

# Nortjé hoping to achieve dream of going to the Olympics

By Franklin County Chronicle, Franklin, Neb.

After having his Olympic dreams dashed in 2024 with an injury, requiring knee surgery, Franklin Public School music teacher Emma Nortjé's husband, Edrich Nortjé, is now looking at giving it another run in 2028.

When Nortjé, was six years old he begged his parents to allow him to start wrestling because his friends were wrestling. Nortjé, 25, was raised on a family farm in South Africa. He attended Oosmoot High School, Hastings College and Dickinson State University in Dickinson, N.D. He said wrestling has been one of the most important things in his life since age six. "My family made a lot of sacrifices so I could compete at the highest level," Nortjé said.

Nortjé said he has been competing since he was seven years old, and has been in too many competitions to count, but has wrestled nationals, whether its South African Nationals or Collegiate Nationals, every year. "I've wrestled in more than half a dozen of African Continental Championships and a handful of world championships," he explained.

He has wrestled freestyle for his club in South Africa (Tuks). "Wrestling is not a school sanctioned sport back home, it is a club sport. I've never wrestled folkstyle before I came to the United States to wrestle in college. It was a huge adjustment for me. I always

choose neutral at the beginning, because wrestling on my feet and take downs/throws are my bread and butter," he continued.

"Between kids, U17, U20, and Senior South African Nationals, I have 18 national titles. I'm a U17 and U20 African Continental champion, and couple time medalist. I'm also a Senior African finalist. The best I've ever done at World Championships was ninth place at U17 back in 2017 in Athens, Greece. That was all freestyle. I was also a U17 African Continental Greco Roman finalist at age 15. In college I was a five time national qualifier. I had an extra COVID year of eligibility, and an All-American at 141 lbs. and a redshirt year when I blew out my shoulder the first time. I was a team captain at both Hastings College and Dickinson State University," Nortjé stated.

Nortjé usually practices two hours a day, five days a week, coaching and managing himself since there is not a Regional Training Center close by. He said he does strength and conditioning at the local gym, Tribe Fitness in Smith Center, Kan., in the morning and then wrestles with the high school kids in the evening. "Every now and then I drive up to Hastings College on Saturdays to go wrestle with some tougher competition," Nortjé remarked.

But his one dream since the age of six was to wrestle in the Olympics. "It's a chance to measure yourself against the best of the best



**ON THE MAT** -- Edrich Nortjé is pictured wrestling an opponent at a wrestling meet. Nortjé has won 18 national titles in his wrestling career. His plans to compete in the 2024 Paris Olympics were dashed due to an injury that required knee surgery. He said he is going to give it another run in 2028. *Courtesy Photo*

in the whole world. I came painfully close to competing in Paris in 2024, but was injured, which required knee surgery. So I am going to give it another run in 2028," Nortjé continued.

Nortjé is an operation specialist for Nutrien Ag Solutions in Stockton, Kan., where he is in charge of the facility, inventory and if they need help, with spraying.

His wife, Emma said she enjoys wrestling. "I got to support the Flyers when they competed at a tournament in Red Cloud. I didn't get into wrestling until I met my husband. Now, I enjoy watching freestyle and seeing his athletes improve. He is a fantastic coach. He coached college wrestling when we lived in North Dakota for two years," she explained.

When not wrestling

Nortjé said he loves spending quality time with his wife, their dog with the rest of his free time spent doing home improvements on their property. "I also like hunting, hiking and trap shooting. I actually was a dual sport athlete in college, competing in both wrestling and shotgun sports.

Nortjé explained about his love of wrestling. "The biggest thing I love about wrestling is how it prepares you for the real world. There are highs and lows, things beyond your control, and many moments where only your own effort makes the difference. I believe everyone should wrestle at some point—it builds a strong work ethic, grit, self-discipline, and self-confidence. Wrestling also connects you with amazing people. The wrestling community is incredibly



**GOLD MEDALIST** -- Edrich Nortjé was a gold medalist at TuksWrestling's in South Africa. *Courtesy Photo*

supportive. I came to America to wrestle, but I gained so much more than that. I made friends, found family, and discovered how meaningful life can really be," Nortjé concluded.

## Soloman Valley Larks headed to Special Olympics

The Solomon Valley Larks will be sending 21 athletes to the annual Special Olympics Kansas (SOKS) State Basketball, Cheerleading and Wheelchairs to the Tournament in Hays on March 20 and 21. More than 5,000 athletes, coaches, volunteer's and fans from around the state will come together for one

of the largest events for individuals of all ages with intellectual disabilities in the state.

The team qualified for the State Tournament through their participation in a Regional Tournament February 21st in Great Bend. The regional tournament followed more than 8 weeks of training by the

athletes.

"Special Olympics Kansas is extremely proud of all of our athletes that put in months of training to prepare for this event," said SOKS President and CEO John Lair. "It is a thrill for us to be able to share the abilities and joy of competition and inclusion exhibited by our athletes."

The State Basketball and Cheerleading weekend festivities include traditional 5x5 competition, cheerleading, opening ceremonies, individual skills competitions, free health screenings and a dinner and dance.

