

HOMETOWN HEROES



Ivy Threatful



Threatful is a great name for a wrestler – as Ivy is often told – but her appearance is anything but threatening. For starters, she's 5'2" and 116 pounds. But right from her earliest wrestling days at Maple Ridge Secondary, she started living up to that name. Her high school coach said Threatful's work ethic forecast her having a lot of success in the sport.

"She's tenacious – she wholeheartedly bought into the training programs, both in our program at Maple Ridge Secondary, and at SFU," said longtime MRSS wrestling coach Bill McCrae. Describing her on the mat, he said she's got huge heart, and can outwork and wear down her opponents. "It's that tenacity – she's hard on her opponents, and she never stops," he said. Threatful is able to flip a switch. "I'm a completely different person on the mat," Threatful said.

In 2019, as a high school wrestler, she won a Cadet division national championship in Fredericton, N.B., when she was just in Grade 10. Threatful allowed only one point to be scored against her in four matches.

The year prior, Threatful had finished fourth. She went home and threw herself into training 12-15 hours every week between workouts with both the Ridge Meadows Ramblers and her club team, the Coast Wrestling Academy. That year she also won high school provincial silver in 2019, and then turned that to gold in 2020.



The Ridge Ramblers have been a talent pipeline for the Simon Fraser University, and Threatful was one of the many local athletes to be recruited for the SFU Red Leafs – the only Canadian school that wrestles in the U.S.-based NCAA. Just starting her fourth year, her success has continued.

Threatful won her second national gold at the 2023 Canadian Wrestling championships, and that got her an international tournament, representing Team Canada. She wrestled for the bronze medal at the 2023 Junior Pan-American Championships which were held July 6-8 in Santiago, Chile. She finished fourth.

She took bronze at the junior nationals in 2022. In 2021 Threatful qualified for the Pan Ams in Mexico, where she placed seventh. She's winning medals for SFU in tough NCAA tournaments across the U.S., having recently won in Colorado, Oregon and Vegas. Threatful has also been to the NCAA nationals, where she won a pair of matches, but did not place.

Being named a Hometown Hero was an honour. "I wasn't expecting it. I was really surprised, and really thankful," she said. "It's a big honour, with all the amazing athletes that came before me, and I'm part of that club."

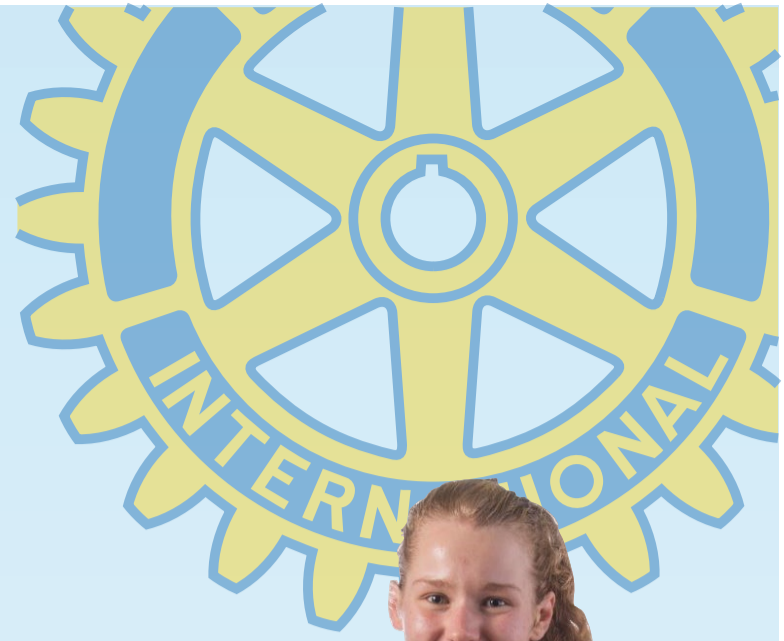
Her wrestling technique continues to improve, and Threatful is hitting the gym more, and putting on muscle, getting quicker and faster. Her goals are to be an NCAA All American. She will take wrestling as far as it will take her – the dream would be the Olympics – and she loves that the sport lets her experience more of the world. "I love seeing new places, and I love travelling," she said.

Academically, Threatful is studying global environmental systems, pursuing a Bachelor of the Environment degree, and is considering a career as an educator.

Dare to Dream



HOME TOWN HEROES



Payten Smith



One of Canada's best, Payten Smith had her sights set on wrestling in the Olympics before her career was cut short by a devastating injury.

Smith was as natural a wrestling talent as the elite Maple Ridge Secondary program has ever seen. Smith was inspired by her father, William Smith, who was also known as "The Hangman" and "Laser Jack Smith" in his professional wrestling days.

But the younger Smith went into the ring for her first tournament as a girl with only her singlet and determination. She was just a Grade 8, but she won her age group, the Grade 9-10 age group, and then the senior class as well. She surprised herself as she beat a lot of older, more experienced athletes, creating one of the greatest memories from a standout career.

She took silver at the provincial championships that year and again in Grade 9, and then reigned as the BC Champion in her heavyweight class for Grades 10, 11 and 12. The dominant Smith went whole seasons where nobody could score a point against her.

In her Grade 12 year, 2014, she won two gold medals at the national championships, in both freestyle and Greco-Roman competition. In freestyle – the wrestling style used in high schools and universities, she won all four of her matches by pin, without a point being scored against her. She had also won a freestyle national championship the year prior. Also in 2014 she was a Canada Summer Games gold medallist, and her accomplishments saw Sport BC name her the BC Female High School Athlete of the Year. "That was a pretty special moment," she said.

The next year at Simon Fraser University she was the BC Juvenile Female Wrestler of the Year, and in 2015 was a Women's Collegiate Wrestling Association (WCWA) bronze medalist, with All-American Status which she kept throughout her collegiate career. She also took silver at the Junior Pan American Games held in Cuba.

2016 saw Smith win WCWA silver, and at the Canada Cup seniors division she took second place. In 2017 she kept improving and got WCWA gold. But then Smith was hounded by a devastating injury that forced her out of the sport. She was thrown at the Commonwealth Games and landed on her head. "I couldn't move for a couple of minutes, and it was pretty scary," Payten said.

The resulting injury left her with instability in her neck, and there was a danger that a whiplash type injury could damage her spinal cord. She had to quit. "It was really cruddy, but it led me to shifting focus, and looking at other opportunities," said Smith. "I was pretty devastated. I remember calling my dad, crying."

When she encounters obstacles, Smith switches focus to what she can do, rather than what she can't.

Smith began volunteering, helping with youth wrestling. She also threw herself into her schooling, and volunteering at SFU's Centre for Forensic Research, where she came up with CSI Fridays to get kids interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering & mathematics).

In 2023, she is working for the BC Wrestling Association as the office administrator. She is also finishing her master's degree in criminology.

Smith said she remembers seeing Hometown Heroes banners at Maple Ridge Leisure Centre, and at her elementary school. They include Hall of Fame baseball player Larry Walker, Boston Bruins great Cam Neely and race car driver Greg Moore. "I look at the names, and I'm honoured to be on that roster," said Smith.



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