

LOCAL

Dremiel Byers' gold dream falls short but look for him again in 2012 Olympics

GARY STEWART

Sports Editor

The Olympic gold medal dream of Kings Mountain native Dremiel "Bam" Byers fell short last week in Beijing when he finished 7th following a third round upset to a Swedish heavyweight in the Greco-Roman wrestling competition.

Byers won his first two matches before losing and even outscored his opponent in the match that he lost.

A newly-adopted rule from 2005 was Byers' downfall, but he didn't make any excuses for the loss. After winning the first round 3-1, Byers lost the second and third rounds when the trailing Swede won the color draw, took the down position, stalled the final 30 seconds to keep Byers from rolling him over and was awarded a point for his "defense." In the second round, even though the score was 1-1, the Swede was awarded the round because he scored last. The third round was the same outcome.

None of Byers' opponents were able to roll him and he never trailed in any match. He had a 5-2 advantage in points over his opponents.

Byers' wrestling coach at Kings Mountain High School, Steve Moffitt, watched the match on the Internet and talked to Byers by phone after the match.

"I told him I was proud of him and told him to keep his head up," Moffitt said. "I'm sure he's down. The scoring is so much different now and it doesn't make any sense, in my

opinion. It came down to the luck of the draw. Bam was never turned and he turned everybody he wrestled. Just because the other guy's color was pulled and he was able to stall and keep Bam from turning him he was awarded the victory."

Byers, contacted at his home in Colorado Springs Tuesday morning, said looking back he realizes he can win the Olympic gold in 2012.

"I lost because I just wasn't able to turn him in the last 30 seconds," Byers said. "Looking back, I know for a fact it's a small tournament and on top of that there's not enough recovery time between rounds. But, definitely, it's a winnable tournament. I've been in tougher tournaments than that.

"I can't walk past a mirror now without seeing who is to blame for the loss," he added. "I can't kick anybody but myself. I had a lot of opportunities to score and didn't."

Byers says not attempting to go back to the Olympics in 2012 is not an option for him.

"I have to go," he said, "especially when I know I can get the job done. A lot of things are going to happen between now and then to make it happen. It may be experimenting with some things. But it's too much a part of my life to walk away yet."

Byers isn't quite ready to get back on the mat now, though. Since returning home Sunday he's crashed.

"For some reason, I wasn't prepared for the time zone



DREMIEL BYERS

changes this time. They really got me," he said. "I slept all night Sunday and all day Monday. My bed and I have gotten reacquainted."

Soon, though, Byers said he will get back on the mat to "fix some things I did wrong." There are no major tournaments until winter.

"I'm pretty much going to sit back," he said. "I'm going to lift real hard and put on some muscles, and do some drills and work on things I didn't do right and improve on the things I did right."

Preparing for matches in the Olympics is somewhat different than other tournaments, Byers said. "You get there and try to stay away from people and get in the groove," he said. "When you get to the competition there's no competition. That's not taking anything away from anybody because everybody there can wrestle. But it's small competition compared to some of the tournaments I've been in."

Byers said his strategy should

have been "to go one match at a time...one move at a time...one second at a time," he said. "You have to break it down and hope for the best. I got into a situation where it was 'I hope they pull my color' but they didn't pull my color in either of the last two rounds. I didn't score in the last 30 seconds and I lost. In that situation it's too easy for the opponent to just shut it down. A lot of people are developing that style of wrestling. The responsibility lies on the person that didn't score and I didn't seize my opportunities."

After a short recovery period, Byers said he will be going all over the United States on behalf of the U.S. Army, talking to youngsters about wrestling and his experiences.

He hopes to visit Kings Mountain in the near future, but until he gets home he wants to say hello to everyone. "I miss them and I really appreciate

their support," he said. "Expect more from me."

Byers also wants to encourage the wrestlers at Kings Mountain High School to work hard. Byers was state heavyweight champion for the Mountaineers in 1993.

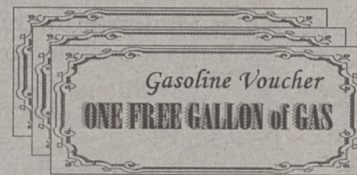
"I want everyone wrestling at Kings Mountain High School to know that this is possible for them, too," Byers said. "I came from the same place they're at now and they're doing the same thing in practice and matches that I did. If they'll just believe in themselves, train hard and stay focused they can accomplish anything they want."

One former KMHS wrestler, Rodney Houser, made the trip to China to see Byers perform. Byers said he tried to make contact with former Crest High running star Travis Padgett, a member of the 4 x 100 meter relay team, several times but missed him.

"Why is Your Favorite Pharmacy Giving Away FREE Gas?"

You'll never believe this! I went to my favorite pharmacy yesterday to pick up my prescription and a few other things, and you know what? They gave me FREE gasoline!

They're doing some sort of promotion— you get a voucher for a gallon of gas when you spend \$50 on cash prescriptions* or non-prescription items like aspirin, batteries, greeting cards, gifts, natural meds— almost anything— and you get *another* voucher with every \$35 you spend thereafter!



All I know is that I got three gallons of gas down the street for buying things at my pharmacy that I would have bought anyway! You can, too, at Parker's BP Station! Free gas! To claim your FREE GAS, get to Prescriptions Plus Pharmacy— before they change their mind!

*Sorry, this offer does not apply to prescriptions paid for by third parties, like insurance or Medicaid

"When you absolutely, positively, want to feel better!"



Prescriptions Plus Pharmacy

Two Convenient Stores to Serve You
703-1 E King Street, Kings Mountain
David Lovelace, R.Ph.; (704) 739-4519
Hours: Mon-Fri 9a-6p; Sat 9a-1p
1614 W. Franklin Blvd, Gastonia
Billy Wease, R.Ph.; (704) 867-3518
Hours: Mon-Fri 10a-6p

Educational Fund established for the children of Greg Tate

The family of Greg Tate has received an overwhelming outpouring of affection and support from family and friends near and far. For this, the family expresses their sincere and heart felt appreciation.

At the request of many of these supporters, an education fund has been established. Any contribution made to the "Greg

Tate Memorial Education Fund" will be used exclusively for the educational pursuits of his children, Kristen and Brooks.

In order to provide custodial care of any contribution to the fund and to assure appropriate disbursements from the fund, the family has established a dedicated account through the

Kings Mountain branch of Wachovia Bank.

If you are so inclined, you may make your voluntary and tax-deductible contribution to: GTMEF, c/o Wachovia, Kings Mountain Financial Center, NC1359, Attention: Elaine Grigg, 125 Battleground Avenue, Kings Mountain, NC 28086.