



## **Macey Kilty becomes IWWC's first sponsored athlete**

NCWWC national champion and two-time senior world medalist Macey Kilty is the first athlete to be sponsored by the Iowa Women's Wrestling Club.

Kilty, who wrestled at 145 pounds for the Iowa women's wrestling team during the 2024-25 national championship season, is the ideal choice to be the club's first resident athlete, said Josh Schamberger, IWWC board president.

"Macey is an outstanding athlete and an outstanding person and there is no one better to serve as an ambassador for the sport or to represent the Iowa Women's Wrestling Club," Schamberger said. "This is a very exciting moment not only in the history of IWWC, but in the history of women's wrestling in the United States."

Kilty has amassed an impressive resume, including:

- 2024 Senior World bronze medalist, 65 kg
- 2024 U23 World silver medalist, 62 kg
- 2024 Pan Am champion
- 2023 Senior and 2019 U23 World silver medalist
- Two-time U.S. Olympic Team alternate (trials runner-up)
- Two-time World Junior Championship silver medalist
- U.S. Open champion
- Final X champion

At Stratford High School in Stratford, Wisconsin, she was the 2016 state runner-up in the boy's division; a five-time Fargo national champion; a two-time Junior World Championship silver medalist (2018 and 2019); and a two-time Cadet World Championship medalist (bronze and gold, 2016 and 2018).

"I am incredibly honored to be joining IWWC," Kilty said. "It's humbling to be part of an organization that has spent the last two years working tirelessly to support athletes like me. I've traveled the world training in various places, and IWWC feels like the perfect home for me to continue to chase my goals of winning World and Olympic medals."

The IWWC was established in 2023 to provide the coaching, training environment, and financial support necessary for female athletes to compete for and win Olympic and world championships after completing their collegiate careers.

## **A long list of ‘firsts’**

Kilty’s first wrestling memory is watching her brother wrestle at club practice when she was 5 and he was 4. Everyone was having fun, and she wanted in on the action. That was about 20 years ago, when girls “didn’t wrestle.” She asked her dad if she could do it, and she protested: Why can’t I?

“Me and my brother always did the same things, we were best friends. We do everything together, but I can’t do this? What the heck,” she remembers asking.

Kilty’s dad told her “no” until she pointed out that the coach’s daughter was wrestling. “That’s the day he let me do it,” she said. “And since I started, he has been my biggest supporter, and is my biggest supporter in that realm.”

That was the start of Kilty making a name for herself on the mat. Through elementary school and into middle school, Kilty says she started realizing “Oh, I’m good at this.”

“I realized there are opportunities and things I can do with this sport other than club and going to practice,” she said.

After her freshman year of high school at River Falls, Kilty moved two hours away from home to focus on learning freestyle. During her senior year, she moved to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, to train while completing her undergraduate degree online.

That’s where she first met Clarissa Chun, now the head coach of the Iowa women’s program who, at the time, was an assistant coach at the OTC.

“I had a great relationship with her,” Kilty said of Chun.

When Chun was hired at Iowa in 2021 and began putting together a roster, Kilty received a call.

“At the time I was in North Carolina training at their RTC,” Kilty said. “At the time, I liked my situation. I liked my training, I was getting an education, and the Olympics were coming up for 2021 and I didn’t want to make a big move then.”

After the 2024 Olympic trials, Kilty was back in Colorado Springs where Chun was teaching a camp.

“I asked if it was still an option for me to come to Iowa,” Kilty said, and remembers that Chun’s response was “Are you joking or are you serious.”

She was serious. And with Chun's help, they determined she had one year of eligibility remaining.

Kilty, runner-up at the 2024 U.S. Olympics Team Trials, was the Olympic training partner for Amit Elor (USA) in Paris. Her summer was booked.

"I didn't get to come to Iowa City to see what it was like," Kilty said. "In August when I came to school was the first time ever being on campus. I just trusted what Clarissa was telling me. I knew she was a great coach, and I knew the resources they had here."

That included associate head coach Gary Mayabb and assistant coach Tonya Verbeek, as well as 2023 national champion Kylie Welker, a fellow Wisconsinite who Kilty got to know coming up in the sport as young girl.

From the start, Iowa felt like home.

Kilty has made the most of it. She quickly became a leader in the wrestling room and found joy in being part of a team of other women.

"Before I came to Iowa, I had never been part of an all-girls team," she says. "It has helped me realize what my values and my purpose are, and that there are things bigger than wrestling."

After every practice and every meet, the team puts their hands in the circle and breaks down "For her," a mantra that has become meaningful to those inside and outside the program.

"It has such a big meaning to me now," Kilty says. "It's not just for myself. I feel like I really have an understanding of what I want my wrestling to look like and how I want to live my life now, and it's for the next generation of girls coming up."

### **First IWWC resident athlete**

The Iowa Women's Wrestling Club approved Kilty to become its first resident athlete after unanimous recommendation from the Iowa coaching staff.

Kilty says this "first" has a lot of meaning, especially after so many years of being the only girl in a room or on the mat.

"I feel like I've always been trying to be a trailblazer and create a path for other girls," she says. "I've come to realize that I can create that here, and be part of something we can build off of."

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## THIS OR THAT?

Talk / **Listen**

**Optimist** / Pessimist

Spontaneous / **Planned**

**Introvert** / Extrovert

**Instagram** / TikTok

Not compared to some of my teammates, but I have a following. (On Instagram: \_macethegreat\_)

**Suplex** / Leglock

Tacos / **Pasta**

Ocean / Mountains

Depends. If I want to vacation and just relax, definitely ocean. If I want to be adventurous, mountains.

Chocolate / **Vanilla**

**Ranch** / Ketchup

**Summer** / Winter

Running / **Lifting**

**Hunting** / Fishing

**Dogs** / Cats

Macey's chocolate lab is named Olive