindergarten through eighth grade exposure to the sport and provide a positive experience in their introduction to wrestling.

Part of the tournament proceeds went to HeartSafe Wisconsin, a program which helps provide CPR training and HeartSafe programs for schools.

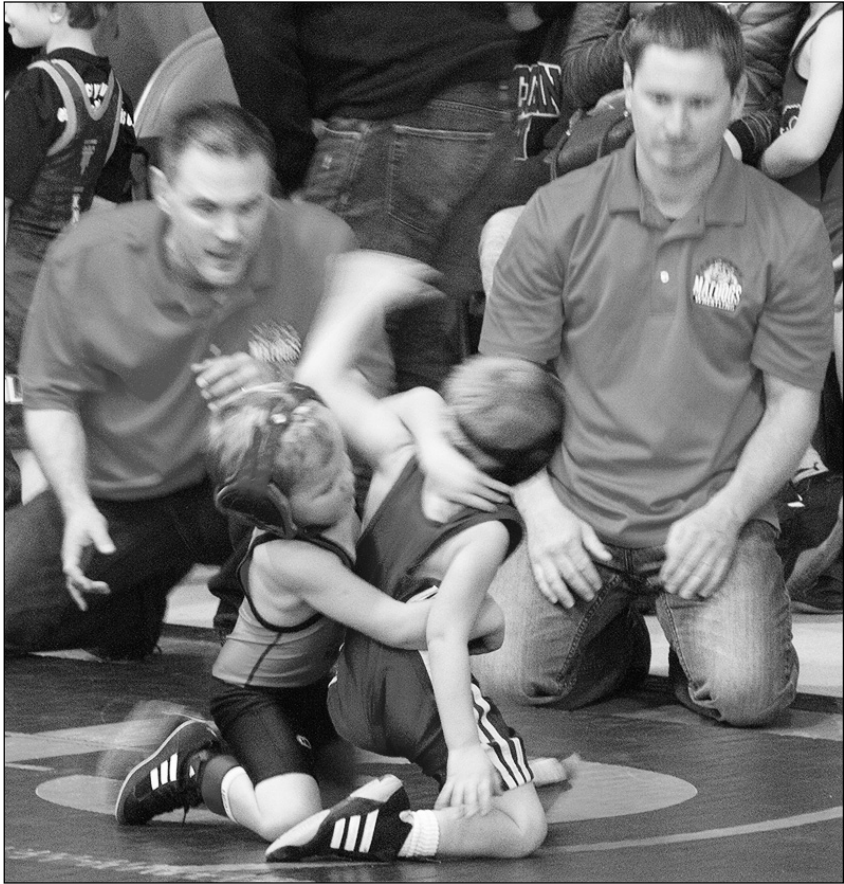
Grant Schoen, a former Cedarburg Matdogs' wrestler who also participated in baseball and soccer and loved sports, passed away in 2013 due to sudden cardiac arrest at age 10.

"We got a lot of great feedback from coaches and parents," Matdogs head coach Matt Gartman said. "This tournament has continued to grow over the years and this year was a record turnout. It is a unique opportunity for beginning wrestlers in the area to learn about the sport and participate.

"This is not only good for the Matdogs, but we want to grow wrestling at the youth level in the area and southeast Wisconsin," Gartman added. "Plus, this event goes for a great cause in Grant's name."

Due to facility conflicts at Cedarburg High School, the tournament was held at Grafton Elementary School.

"We are very grateful to Grafton



Submitted photo

Cedarburg Matdogs head coach Matt Gartman, left, encourages his son Ryan during a match at the Grant Schoen Beginners Tournament, which was held Feb. 7 at Grafton Elementary School. Assistant coach Joel Gartman, right, also watches the action at an event which drew 242 first- and second-year wrestlers.

for opening their doors for this expanding event," Gartman said. "We cannot thank them enough."

Max Askren, a former NCAA national champion who runs the Askren Wrestling Academy in Mequon, gave a wrestling clinic prior to the competition.

There were no awards given, but all wrestlers received beginning instruction and experience in wrestling. Each participant received a slice of pizza and bottle of water after they competed.

"Sometimes throughout the day," Gartman said, "the kids would ask if they could have the pizza yet, and I would say 'not until you are done wrestling.'"

It is not too late for kids to participate this year with the Cedarburg Matdogs; the season is at the halfway point.

New wrestlers and parents considering getting involved are

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— Cedarburg Matdogs head coach Matt Gartman

encouraged to email Gartman for more details at matdogs@icloud.com.

Practices for the Matdogs take place at Cedarburg High School.

You can also view news, results, photos and information regarding the Cedarburg youth wrestling program at www.matdogs.com.