

WAYC 2015: What A Week!

P&D Staff Recalls Its Favorite Moments From Tourney

A year ago when it was announced that Yankton would host the 2015 World Archery Youth Championships (WAYC), the Press & Dakotan news and sports staff realized we would have an incredible opportunity.

As the international tournament approached, we began to organize our coverage, all in a way to highlight for our readers the behind-the-scenes efforts and the archers themselves.

From profiles, to feature stories, to preparation work, to notebook stories, to photos, to video, and social media, we brought you the coverage we felt this kind of a tournament deserved.

Now that the WAYC has concluded and all the international visitors have begun their trips back home, those Press & Dakotan reporters who helped out with the coverage came together to share their experiences from the week-long event.

Jeremy Hoeck, Assistant Sports Editor

I still clearly remember the exact moment I heard Yankton was officially awarded the bid for the World Archery Youth Championships for June 2015.

It was a Tuesday afternoon. And my first reaction was, "That's a full year away."

Archery long ago became my favorite sport to cover. And every time I mention that to someone, they give me a perfectly quizzical look. But it's true. Archery tournaments, particularly of the international variety, afford you the rare opportunity to spend time with people from literally all over the world. You not only get to interview them, you get to know them, get to know their languages (one of my favorite aspects of the WAYC), get to understand a little bit about their cultures, and you also get to see some pretty high-level archery.

Last week at the WAYC was, by far, the most fun I've ever had at a sporting event. For all those reasons I just mentioned, I enjoyed every minute I spent out at the ranges – typically from mid-morning until mid-afternoon, with the exception of Sunday, when it was an all-day affair for the finals. Beyond your official interviews with coaches and participants, you have dozens more casual conversations.

But, to me, it was one moment in particular that stands out. It was last Friday afternoon, and I was standing behind the teams at the recurve range. To my far left, was a group of archers from Poland and they were loudly chanting something to one of their teammates who was shooting. Closer to me on the left was a group of three male archers from the Netherlands, and they were dancing to a song playing over the speakers. Directly in front of me at one of the picnic tables were three archers from Korea, who had just finished shooting. In front of them was a group from the United States. Directly to my right was a large group from Spain, and one of the archers was wearing a Mount Marty College sweatshirt – no doubt something he bought while in town. Together, it was an incredible scene. There, right in front of you was a diverse mix of people from all those countries. It's not something we experience much in Yankton, unless you regularly spend time at archery tournaments.

To be honest, I was sad Monday when I woke up and realized the WAYC was over. Most of the teams had left Yankton. It was significantly quieter out at the archery complex when I was out there Monday morning for some interviews.

My hope throughout the tournament was that it opened some eyes to those people across Yankton who hadn't given archery a thought in the past. After all, that sport is the very reason why our little town is on the



WAYC 2015: A Look Back

As archers head home from the World Archery Youth Championships, the Press & Dakotan staff that covered the action this week took time to share their thoughts on the week.

ABOVE: The U.S. team of Emily Fischer, left, Paige Pearce and Danielle Reynolds salute the crowd after their victory in the gold medal match of the compound junior women's team competition on Saturday in Yankton. (James D. Cimburek/P&D)

LEFT: An archer, right, from Spain shakes hand with the Korean team after their recurve match Friday. (Jeremy Hoeck/P&D)

international map. It's not the Missouri River, or the lakes, or any historic landmark. It's archery.

Follow @jhoeck on Twitter

Dylan Huggins, Sports Reporter

The opportunity I had this past week in covering this world event was amazing.

I had the privilege in interviewing and talking to people from all over the world. I talked to archers from Korea, Russia, Denmark, USA, and Great Britain.

The archers were there to compete, but it was clear from me, that they were enjoying themselves.

When interviewing the archers, they talked about how they were enjoying the competition and for most of them, just being in a new environment that most of them have never been in.

One aspect of the competition that I thought was interesting was witnessing teammates having to compete against each other.

Each country wants their archers to advance to the next round, but it was clear it was hard for some archers to have to compete against one another.

I was also impressed with how the archers carried themselves when the weather turned bad.

The weather on Thursday turned from sunshine to cold and rainy. Archers still had to compete in poor weather conditions, but they still performed admirably.

This opportunity for me to cover this event was great, not only because I talked to people from all over the world, but also because it's something that I probably won't get to cover again.

This tournament was not only great for the town of Yankton, but for me as well.

It allowed me to cover a world event and gain valuable experience that I gained from this event.

Follow @dhugg23 on Twitter

Michael Hammond, Sports Reporter

For me, I did not fully understand that I was covering an international event until the last day of the tournament, when I realized that this tournament was just

two steps down from the Olympics.

Going in I had no experience with archery either myself shooting, watching a tournament, or covering the sport, and I had no idea how any of it worked. I enjoyed learning about the sport and how archery and the tournament worked as it is not a sport I would normally watch even when it's on in the Olympics.

Interviewing people from around the world was good experience and I was surprised how well many of them spoke English, I didn't have to use a translator once to interview anyone.

Another thing that surprised me is how many kids liked Yankton. They came from around the world to a small city in South Dakota and all the kids I talked to liked the city.

The finals venue for the last two days was something I was not expecting out of the tournament. They were able to make it spectator friendly and had a full crowd for most of the finals I saw. It was about a full 180 degrees from the range with scoreboards, video boards, and play-by-play announcing.

Overall I thought it was good experience, surprisingly entertaining, and I would cover it again.

Follow @michaelhammond_ on Twitter

Alyssa Sobotka, News Intern

The 2015 World Archery Youth Championships (WAYC), the week-long event that arguably brought one of the largest diverse groups to Yankton, may have concluded Sunday afternoon and departed Monday, but the memorable experience will last a lifetime.

