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Years Beyond Title IX...



Wrestling. It's Not about Gender

by Sarah Zobel

In 1992, a student walked into the PA boys' wrestling team practice room and asked to sign up.

The student was a girl. The team's coaches told her she was out of luck, but the athletics director, Leon Modeste, overruled them, saying they had to let her participate since there was no equivalent for female students.

"Grudgingly, we accepted her," says Rich Gorham '86, then an assistant and now head coach. Since then, there has always been at least one girl on the team—some years as many as seven.

One of those was Kassie Archambault '06, who had been disappointed to find no gymnastics team at PA. She chose wrestling as a somewhat unlikely alternative, and though her early career included a number of forfeits from all-boy teams that weren't ready to compete against a girl, she kept practicing.

"I fell into it and I loved it," she says. "Andover has a great program that allows you to start wrestling without ever having been exposed to the sport, and by the end of your four years you can really excel."

Archambault knows what she's talking about: by her lower year, she was a varsity wrestler, and in her senior year, she was given the Richard S. Pieters Award for Outstanding Contribution to Andover Wrestling. Gorham says choosing Archambault as recipient was a "no-brainer," based on her overall contributions to PA wrestling and for breaking new ground, including many firsts: first girl to become a varsity wrestler; first girl to place in a Class A tournament; first PA girl to win the New England USGWA Girls' Championship, which she did in 2005.

Although female wrestling became an Olympic sport in 2004, its world remains exclusive—at least in the United States, where, said Gorham, everybody knows everybody. The inherent physical differences may be to blame for keeping numbers low. After about 100 lbs., girls face a disadvantage in terms of upper-body strength. They also tend to have lower centers of gravity. On the flip side, they're more flexible than boys.

Today Archambault is back at PA, a teaching fellow in Russian, but also an assistant wrestling coach, the first female to have that role in New England prep wrestling. Resurrecting moves she adapted for herself, she coached Alyssa Augustin '15 to victory in her weight class in the USGWA tournament in March. Augustin, who took up wrestling for basically the same reason as Archambault—her sport of choice was

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Hailey Novis '13 Punches Ticket to 12-Letter Club

by Tracy M. Sweet

Hailey Novis '13 joined her local swim team at three and a half years old and competed in her first triathlon at age 5. As a young child, she remembers riding her bike alongside her mom, former PA biology instructor Esther Novis, when she'd go on marathon training runs.

Novis has yet to run a marathon herself—though she's a nationally ranked tri-athlete—but what she has achieved at Phillips Academy requires similar dedication and perseverance.

The two-sport captain, cohead of the Athletics Advisory Board, and community service program leader is poised to earn 12 varsity letters when she concludes her PA career this spring. It's like the pitcher throwing a perfect game; only her "game" has lasted four years. A native of Jamestown, R.I., Novis has lettered in soccer, cross-country, swimming, and lacrosse, demonstrating her ability to perform individually and contribute to a team.

Athletics Director Mike Kuta says Novis will become one of few modern-day student-athletes to earn this distinction. She joins the ranks of other notable alumni in the 12-letter club: Eleanor Tydings Gollob '86, Aisha Jorge Massengill '88, Carter Marsh Abbott '93, Becky Dowling Calder '94, and Zak DeOssie '03. (Records for Andover girls reflect the 40 years since the Phillips-Abbot merger in 1973.)



Zoe Gallagher '14, Phillipian

"This is quite a feat for Hailey and stands among the finest achievements of our student-athletes," says Kuta. "In this day and age, where the culture leans toward sports specialization, it is becoming increasingly rare to find a three-sport athlete, especially one who performs at the highest level."

Last fall's cross-country season was especially meaningful for Novis, who captained the team but began the season in physical therapy

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Beth O'Connor

Brazilian jujitsu—competes mostly against boys. She says her biggest challenge is finding the locker rooms at other schools, adding that her teammates don't seem bothered by her gender.

"It's not a big deal," Augustin says of being the sole girl on the team. "As long as you work hard, they really don't care."

Gorham says the coaches make it clear to PA wrestlers at each season's outset that girls are part of the team, and that if any boy is not comfortable with that, he is welcome to leave. No one ever has.

