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MASON AND PAGE TO WRESTLE AT NLWC WITH OLYMPIC WRESTLER AND UFC FIGHTER, SARA MCMANN IN ONE CORNER

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Lauren Mason and Jennifer Page will face off as the only women's match on the Nittany Lion Wrestling Club November 24th card in State College, Pennsylvania at 8pm ET.

Quarantining at home in California, Mason began training at Sara McMann's gym with fellow SFU teammate, Alex Hedrick. She describes the situation, "Unusual, but for the better. I really had a chance to sit and think 'why I wrestle, do I still love wrestling' and so on. Which actually, fueled my fire and love for wrestling even more. I've been able to train with and by really incredible people such as Sara McMann and Torrean Tyus and others who have been able to help me grow in my wrestling. So, it's been different, but overall, I've really enjoyed it a lot more than I expected to in the first place."

Sara McMann, a former 2004 Olympian and now UFC Fighter, will be coaching Mason. Mason says training with McMann is more about, "going through the basics, with some technique, then live. We're not learning anything super new, but fine tuning and adjusting the moves I already know. She's been a key component in perfecting the minor details."

McMann returning to the mat as a coach says, "it feels good to be in a position to give back to the young girls coming up. It's tough to navigate training and coaching, but both of them give me a lot of joy." Mason goes on to say, "Yes, I've been able to do some live wrestling with [Sara] and get my butt completely whooped! Fighting MMA, she's super tough, but a great environment to be in. All in all, I'm really excited for her to coach me and have her in my corner."

Page says her training during the pandemic has required a lot of creativity and flexibility as she states, "I feel like I've had an easier time with the challenges of this pandemic because it's the same skill set, I developed from learning to train while recovering from injuries. I've been getting creative to do what I can when I can, and focusing on what I can control."

The NLWC has truly embraced the inclusivity and equity when it comes to including women on their cards. "I can't say enough good things about the NLWC," Page comments. "They've been welcoming and supportive of the women in their room since day one. They treat us just like any other athlete in the room. It's easy to tell when someone just puts up with having a girl in the room because they have to, but our coaches truly respect any athlete who is willing to put in the work. Training with them has been the opportunity of a lifetime."

When asked how women's wrestling has impacted Lauren, she went on stating, "I grew up in a wrestling household so my Dad wrestled and my brother wrestled and they both coached me at some point. I started in sixth grade. I'm from California so not too many girls wrestled when I was growing up. I was always the only girl on the team until I got to High School and I started going to all girl tournaments which was exciting!"

Seeing the growth of women's wrestling has been exciting to watch. To have the sport redefine what it means to be a woman, has been the most inspiring. In the sense women can get dressed up and be feminine but when we step on the mat, we're crazy tough! But, it's even more exciting for the next generation to watch us older wrestlers. Victoria Anthony's touched on this a lot: when you can see someone who looks like you and you can connect with them, that young girl believes 'if she can do it, I can do it.' So many organizations, like Wrestle Like A Girl and NLWC, have done a phenomenal job of making the sport more visible for women."

Page held shared views, saying, "Women's wrestling has given me so many opportunities to grow as a person. I've developed so much mental and physical strength that has benefited me at work, school, and in all areas of my life. It's introduced me to so many people and places from around the country and the world. I expect it to continue growing at an exponential rate for many years, and I'm excited to see the growing collegiate opportunities women have. I believe we will have a strong NCAA tournament in a few years."

When asked on the progress of women's wrestling and where its headed, McMann believes, "women's wrestling is currently at a great place with participation, new athletes, and well-rounded senior women. It will continue to grow rapidly as more colleges add programs and the highest institutions create elite tournaments to compete at. I'd like to see more camps and clinics for the younger generation. The current women can have such a huge impact on the growth of our sport and it's important to see and speak with them in person."

McMann says Mason is ready as she's, "been working consistently and staying as active as possible. She has put herself in places to get tough partners and solid practices."

Mason is excited to return to the mat against a solid competitor such as Jen as she states, "Jen Page is actually from my area, and I grew up knowing her, but never wrestled her before. Excited for us to compete as she's a high caliber wrestler."

Like Mason, Page's gratitude and excitement to get on the mat is mutual, as she states, "I'm excited for every opportunity I have to wrestle! It's what I love and I've learned to never take it for granted. I'm ready to get out there and have fun. Lauren is a great opponent and I know we'll put on a good show." Mark McKnight along with Jake Varner or Casey Cunningham will be coaching in Page's corner.

Mason and Page will face off this coming Tuesday, Nov. 24th at 8pm ET on the Nittany Lion Wrestling Club channel on Rokfin. Subscribe to live stream.

For media inquiries, contact WLAG Media Director, Victoria Diaz at vdiaz@wrestlelikeagirl.org