

On Wisconsin Outdoors

With the Dick Ellis Experts

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NASP

School program offers lessons in archery, life

By Dick Ellis

It is often said that one goal of competition is to increase the overall confidence of the participants in other walks of life. Competition, though, can be selective if speed, size strength or endurance are prerequisites to success. Enter the National School Archery in the School Program. If showing as many students as possible the path to overall success is indeed a goal, NASP is right on target.

When any of the hundreds of students representing approximately 140 Wisconsin schools from Superior to Kenosha and Manitowoc to Lacrosse stepped to the line at the 4th annual National Archery in the School Program (NASP) State tournament in Wisconsin Rapids this weekend, each would be shooting a Genesis bow at the same distance. Each would have an equal chance at success. It is that one "constant" that John DuMars finds most appealing.

Retired plumber DuMars is a certified NASP instructor, teaching gym teachers and other interested people in Wisconsin communities how to safely teach archery as curriculum in the physical education programs of participating schools. He has been shooting and hunting with bows since 1980, and with three

children and eight grandchildren of his own, said that he "loves teaching and helping kids."

"The reason I do it and the reason I'm excited about it is that every kid who steps up to the line is equal," he said. "Their shoot-

thing."

NASP is a venture of state departments of education, state fish and wildlife agencies and archery organizations and equipment manufacturers with the mission of promoting student

other curriculum. Since its inception in March 2002, more than 4 million students at 4,900 schools located in 46 states and five countries have participated in NASP.

"Rhode Island, Delaware, Vermont and Maine are the only four states left," said Jon Gauthier of Brennan Industries in Sparta, which coordinates the National Archery in the Schools Program. "Two of those four have advised us that they will adopt NASP this year. Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand are also in NASP and we have received inquiries from many other countries outside the US."

"Nationally, 40 percent of the archers are female at the competition level. The key to NASP is that everyone can be on the archery team, there are no limitations. You do not have to be tall, fast or pretty."

NASP archery, Gauthier said, is a great way for today's youth to find success. Many young people who find success in archery have not previously found success in other endeavors. The new-found success introduces them to the very idea of achievement and initiates the inspiration to seek more in every day life, whether it is in school,



Retired plumber John DuMars teaches instructors in Wisconsin schools how to safely teach archery in physical education programs as part of the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP). Everyone is equal when they step to the archery line to shoot, said DuMars of the NASP program. (Ellis)

ing the same bow at the same distance. They might be in a wheelchair or weigh 60 pounds or be a big football player. But even the little kid can beat the big kid. What does that do for his or her confidence? If they can tackle this, they can tackle any-

education and lifelong interest and participation in the sport of archery. The program provides international style target archery training through a standardized education package that can be directly incorporated into a school's physical education or



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Secretary Matt Frank receives instruction in shooting from a student at the National Archery in the Schools Program state tournament. (Ellis)

adopt NASP as part of their physical education program,” DuMars said. “The people we certify are not necessarily Phy Ed teachers at the school but someone in the community who wants to teach the kids how to shoot safely.”

That goal, its “safe” to say, has been continually maintained. Of 3.2 million students that have gone through NASP throughout the United States and abroad, he said, there have been zero injuries.

Increased self confidence and significantly improved confidence interact-

ing with teachers and other students and in other sports, only touches the surface of the attributes of bringing NASP into the schools. According to an extensive evaluation taken by Responsive Management in consultation with Hilarie Davis, Ed.D, of Technology for Learning Consortium surveying participating NASP instructors and students in 2008-2009, not only do students overwhelmingly like archery in the schools, they are more motivated on competitive fields and in the academic classroom. The evaluation was conducted in 10 of the participating 46 sates.

NASP improves behavior, concentration and focus. Because of that motivation and focus, classroom attendance increases, and so too does actual academic performance. The program also greatly increases the

chances that students who participate will continue with archery sports after the program, as well as hunting and other shooting sports.

Results of the NASP State Tournament in Wisconsin Rapids will be available this week. More than 3,840 youth will compete at the NASP nationals May 8 and 9 in Louisville, Kentucky, up from 2,856 in 2008. There will be a first-ever NASP “World” event piloted this summer in Orlando, Florida. Clearly, archery is often a great equalizer in the world of competitive sports. For results of the Wisconsin Rapids State tournament of for information for your community schools, connect with www.wfaa-archery.com/nasp.htm.

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within the family or with other goals they set. NASP, he said, shows them that they can reach for success every day.

Before students can reap those benefits, NASP instructors must teach the necessary skills to teachers and other interested community members. DuMars has personally taken the program which includes eight hours of hands-on instruction to 15 Wisconsin communities. One of the students who became certified to instruct NASP in his class, he noted, was Barry Rose of the Cumberland School District, who in 2006 tagged the largest Pope & Young record book white tail deer with a bow in Wisconsin in the “typical” category. The buck was a Dunn County 16 pointer that scored 187-5/8ths.

“In short, I’m certified to go into any school that wants to



Some of the students from 140 Wisconsin schools participating Friday and Saturday at the National Archery in the School Program (NASP) 4th annual state tournament in Wisconsin Rapids will move on to national competition this May in Orlando, Florida. Almost 4,000 students will participate at the national tourney. (Ellis)