That acceptance continues to grow beyond campus. Both the National Wrestling Coaches' Association and New England Prep Wrestling have rewritten all documents to make them gender neutral. The only remaining distinction relates to weigh-ins, which are done in "suitable undergarments" and thus require female officials; there is a move to have weigh-ins done in singlets, which would eliminate the issue.

"There are a lot of ways in which having females in wrestling makes it a more human sport—a better sport," says Gorham. "Over the last 20 years, I've become a huge advocate of girls' wrestling, and I'm very grateful to have them here."

Novis continued

mode after having surgery on both shins over the summer. Disappointed but undaunted, she focused on the team and getting herself healthy, and trimmed what doctors said would be a six-month recovery to two months. "Even if I wasn't going to run, I wanted the team to have the best season possible," she says. "When you have a group of competitive girls, it can create some drama. I made it my goal to make sure everyone had fun. We had pep talks and sang songs before our races. It was about the team and counting on each other." She credits coach Becky Hession and her teammates for keeping her spirits high.

Faculty member Kate Dolan, who coaches Novis in lacrosse, admires her work ethic and determination. "She is fierce and relentless yet humble and self-deprecating," says Dolan, "the extremely rare girl who competes and is able to set aside personal feelings in a competitive setting, yet remain extremely fun loving and friendly as soon as the play, race, or game is over. She is one of the toughest kids I have ever coached."

Novis tempers that toughness with several off-the-field interests. Among her favorite activities are Sundays spent at a local YMCA teaching kids with mental and physical disabilities how to swim. She's also a proctor in Paul Revere and a peer tutor in math and science.

In addition to her teams faring well, she also has earned individual honors for sportsmanship and kindness. One award sums up the type of student-athlete that Kuta likes to cultivate: "one who best combines the vigor of a competitor with a grace of character..."

Won: 1st place at the 14-team Northern Invitational Wrestling Tournament, by **Big Blue wrestlers**, including individual titles: **Andreas Shiekh '15** (106 lbs.), **James Palmer '14** (170 lbs.), **Henry Curtis '15** (195 lbs.), **Christian Vallis '14** (120 lbs.)

Earned: 4th place at Eastern Championships (40 teams) by **Girls' Swimming & Diving**

Triumphed: Diver **Lilybet MacRae '13**, with 512.45 points, a new EC record

New School Records Set: 200 IM (2:04.34) & 500 Freestyle (4:57.04): **Danielle Liu '14** 400 Freestyle Relay (3:31.50): **Liu, Hailey Novis '13, Kaitlin Simpson '14, Amy Zhao '14**

Crushed: A-E records (held by Exeter) in 200 IM and 500 Freestyle, by **Danielle Liu '14**, with times of 2:07.40 and 4:59.31

Earned: 4th place at Eastern Championships (44 teams) by **Boys' Swimming & Diving**

200 Medley "A" Relay: 1:34.48; 2nd place (2nd fastest time in school history). Named All-American: **Tim Wynter '14** (backstroke), 22.9; **Aaron Teo '15** (breaststroke), 26.8; **Joe Faller '14** (butterfly), 23.0; **Scott Simpson '14** (freestyle), 21.7

100 Butterfly: **Tim Wynter**; 49.74; 2nd place (new school record). Named All-American

400 Freestyle "A" Relay: 3:07.74; 3rd place (2nd fastest time in school history). Named All-American: **Joe Faller**, 46.9; **Scott Simpson**, 47.6; **Travis Bouscaren '14**, 47.9; **Tim Wynter**, 45.4

Received: Robert L. Wurster Award and Richard McAllister All-NEPSAC Class A Honorable Mention, by varsity basketball player **Brendan O'Connell '13**

Dashed: 12-year-old school record (11:19.7) in the 2 mile, by **Anoush Shehadeh '15** with a time of 11:18.33; the 13-year-old junior class record (6.6 seconds) in the 50-yard dash, by **Camille Little '16** in 6.52 seconds

Named: **Kaitlin Gaiss '09**, Duke's lacrosse captain and starting goalie

Set: Yale records in hits (64), doubles (19), home runs (14), batting average (.430), by sophomore **Sarah Onorato '11**, voted softball MVP this season

Honored: St. Anselm's **Tucker Mullin '08**, with prestigious NCAA Hockey Humanitarian Award. **Read more** at www.andover.edu/magazine.