

Interview with Yoni Ellman (Head Coach TABC)

What team do you coach?

Torah Academy of Bergen County - TABC

Who are the team captains this year?

Yair Klyman, Ramin Ahdoot, Shakead Subin

How long have you been coaching there?

This is my 8th season at TABC

How large is your program?

We have 36 guys in the program this year. It is our biggest team ever.

How many days does your team train and compete?

Every wrestler practices 3 days per week. We have 2 practices a week for the entire program and then 2 days per week where we split the team – 1 day for advanced and 1 day for novices. Once competitions start we try to still keep 3 practices days with matches, but that gets very hard so it really depends. Some weeks the boys are on the mat 4-5 times while others its only 2-3.

When did you start practices?

We started practicing in early September. We begin with 2 days a week at first and after a few weeks go to 3 times per week. The chagim really put a damper on the month of October, so we tried to get started as early as possible.

When do you stop practicing? Do you end with Wittenberg?

Our regular season ends with Wittenberg in February. After that we give the boys 1-2 weeks of rest and recuperation and then begin our spring practices. During the spring we practice only twice a week. Our spring practices are a little more fun and chilled out as compared to the regular season, but it gives us a chance to learn new and exciting techniques in a non-pressured atmosphere. We usually allow music in the spring during drilling and even have some other teams wrestlers join us on occasion. Last year we had a few local public school kids and some Frisch guys attending.

What is your typical practice like?

I try to make every practice different and exciting. I cant say we have a specific daily routine, but I will explain our general guidelines. Every day we have specific practice outline laid out by the coaches with detailed techniques and moves we plan to drill that day. We post the daily schedule on the wall at the beginning of practice and generally try to follow the plan closely.

Practices always begin with a warm-up led by our captains for 25 min. This includes running outside and dynamic stretching. After the warm-up the coaches take over and usually begin with drilling. We spend roughly 1/3 of practice every day drilling our techniques, neutral, top, and bottom - many times on the whistle. New technique usually follows drilling. We teach a lot of technique at TABC, so we are constantly teaching new things. At this point we are usually ready for our live wrestling. Many times we finish up with a quick workout and burn.

What excites you most about the upcoming wrestling season?

We have a very exciting young squad with lots of potential. We have a tough schedule ahead including a trip to Chicago to wrestle the Wittenberg champs, Frisch and the Bergen County Tournament with over 50 local teams. I am anxious to see how the freshmen perform over the season and how they mature as we get closer to Wittenberg. I am also very hopefully about the sophomores and juniors who will be stepping into the varsity lineup for the first time – I think they are ready to make a real mark.

Do you have any specific wrestlers that really impress you?

All of them! Actually we have a few standouts that are really impressive. Yair Klyman (captain) has developed well as a wrestler. He spent much of his spring and summer on the mat and is really ready to show his stuff. Remy Moyal and Amitai Mozeson are two other seniors who really should do well and be successful this year.

What are your teams' challenges this year?

One of our biggest challenges is money. We are going to Chicago and then we have Wittenberg... it gets costly. In terms of wrestling, one challenge includes meshing a team of strong seniors with a huge group of freshmen and underclassmen. I am also always concerned about burnout as we have a long season that can be very trying especially during December, Jan and February. TABC students have lots of homework and it gets very tough during the heart of the season.

If you could change one thing about your program what would it be?

Obviously I'd love to practice 5 days per week and get a brand new wrestling room like Cornell or Penn State, but I can deal without these. One of my biggest pet peeves is the fact that Chanukah falls right in the middle of our season and TABC is not very accommodating with allowing us to practice then. The other one is winter break. TABC has finals in mid January and then winter break for 1.5 weeks. This really kills the season and makes scheduling very hard it also hurts our momentum going towards Wittenberg.