

Mongolia 2019 Wrestling Experience

A total of 11 self-funded BC Wrestling members went on a 2 week training camp trip July 6-19. There were either BC high school athletes (Ryan Hicks, Stephanie Mould, Owen Martin, Karan Gill, Chirag Mattu, Elijah Lazar, Marquesis Haintz, Ivy Threatful), two BC senior athletes, Aso Palani and Justina Di Stasio. The trip was led by Lhamsuren Naidan (Sama) who has worked alongside BC Wrestling athletes for many years, and was able to set up these amazing training opportunities for this group because he was previously the Mongolian National Team coach.

Mongolian wrestling is all about tie ups and grip placement, it's so different than how we wrestle here, and the two weeks was full of learning about this. The 2 on 1 tie is something everyone on this trip will come back with a better appreciation for. The athletes were on a high volume training schedule, and had to be mentally focused and tough to push through the training load, which was great to see them all dig deep and do. Beyond just wrestling, we were able to see and experience a new culture through food, sightseeing, and spending time with local athletes and coaches.

The country and training centers in Mongolia were very spread out. We stayed in a secluded mountain side camp the first night. After this we moved to the city center, but were still able to drive and see many different training centers. The Mongolian National Holiday weekend the Nadaam festival was a three hour celebration that explained the evolution of the country over thousands of years. We went to the Ghangis Khaan statue, rode camels and horses, and ate traditional Mongolian meals out in the country side. Training took place at National level training centers, Mongolian Olympic training center, and a run throughout the city that took us to a view point overlooking the city of Ulaan Baatar. –Aso Palani

The Mongolia trip was an amazing experience. The wrestling community here was very open and accepting. The culture was cool too with the festival we went too. The difference in the way they dress and walk and act is pre cool. On this trip I learned and felt a difference style of wrestling that made me feel more comfortable on my feet with my footwork as well as my hand fighting. I noticed in the wrestling room there are a lot of left leg leads so I also became more comfortable shooting on both sides which is something I really need to work on. Some of my favorite parts of the trip was honestly the practices. To me I love the grind of practices and just like going to war is awesome. Off the mat I really enjoyed being with the team. We had a great group of coaches and athletes. The trip was really fun, nothing really that I can think of to do to make the trip better. -Ryan Hicks.

Mongolia for me has been a very comfortable travelling experience because of the very talented and welcoming wrestlers as well as the new cultural experiences. During the trip I got to wrestle a variety of different female partners who were similar in weight and all had different styles which I could benefit from, unlike at home where my female partners are very limited. On this trip I learnt plenty of new things on the mat including a few techniques that I feel would be very useful back in Canada, as well as learning to appreciate everything I am given at home because not everyone gets the same privileges handed to them. My favourite part of the trip other than the practices was getting to experience a piece of their culture through the events and opening ceremonies at the Nadaam festival. The only thing that bothered I during the trip was the amount of time it would take to get to each practice, but there is nearly no way to solve this problem so overall I would change nothing. -Marquesis.

My experience in Mongolia was amazing. It was nothing like I have ever done before. The wrestling was great, because there was so many people my weight and who were good wrestlers. The culture in Mongolia was very interesting and eye opening. The people were also very nice and inclusive. On this trip I learned that in order to become a better wrestler I need to wrestle people who are better than me and who will kick my butt. Off the mat I learned that not all people are as fortunate as us in Canada. I think my favourite part of the trip on the mat was when I got to wrestle the Korean girls and a girl who placed 2nd at worlds. I also liked how we got to play wrestle a lot, which we don't do at home often. Off the mat I think my favourite part was when I got to try new foods and when I rode the camel and held an eagle. I also loved the Nadaam festival, it was Amazing! I think we should have done a few more things that involved Mongolian Culture (which would have made it better). Over all I think this trip was a once in a life time experience and I really hope I will have the opportunity to come again in the future. - Ivy Threatful

Travelling to Mongolia was one of the best experiences of my life. The training was amazing and it was especially interesting to see a completely different style of wrestling. Moreover, the people here were all very knowledgeable and engaging to learn from. My wrestling improved tremendously over the course of the trip. It was also really cool to meet the Mongolian coaches and wrestlers. The Genco coach especially was a very interesting guy with a wealth of experience and understanding of wrestling. He was also just a fun guy to be around. Coming into a country with a very different culture was a new experience that I will carry with me for a long time. Because of this trip, my love for wrestling has only increased. My favourite part of the trip was all of the sessions at Genco with the excellent training partners. Off the mat, being together as a team and seeing Ulaanbaatar was a terrific experience. One technique that I learnt was the two on one variations and the ankle pick variation that the Genco coach showed. If I could change one thing about the trip, it would be to wrestle more sessions. Regardless, it was an excellent experience. Thank you Aso, Sama and all the mongolian coaches, wrestlers and people who made this trip amazing.

-Elijah

My experience in Mongolia was nothing like any experience I've had before. Being in a country where wrestling is such a large part of their culture and everyday lives was such a great thing to see.

I was able to learn many adjustments to my technique and new moves as the wrestlers here are always nice and excited to share.

My favourite parts of the trip were training in 5 different clubs/places and meeting so many wrestlers, and just being around other people who have the same goals as me.

-Stephanie Mould

My experience in Mongolia was pretty good I got a totally different feel of wrestling here the athletes were a lot stronger and were amazing at hand fighting ... The culture was different here and it was great to explore new ideas and beliefs of the Mongolian people. It really goes to show how different things are in a different continent and country.

I learnt lots of new things on this trip such as new ways to get the 2 on 1 and new ways to score from there I also learnt how important it is to be tough on and off the mat ... and what hand fighting looks like

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My favourite parts of the trip were all the practices where we had tons of play wrestling and live. Of the mat my favourite part was staying together as a team and eating together.
For the most part the trip was really good maybe a little bit more break in-between practices could have been better although I preferred getting of early.....

-KARAN GILL

My experience in Mongolia was awesome! The people and wrestling were great, and I learned so many new things on and off the mat. My favourite part of the trip was when we went and watched Mongolian traditional wrestling it was awesome definitely would come back again! -Owen Martin

I really enjoyed it, it was an experience of a life time and I would do it all over again if I could. I really enjoyed meeting the people in Mongolia and eating dinner with them and also how this was a great opportunity to get closer as a team.

I learned a lot of moves from the 2 on 1 position and how to use it to my advantage so I could win more matches.

The only thing I didn't like was how I lost my phone....and then finding it. -Chirag