

*USA Wrestling Connecticut*  
Girl's & Women's Wrestling

## USGWA NATIONALS, APRIL 1 & 2, 2006, RESULTS

Once again a group of Connecticut and New England girls made the trip to Lake Orion, Michigan for the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual US Girl's Wrestling Association National Tournament. This is the largest girl's wrestling tournament in the United States and possibly the world. This year there were more than 640 girls competing in the Elementary, Jr. High, High School and University divisions. Connecticut was represented by 6 wrestlers and supported the efforts of 2 girls from Vermont and one from Massachusetts. There were a few girls from Maine and a few other girls from Massachusetts that were there independently.

Connecticut had one Elementary wrestler, one Jr. High wrestler and four High School wrestlers. The two Vermont and one Massachusetts wrestlers were all in the High School division. The wrestlers and their families traveled by various arrangements, flying, driving family vehicles and van pooling. However they traveled, it was an experience worth the effort. Although we did not have a National Champion this year, as we have been fortunate to have for the past three years, we did come away with two All Americans in the group. All American ranking at this tournament qualifies the girls for funded access at the US Olympic Training Center in Colorado Spring, CO.

Because so many girls come from all over the country the tournament is designed to maximize the opportunity to wrestle other girls. The High School tournament brackets are wrestled to 12 places with medals awarded to the top 9. The top 8 are All Americans and have funded access per USA Wrestling National guidelines. There is a G3 (Guaranteed 3 Matches) tournament for those that are eliminated in the High School tournament before the 12 place winners round. The High School girls are also eligible to wrestle in the University division. The Connecticut and other New England Wrestlers, and their placements were:

***Elementary:***

Siarra Harrington	Lebanon, CT	48.5 lb	4th place
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***Jr. High:***

Spirit Souza	Brooklyn, CT	115 lb	2nd
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***High School:***

Jessica Rea	Stratford, CT	126 lb	6 <sup>th</sup> (All American)
Erin Clodgo	Richmond, Vermont	134 lb	4 <sup>th</sup> (All American)
Dyami Souza	Brooklyn, CT	122 lb	11th
Sarah Feinman	Lexington, MA	126 lb	11th
Jessica Bennett	Montville, CT	100 lb	2-2 (one round from placing)
Tracy Walsh	Danbury, CT	114 lb	0-2

### **G3 Tournament**

Tracy Walsh	Danbury, CT	114 lb	2nd
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### **Collegiate**

Tracey Walsh	Danbury, CT	118 lb	5th
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As is usual the results only tell part of the story of the Connecticut and other New England girls' performance in this tournament. Siarra Harrington is a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader wrestling girls from K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. She was a trooper, wrestled hard, had a great time and got her posters for her bedroom walls signed by multiple World Team and Olympic Team wrestlers that were at the tournament. Spirit Souza was in an unusual bracket. There was one girl in the bracket that has placed well in over seas tournaments, including Japan, a strong hold of women's wrestling, and all the other girls dropped out or moved up a bracket rather than wrestle her. Spirit did lose to her, but was congratulated and thanked for having the nerve to stay in the bracket and compete. The tournament director also made sure that Spirit had a number of other exhibition matches so that she did not only get to wrestle one time.

For the girls in the High School division, this was an education. It was for me too. I have never really had a chance to coach some of the girls before. I was very impressed and honored to coach for wrestlers that have as much heart and fortitude as some of the girls displayed. All of the best girls in the country show up at this tournament because the college and USAW National coaches are all there scouting. Jessica Rea, after injuring her shoulder in a middle round match refused to quit and wound up facing some very tough competition with more determination and endurance than I would have thought possible. Despite pain and better reputations, Jessica went on to out last and defeat some very strong opponents and take them all the full distance.

All of the girls had their battles. Dyami Souza is coming back from a year away from wrestling. With limited training time she still placed and displayed some great take down skills in a number of her matches. Tracey Walsh, a sophomore, had a tough start and got beat up a bit in the initial matches. She could have left it at that. Instead she got herself together and came back and wrestled in two additional divisions. She was another one of our girls that doesn't quit. Some of our other girls, girls that have done very well here in New England learned what it means to challenge the best in the country. Jessica Bennett and Erin Clodgo (from VT) ran into some very tough competition. Jessica fell one round short of the medal rounds in some very tough matches. Erin lost a pair of heart breaker matches, one in the semi finals and one in the consolation finals by just a point.

In the end, the girls demonstrated that our CT and New England wrestlers can compete successfully on the national level. In addition, this year we were very fortunate to have the support of Wayne Harrington and Dan Rollet in assembling the team and supporting their efforts. Their help was greatly appreciated and I'm sure will help improve our CT girls wrestling program in the coming year. Hopefully we will be able to get preparations for this great tournament going earlier next year and get even more CT and New England girls prepared and involved.

Our next goal is to assemble a CT / New England team for the Jr. Nationals in Fargo, ND at the end of July. This year we would like to enter a team in the Girl's Jr. National Duals tournament the day after the Jr. National individual tournament. Any girls interested in this opportunity please take advantage of the freestyle training opportunities through out CT and contact me!

Thanks to all the parents and wrestlers that supported our CT and New England girls !  
If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact me.

**Roger Shaw**

Director for Women's Wrestling  
USA Wrestling CT  
Office: 860-439-0203  
Fax: 702-442-8976  
Mobile: 860-961-0763  
Home: 860-442-8974  
RogerShaw@myeastern.com  
[www.usawct.org](http://www.usawct.org)