

Passion, dedication pays off for wrestler

By Kathryn Gurfinkel

The Goodland-Star News
Wrestling is his passion, and Blazye Bahe, has dedicated much of his 18 years to the sport.

The May Goodland High School graduate wrestled his way to a letter in the sport all four years of high school.

First, he said, he had to win a spot on the varsity team.

"To make varsity, you have to be the best in your weight group," he said.

Then he had to win at least seven varsity matches, a spot in the top six of a 16 team tournament, or a place in the top three at an eight team tournament.

Letter winners must help with at least three practices for Kansas Kids Wrestling, a program which aims to get children involved in wrestling. Once a member of the group, Bahe said, he volunteered to teach kids wrestling techniques.

"I went to a couple of tournaments and coached a couple of kids," he said. "It kind of helps inspire them."

Bahe said he was inspired to become a wrestler at a young age and has been practicing the sport ever since.

"I wrestled since I was 4," he said.

With the exception of his mother, Kathy, wrestling runs in Bahe's family. His father, Randal, wrestled in high school and at Colby Community College and is now the wrestling coach at Goodland High. He said his father has been his coach since he was in Kansas Kids.

"It's nice, I enjoy it," he said. "I'll look back, down the road from now, and really cherish those memories..."

His brother, Bryce, 20 began wrestling at age 6 and currently



Blazye Bahe (top) defeated Dustin Sullivan of Garden City by a technical fall 16-0 in the quarter-finals of the 119-pound competition at the Southwest Wrestling Classic in Imperial, Neb., last January. Bahe finished his senior season as the Class 4A state champion with a 35-1 record. Photo by Dennis Saint

wrestles for Minnesota State University in Mankato. His younger brother, Brett, 15, started wrestling early, too, and currently competes in high school.

Although wrestling is a winter sport in school, Bahe said he wrestles year round.

Outside of school, he said, he just shows up to tournaments, weighs in and wrestles. He attended the Junior National competition in Fargo, N.D., where he wrestled on the Kansas team. He said out of the 30 states that take teams to participate in the duals, Kansas took eighth in both styles of wrestling. He brought home a plaque for winning fifth in the nation in his weight.

"That was quite an accomplishment," said Randal.

Last summer Bahe won All-American in Greco-Roman wrestling at the national tournament and took outstanding wrestler awards at several tournaments.

He said he wrestles folk style during the school year and he does free style and Greco-Roman at tournaments.

This fall, he will continue wrestling on a scholarship at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colo. He said the team is moving up from NCAA Division II to Division I.

"It's a really good scholarship," he said. "I really like their coach and

their program."

Bahe plans to red shirt, or compete on the team, but not participate in any tournaments, during his first year in college to gain some experience without using a year of eligibility.

"I'll be there for five years at least," he said. "Hopefully, the more experience I get the better I'll get."

He said he is undecided on a college major, but he will receive scholastic support through an athletic director and tutors. He also will live in a dorm on campus.

As a freshman in high school, Bahe started out wrestling at 103 pounds, then moved to 112 as a sophomore and finally 119 pounds

Bears add seven to roster

Blazye Bahe will be one of seven new faces on the wrestling roster for the University of Northern Colorado next season, and the only one of the seven not from Colorado.

Northern Colorado went 3-10 in dual meets last season in a schedule split between NCAA Division I and Division II teams. The 2004-2005 school year will be the second of its four-year

transition from Division II to Division I.

The Bears are coached by Jack Maughan, who is entering his 18th season. Maughan, himself a two-time collegiate all-American, won his 100th dual meet last season.

During his tenure at Northern Colorado, Maughan has coached three national champions, five runners-up and 46 all-Americans.

for his junior and senior years. Today, he wrestles in the 125 pound category, a weight he has to maintain for college. Wrestlers are expected to weigh in once a week or at a tournament. As long as you stay under the weight for your group, Bahe said, you can wrestle. If you go over the number, you have to sit the match out.

Although he wrestled in a lower category in high school, he said he isn't worried about maintaining 125 pounds. He said the coaches try to get wrestlers bigger than their weight class so they can slim down before tournaments, but keep their strength.

"Right now I'm big enough..." Bahe said. "I'm not really looking to get bigger, just stronger."

To make weight for tournaments, wrestlers sometimes go to drastic lengths. He said at some meets, he has to weigh in twice with an allowance of only two pounds from morning to night. Sometimes he has to refrain from eating what his friends eat to ensure that he stays under weight.

To keep in top physical condition, he works out with weights and practices wrestling two to three times a week at the Max Jones Fieldhouse with his brothers and classmates. Bahe has a weight lifting room and wrestling mats at home, too.

Before a tournament, he said, he steps up his workout program and he adds a 2 1/2-mile run.

"To be a wrestler, I think you have to be more dedicated than any other sport," he said.

When he isn't wrestling, he said, he is normally out working on his family's farm. He said they raise wheat, corn, pinto beans, milo, sunflowers and soybeans.

For fun, he likes to hunt pheasants and doves and to fish at Webster Dam or Cedar Bluff Dam.

After college, Bahe said NCAA Division I wrestling is one step closer to Olympic wrestling. No matter how far wrestling takes him, though, he plans to always be involved in teaching the sport.

"I don't know," he said. "We'll see where it goes. Hopefully someday, I'll be a coach."

Goodland falls to St. Francis 11-7

By Greg Stover

The Goodland Star-News
Goodland's K-18 baseball team lost to St. Francis for the second time this season Monday night, falling 11-7 at Memorial Field in Centennial Park.

Goodland, now 2-5 for the season, lost in St. Francis last month 13-3.

Two Goodland errors led to unearned runs as St. Francis took a 2-0 lead in the top of the first inning. Goodland cut the deficit in half in the bottom of the frame when Andrew Pettibone was driven home on a single by T.J. Hawkins.

St. Francis added three more runs in the top of the second to go up 5-1. In the bottom of the inning, Pettibone scored Goodland's second run when Cameron Morris hit a single to right field. Pettibone got on base with a double to center field, then got to third on a wild pitch setting up the score.

Goodland outscored St. Francis 2-1 in the third to narrow the visiting team's lead to 6-4. In the top of the fourth, St. Francis again picked up a pair of runs due to errors to make the score 8-4. A passed ball led to a run for the home team in the bottom of the fourth.

Neither team scored in the fifth inning. Leading 8-5 going into the top of the sixth, St. Francis scored three more runs to increase its lead to six, then held Goodland to a "three-and-out" to end the inning.



Andrew Pettibone pitched all seven innings Monday night against St. Francis at Centennial Park. He struck out six batters, however errors by Goodland led to several unearned runs for St. Francis, which won 11-7. Photo by Greg Stover/The Goodland Star-News

Goodland's Ben Davis and Preston Dautel both scored in the bottom of the seventh to make the final 11-7.

The team was supposed to play

Oakley Thursday afternoon at Centennial Park. The next action will be 6:30 (Central Time) Monday against Colby at the ball complex near the northeast corner of Colby.

Summer sports schedules

Men's Softball Tournament starts Tuesday, the second round will be on Tuesday, July 27, and championship game Thursday, July 29.

Coed Softball Tournament starts Wednesday, the second round will be on Wednesday, July 28, and the championship game Thursday, July 29.

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