And I'm not just talking about the memories the archers experienced, but what I, an intern reporter, will be able to reflect upon in my journalism career ahead.

The first interaction I had with archers was at the Sioux Falls Regional Airport when they first stepped foot off the plane. Between having just gotten off a long flight and in a new environment, the archers were quite shy when talking with me.

That attitude shifted throughout the week and

after speaking with more archers and coaches, I began to understand who was responsible for the change in comfortability.

Each interaction I had with archers and coaches they remarked on the abundance of welcomes and hospitality they received from organizers, volunteers, and the Yankton community throughout the week's competition.

Ludvig Flink, an archer from Sweden, told Press & Dakota's assistant sports editor, Jeremy Hoeck and me that he was surprised how welcomed he felt, as people in Sweden do not take the time to come up and talk with strangers and sometimes even go out of their way to avoid one another.

I also recall speaking with Eliana Claps, United States archer from Seattle, during the swap night, a relaxing evening activity put on by organizers in hopes of archers mingling with one another. Claps told me, "It's nice to get to talk with the other countries outside of competition, where everyone is relaxed and at ease having fun. It's nice to see our competitor's real side, not just the competitive side."

What Claps described of the international archers is exactly what I got to see. I didn't cover the sport of archery, but the activities where archers shared with me pieces of their real side. It did not matter where these archers were from; they set aside their competitive side and bonded over their shared love and passion for archery and enjoyed the cultural experiences together.

I will be forever grateful for having received the opportunity to be a part of such a unique experience, where people from around the world came together to make a remarkable experience for everyone.

Follow @alyssasobotka on Twitter

James Cimburek, Sports Editor

I did not spend much time out at WAYC2015 – I told people that I was handling "everything else" – I did get out to shoot (photograph) Saturday afternoon's finals in several compound divisions. I came away with a

couple of impressions: 1) these young people are very talented, and 2) they are very composed.

I would have to check the official stats, but I don't remember seeing more than one arrow that scored as low as a 7 out of 10 in two hours of competition. Most of the arrows struck the 9 or 10 rings at the center of the target.

What impressed me more, though, was how these young men and women carried themselves throughout the competition. They kept an even keel, not letting the highs and lows of competition overwhelm them. There was no trash-talking, no over-the-top celebrations even after the final victory was clinched.

The archers were also gracious in defeat. Only once the entire afternoon did I even see an individual react overly negative to a bad outcome, and that came when an off-center shot on the final arrow of competition cost him a medal. Even then, he quickly gathered himself to congratulate the winner, a teammate of his.

It was also fun to see the non-competing archers get behind their countrymen and women. The team from Turkey made for great fans, with Denmark also making some noise.

Saturday's little taste definitely made me wish that I'd have "delegated" less and taken in more of the action myself.

Follow @JCimburek on Twitter

Kelly Hertz, Managing Editor

I didn't see a lot of the World Archery Youth Championships — I was there to help cover the opening ceremonies, but couldn't get back to the site — but what I will remember most about the tournament is how this town came together to handle a global event.

Yankton is a small place as such major events go, and I don't think there is anyone who would argue otherwise. But from the staff at the NFAA Easton Center to the army of volunteers who were recruited, the event came off, and by all accounts, it ran well. That speaks volumes

Hoeck: Yankton Set The Bar High, But What's Next?

BY JEREMY HOECK

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Bruce Cull doesn't stop dreaming.

There's too much to do to slow down. Too much potential. Too many options for future projects.

That's the way the president of the National Field Archery Association (NFAA) – headquartered in Yankton – operates. Cull is always thinking ahead; thinking of the next big archery tournament he could help lure to Yankton.

And so, it wasn't a surprise when I asked him Monday during an interview to recap last week's World Archery



Jeremy
HOECK

Youth Championships (WAYC) if he ever shies away from big ideas.

"No, not at all. That's what it's all about," he said.

Cull, like many in our town, isn't afraid to think big. That mindset, after all, is what eventually led the NFAA to move its national headquarters from California to Yankton in 2008. Cull needed city and county support to make that happen, and then some trust from those involved that the archery complex would be beneficial to Yankton.

And that's exactly what happened. Within a decade, Yankton has firmly planted itself on the international archery radar, and doesn't appear to be going anywhere.

The past week proved it.

Archers from 51 countries (it would've been 52 if not for the situation with India) gathered in Yankton for the week-long WAYC, which concluded with the finals over the weekend on a specially-designed target out in front of the Easton Yankton Archery Complex.

But the part that really made Yankton a tough host city to eventually beat was the community-wide support. That was necessary – quite literally – for a small town. Tournament officials were going to need financial and volunteer support from the community at large to make this happen.

To that end, mission accomplished, Cull said.

"Big cities have a lot to offer, but when it comes down to our hospitality, I think that's going to be a hard one to follow," he said.

Yankton being tabbed last summer as the host for the 2015 WAYC was a definite surprise to many around the country. There was a true sense of, "Really? In South Dakota?" Yankton (population: 15,000) was sandwiched between WAYC in China (in a city of 6.3 million) and Argentina (in Buenos Aires, a city of 2.9 million). Having such a prestigious event thrown into such a small town brought understandable pressure to Yankton.

That ended up being an advantage for our town, though.

Yankton, although small and hard to get to, had a history of organizing and hosting international archery tournaments. Even faced with a larger pool of participants, it wasn't exactly uncharted waters.

"That's one of the reasons we went into it, and one of the things World Archery knew we had to offer," Cull said. "I think it was just awesome."

To be fair, Yankton – not to mention the state of South Dakota – had never hosted something that diverse as the WAYC. Any previous international events that came to town had somewhere between 20-25 countries represented.

When you talk about doubling that number, you're