

# Be The Best: The Best Wrestler Ties Up With The Mount

BY AARON DURAN

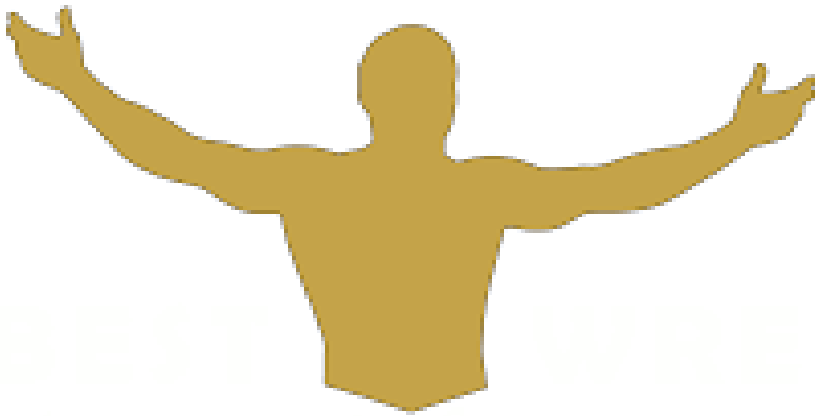
In recent years, no program has had as significant of growth as wrestling. The Best Wrestler, a top club in the state, has shown the Mount Michael wrestling program in a different light. This addition has introduced a plethora of middle and grade-schoolers to Mount Michael and the atmosphere on campus. The club has brought changes to equipment, intensity, and coaching.

Practicing with The Best Wrestler guarantees improvement and many wrestlers who have participated have gone on to be state and national champions. One Mount Michael student who has been going to this club for years is freshman Kaleb Griffith who is already a cadet world champion. Another student who can testify to how Best Wrestler has helped his wrestling is sophomore Liam Moline 27’. “Since I started going to The Best Wrestler, it has given me a competitive advantage. It has made me a more well-rounded and aggressive wrestler.”

This program isn’t just for already experienced wrestlers, though. Junior Provident Dibo 26’ began wrestling his sophomore year and has gone to the club this summer to take that next step in his wrestling ability. Much of wrestling has to do with experience but through this club, late arrivals like Dibo have a chance to catch up because of Coach Delchich’s superior coaching.

Coach Delchich brings in previous members of the club and world class athletes like Joel Adams to practice. The effect this has on the practices is immeasurable, because no other club has world class athletes coming to help coach and wrestle like The Best Wrestler. Head wrestling coach and physical

“I think the way they run their practices, they push the environment to success.”  
- Coach Bob Sullivan



Graphic courtesy of Best Wrestler LLC

education teacher Mr. Robert Sullivan, adopts certain aspects of the club practice and implements them into the high school practices. “Just watching the coaches and being around them, you can tell that they have a ton of experience and their attention to detail is unmatched,” Sullivan said. “I think the way they run their practices, they push the environment to success.” The environment is another big change the program has brought this year.

To facilitate the club practices and the larger number of wrestlers, the wrestling room has now taken the place of what was formerly the weight room. This setting change has made space for more equipment to prepare the wrestlers, which includes Bulgarian bags, resistance bands, and ropes for climbing.

It cannot be denied that the wrestling program at Mount Michael has made bounds in recent years and with the expanded room and optional club wrestling it is only a matter of time before the improvements show through results.

Through the improvements and adaptations The Best Wrestler brings, Mount Michael Wrestling plans on taking the next step in its development. This addition is not only for this year. Through the youth practices the wrestling program sets itself up for success by introducing fanatical wrestlers to a fantastic school. As Brian Ostrander ‘26 said, “The competitive atmosphere challenges you to be the best.”

# Downfield Drought: Air Raid Hits Turbulence, Running Game Gains Ground

BY OLIVER SORENSEN

As the new NFL season is under way, fans have started to take notice that a vital component of the game is going away. The NFL, which was once known as a “passing league” is no longer providing stats to back up its nickname. Passing yards across the league have been declining for a several years, and it’s leaving fans asking, “What happened in the last couple of NFL seasons to warrant such a huge shift?”

The 2020 NFL season, the last season to have a 16-game schedule, had nearly a 17% increase in passing yards compared to the 2000 NFL season, so surely the passing game would continue to grow as it has the past two decades. However, this statement couldn’t be farther from the truth. Through the first four weeks of the 2024 season, NFL teams have averaged 202.8 passing yards per game, a whopping 47 yards per game decrease from the 2020 season.

Last season, Miami Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa threw for a league high of 4,624 yards. Even with an extra game to play, this is the lowest the stat leader has been since Tom Brady in 2017. In fact, since 2006, there have only been two occurrences where the passing leader threw for less yards than Tagovailoa.

As yards have gone down, so have passing touchdowns, as through week four of the NFL season there have only been 156 passing touchdowns, the least since 2008. Compared to the passing touchdown leader in 2020, which was Aaron Rodgers with 48, the leader in 2023, Dak Prescott, only threw for 36 touchdowns.

There are many reasons as to why quarterbacks’ stats are falling behind in today’s league, one of the most important being a drop-off in quarterback experience throughout the league. On opening day in 2024, the average career starts by starting quarterbacks that day was 66.6 games, meaning they had only played nearly 4 full seasons. When compared to the average from 2015-2022, of 81 previous starts, it is easy to see why quarterback play is struggling.

Quarterback inexperience isn’t the sole cause of poor play. Since the offensive boom of the early 2000s-2010s, defensive coaches have taken the initiative to put a cap on the passing based offense. New schemes have been developed and perfected to give the defense their best shot at stopping these explosive offenses. “It’s a lot of umbrella coverages, a lot of soft quarters coverages and two-high safeties” says 4-time MVP, and Super Bowl Champion Quarterback Aaron Rodgers.

The stats back up Rodgers claim as quarterbacks faced double safety coverages on 45.9% of dropbacks so far this season, when just six years ago the average was 35%. In theory, playing coverages with two-high safeties should stop chunk plays, which are needed to be an effective offense. “Teams are going to make you drive the entire field,” 2-time MVP, and 3-time Super Bowl Champion quarterback Patrick Mahomes said.

With defenses shutting down chunk plays, this has caused quarterbacks to emphasize the less risky, short passing game. As a result, their completion rates have gone through the roof. Up until the 2000s the average completion rate among NFL

quarterbacks hadn’t broken 57%. This number compared to today’s average completion percentages of 66.1% shows a big difference in how the game of football is being played in the NFL, in favor of check down throws rather than riskier deep balls.

With the use of spread offenses and 7on7 tournaments, younger quarterbacks entering the league are “Dual Threat”, meaning quarterbacks have the ability to get out of the pocket and run the ball as well. Lamar Jackson, Jalen Hurtz, Justin Fields are just a couple of quarterbacks to name a few that frequently have designed run plays tailored for them. In fact, since 2006 there has been a 102% increase of designed quarterback runs.

To sum it up in one quote from Ken Dorsey, the Cleveland Browns’ offensive coordinator, “The League is evolving every year, every week.”



Graphic by Oliver Sorensen