

# The silent roar of the crowd: Deaf wrestler an inspiration to his Pullman team

By Pamela Robel, Daily News staff writer

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**Geoff Crimmins/Daily News**

When Jordan Sherman hits the mat, the crowd can't help but yell like children circled around a playground fight.

The difference is he can't hear the crowd or his coaches.

Sherman is deaf.

Jordan was born with the ability to hear but was premature, weighing just 2 pounds, 6 ounces at birth, said his mother, Jackie Sherman. He spent six months in the hospital after his birth, and the ototoxic drugs he was given helped save his life but took his hearing.

The hospital staff called him a "miracle baby," Jordan's father, Mike Sherman said.

The Shermans moved to Pullman, Mike's hometown, three years ago. Jordan decided to be a wrestler, and it's been an experience for the entire family.

Jordan, now 15 and a freshman at Pullman High School, weighs 80 pounds but holds the varsity spot at 103 pounds.

"Wrestling is fun. I enjoy it," he said through one of his interpreters, Joy Bradley, an employee of Pullman School District who teaches the hearing impaired. "I like the running and getting down and scrapping. It's fun to win, too."

Jordan has an interpreter who signs the beginning of the matches, directions from head coach Andy Brownson in the huddle and the occasional bit of encouragement.

"There are some basic hand signals to indicate starting positions and so on, but we use those for all of our wrestlers," Brownson said. "Really, there is not much difference between Jordan and other wrestlers. We just don't yell as much."

Jordan said referees use signals and gestures in addition to the whistle to direct him to start or stop wrestling.

"The referee puts his hand down when he says go and taps me to stop," Jordan said.

The Shermans say the team has been nothing but supportive.

"They give him high fives and have asked to learn how to sign 'good luck,' " Jackie said.

Brownson said the other wrestlers on the team are "great with Jordan."

At a recent dual, Jordan received a fist bump from injured wrestler Travis Keithley before heading onto the mat.

His teammates "are better at communicating with him than I am," Brownson said. "During one tournament I saw him teaching some of them a few signs. Text messaging also helps. They are texting all the time."

Brownson said Jordan's attitude and confidence has improved.

"Lately, he seems to be getting more confident and is smiling more," Brownson said.

The wrestling season is a long, grueling one and Jordan will be the first to say he doesn't enjoy the travel involved.

"I like the home wrestling matches," he said. "I don't like going to the meets in Spokane or Othello. They're so far away. It's like two days on the bus."

Jordan has been something of an inspiration for the rest of the team. He remembers a tournament when the coaches praised him in the huddle and told the rest of the team to be more like him and more scrappy in their matches.

He hopes to record a few more wins as the season continues. While working toward those wins, it is clear his lack of hearing will not stand in his way.

"I have to remember how to shoot, turn (my opponent) and pin them," he said. "I have to try hard, not forget what I've been taught, and go out and do it."

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