



Dear Wrestlers and Coaches,

My name is Stephen Barrett and I've worked with a Christian sport organization called Athletes In Action for the past twenty years. I represented AIA in Russia for sixteen years; before leaving in July of 2007. Now I live in Mongolia. While living in Russia I organized many sport exchanges. I was team leader or coach with the US national team on over 20 trips and was with the US junior team on several occasions and have organized exchanges for AIA wrestling trips twenty times. I've been holding a camp for kids from the Caucasus of Southern Russia for the past eleven years. The last few years, Fellowship of Christian Athletes joined me in recruiting a team from the US to attend and help run the camp. We have held a wrestling camp in Mongolia for the past 4 years which has been attended by the top cadet and junior wrestlers of Mongolia. Teams have also come from Buratia in Russia, as well as a team from Inner Mongolia which is in China.

Bill Gifford is gathering a team of Christian, junior wrestlers who are tough and have a desire to use their talent to take a ministry trip to Mongolia. This trip will be a combination of three things: It will be a great experience from the standpoint of wrestling. Mongolians are traditionally some of the best wrestlers in the world and they have a completely different style of wrestling than we have in America. The trip will also be a cultural exchange, opening the eyes of our wrestlers to a different part of the world. This will give each team member a better appreciation of home! Most important, the trip will be a great opportunity for bringing the Gospel to wrestlers.

Unless something changes, the dates of the 2014 tour in Mongolia will be June 20-July 3rd. The camp lasts 7 days and will be held at the Olympic Training Center, 60 kilometers outside of Erdenet which is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city in Mongolia. AIA and FCA will sponsor a Mongolian national cadet and junior tournament just before the camp which will be held in Ulaanbaatar. We have sponsored this tournament the past 4 years with the help of the Mongolian Wrestling Federation. It has averaged over 300 participants. The team from the US will come before the tournament and camp for competitions and training with local clubs in Ulaanbaatar.

At last year's camp we had several different coaches lead a practice, including the American coaches who came to help. During practice different techniques were shown and worked on, along with plenty of live wrestling. After every practice, on the wrestling mat one of the Christian coaches would give a testimony, Gospel presentation or a Bible story. Once a day we hold practice outside. The Mongolians love to play soccer but in addition to that we taught them to play ultimate Frisbee and a simple form of American football which has rules similar to ultimate Frisbee. Every evening Mongolian Young Life representatives help to lead a program which the wrestlers loved and happily take part in.

From a ministry stand point, the average Mongolian knows very little about Jesus or the Gospel, but they are open to listening. One of the coaches who comes to our camp every year is Idrie. He told us that following our visit to his team with a group of AIA guys a few years ago, he came home and broke his Buddhist idols and removed the altar in his home. He became a Christian and is attending a local church. Now over half of the kids on his team are going to church with him. One of his girl wrestlers who attended the camp last year, went on to win the gold medal at the junior world championships. She now loves to share her testimony with others.

Before the tournament and camp, we will have joint training with some local clubs where we will have a chance after practice to share our testimonies and the Gospel. Last year's team

visited 3 prisons where we played soccer or basketball with the guys before sitting down with them to explain the Gospel. This year we plan to do similar outreaches.

Visas to Mongolia are not required for American citizens, but valid US passports are. It's not too early to work on that. Cost of round trip airfare from the US to Mongolia is dependent on what your travel agent can find, but last year it was approximately \$2,000 per person. In country expenses will be about \$800. each. If anyone wants to raise additional funds, they can help scholarship Mongolian wrestlers to camp for \$100. per camper. Last year we paid the travel and camp expenses for 70 campers. The number of campers we can invite to camp this year is directly related to the funds we have available.

The camp last year had a big impact on the Mongolian wrestlers and coaches who came. I have seen them at competitions since and the coaches and representatives of the Mongolian wrestling federation have continued to express their thanks for the camp. The American coaches and wrestlers who came last year played a big part in the success and impact of the camp on the lives of the Mongolians. Wrestling is the biggest sport in the Mongolian culture and I look forward to seeing how the Lord will continue to use camp and wrestlers from America to share His love.

Blessings,  
Stephen Barrett  
Athletes In Action