The State Basketball Tournament is made possible by our presenting sponsor, the Kansas State

Council of the Knights of Columbus along with Plainville and Stockton Knights who have supported our State Basketball and Cheer competitions through volunteer service for more than 50 years. We also thank our event sponsors; Park N Go, Kansas State Bank, Corner Stone Orthodontists, Fort Hays,

Walmart/Sam's Club, Oleander's Greater Manhattan Community Foundation, Hays Convention and Visitors Bureau, Visit Manhattan, Hays Medical Center and Hays Recreation Center. Statewide sponsors of Special Olympics Kansas include Sunderland Foundation, Club Car Wash, and Heartland Coca-Cola.

### USD #110 BOE Special Meeting

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** The special meeting of USD #110 was called to order by President Staci Foreman at 6:00pm. Other members present were Tina Dennis, Kathy Holling, Bridget Wyrill, Ali Hadley, and Justin Abbott. Also present were Randy Klooz and Heidi Struckhoff.

**II. SUPERINTENDENT CANDIDATE:** Staci Foreman moved that the board go into executive session for the purpose of conducting a superintendent interview, and the board return to open session at 7:00pm. Justification for the executive session is the exception relating to non-elected personnel under KOMA (Kansas Open Meetings Act). Justin Abbott seconded. Motion carried 6-0. Randy Klooz was invited to the executive session. Heidi Struckhoff left the meeting at 6:00pm. The board returned to open session at 7:00pm. Heidi Struckhoff returned to the meeting at 7:00pm. Staci Foreman moved that the board go into executive session for the purpose of conducting a superintendent interview, and the board return to open session at 7:21pm. Justification for the executive session is the exception relating to non-elected personnel under KOMA.

Justin Abbott seconded. Motion carried 6-0. Randy Klooz was invited to the executive session. Heidi Struckhoff left the meeting at 7:01pm. Randy Klooz left the meeting at 7:08pm. The board returned to open session at 7:21pm. Heidi Struckhoff returned to the meeting at 7:21pm.

Staci Foreman moved that the board go into executive session for the purpose of discussing superintendent candidates, and the board return to open session at 7:52pm. Justification for the executive session is the exception relating to non-elected personnel under KOMA. Justin Abbott seconded. Motion carried 6-0. Heidi Struckhoff left the meeting at 7:22pm. The board returned to open session at 7:52pm. Heidi Struckhoff returned to the meeting at 7:52pm.

Staci Foreman moved that the board go into executive session for the purpose of discussing superintendent candidates, and the board return to open session at 7:57pm. Justification for the executive session is the exception relating to non-elected personnel under KOMA. Justin Abbott seconded. Motion carried 6-0. Heidi Struckhoff left the meeting at 7:52pm. The board re-

turned to open session at 7:57pm. Heidi Struckhoff returned to the meeting at 7:57pm.

Staci Foreman moved that the board go into executive session for the purpose of discussing superintendent candidates, and the board return to open session at 8:07pm. Justification for the executive session is the exception relating to non-elected personnel under KOMA. Justin Abbott seconded. Motion carried 6-0. Heidi Struckhoff left the meeting at 7:57pm. The board returned to open session at 8:07pm. Heidi Struckhoff returned to the meeting at 8:07pm.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT:** Justin Abbott moved to adjourn the meeting. Ali Hadley seconded. Motion carried 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.

**SHOP LOCAL SHOP SMITH**

## General Notice To Control Noxious Weeds

The Kansas Noxious Weed Law K.S.A. 2-1314 et seq. requires all persons who own or supervise land in Kansas to control and eradicate all weeds declared noxious by legislative action. The weeds declared noxious are: Field Bindweed, Musk Thistle, Sericea Lespedeza, Johnson Grass, Bur Ragweed, Canada Thistle, Leafy Spurge, Hoary Cress, Quack Grass, Russian Knapweed, Kudzu and Pignut.

Notice is hereby given pursuant to the Kansas Noxious Weed Law to every person who owns or supervises land in Smith County that noxious weeds growing or found on such land shall be controlled and eradicated. Control is defined as preventing the production of viable seed and the vegetative spread of the plant.

### Failure to observe this notice may result in the County:

1. Serving a legal notice requiring control of the noxious weeds within a minimum of five days. Failure to control the noxious weeds within the time period allowed may result in the county treating the noxious weeds at the landowners expense and placing a lien on the property if the bill is not paid within 30 days or,

2. Filing criminal charges for non-compliance. Conviction for non-compliance may result in a fine of \$100 per day of non-compliance with a maximum fine of \$1,500.

The public is also hereby notified that it is a violation of the Kansas Noxious Weed Law to barter, sell or give away infested nursery stock or livestock feed unless the feed is fed on the farm where grown or sold to a commercial processor that will destroy the viability of the noxious weed seed. Custom harvesting machines must be labeled with a label provided by the Kansas Dept. of Agriculture and must be free of all weed seed and litter when entering the State and when leaving a field infested with noxious weeds. Additional information may be obtained from the Smith County Noxious Weed Department or by contacting the Kansas Dept. of Agriculture, 1320 Research Park Drive, Manhattan, KS 66502.

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