

Scouts Honor: A Special Appeal to Parents

from DAAA Co-Founder Len Sawisch

I tell people I helped start organized dwarf sports so I would have someone to beat. It's not true. I wrestled in high school (I lied to pass the physical). My worst beating came at the hands of the only other LP I ever wrestled. It really tore me up, and here is why (and why your kids should be at the World Dwarf Games):

When I was a kid, people use to tell me 'you're just small, that's all.' And I really wanted to believe them (even though it's not true). I use to fantasize that if I was the same size as everyone else, I would be one Bad Dude! I carried that image locked inside until that senior year wuppin'. It took years to get over. First I had accept that if I chose my peer group by size, there were actually folks out there my size who could kick my butt. Second I had to accept that no one can be the same size as everyone else; what a foolish idea to begin with! Third, and probably most devastating, I had to accept that I really wasn't all that special.



And that's why dwarf sports is so important. Every kid needs opportunities to learn how not special they really are. Kids like me grow up constantly being told by stares and points and preferential treatment (good or bad) that they are special because they are dwarfs. Our opportunities to not be special are few and far between. But to be part of the largest sporting event in history exclusively for dwarf athletes; to be surrounded by 500+ dwarf athletes of all skill levels from all around the world for a week; to be immersed in a context where only folks with dwarfism are allowed to be stars - that's where reality is truly tested. That is where dwarfism becomes irrelevant.

DAAA was started by parents of dwarf children; all but one of whom were dwarfs themselves. Each grew up without dwarf sports. Each realized, in our own way, that our children and children like us should not be denied a sport venue with such reality-based life-altering growth potential, win or lose. As a result, every dwarf child born in America over the last 30 years has had the potential to be involved in dwarf sports. But the potential is lost if they don't show up.

The World Dwarf Games won't be back on American soil again for at least two decades. The Games may never again be as big as they will be this year in East Lansing, Michigan. So on behalf of all the DAAA founders, we strongly encourage you to find a way to get your kids to the World Games. And keep this bit of irony in mind; in every event and every sport, it's guarantee that at least one dwarf athlete will prove, to their self and others, that they really are special. It could be your kid. Scouts honor.