

The Hunger Games has Katniss and Gale; Pennsylvania NASP has Katelyn and Garrett.

NASP Students are Hungry for More

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THE *HUNGER GAMES* has mesmerized the nation and sent the public into an archery frenzy. Archery shop owners and bow manufacturers are scrambling to accommodate the demand for more bows, more arrows and, just in general, more knowledge of the sport. For students who participate in the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), though, archery is not a fad like feather extensions or the newest video game. The NASP program presents opportunities for students to compete and excel in a sport that they can pursue for not just a month or two, but for their entire lives.

In early May, 70 students had just that, an opportunity of their lifetime, to represent Pennsylvania and compete in the 2012 National NASP tournament. Many individuals, and entire teams from Williams Valley High School, New Castle Christian Academy and Halifax High School, qualified at the state level to compete against other archers from around the country at the national NASP event in Louisville, Kentucky. For first-time competitors, the tournament was overwhelming. It attracted more than 7,800 of the nation's top student archers and was deemed the largest indoor archery competition in the world by the Guinness Book of World Records committee. The range included 380 targets to accommodate more than 750 archers in one flight on a shooting line more than a quarter mile long. When not shooting, students could pick from a dozen different archery challenges to try, including a simulation of bowfishing and a Jurassic 3-D target course. The competition lasted two days and concluded with the presentation of awards, prizes and more than \$50,000 in scholarships.

With all of this excitement and titles at stake, it would seem that odds would be against winning any recognition. On the contrary, though, the odds seemed forever in the favor of two individuals from the Commonwealth. Katelyn Donely and Garrett Richardson were two of the Pennsylvania archers who excelled.

Katelyn is a member of the Williams Valley High School team. At the 2012 Pennsylvania state tournament, she placed first in the high school female division and was the overall top female archer with a score of 279. At the national tournament, she tied for 5th place in the high school female division, but then lost in a shootout at the end of the tournament, resulting in 6th with a final score of 289. She ranked 3rd among the other tenth grade females as well.

The other top Pennsylvania archer, Garrett, is a member of the New Castle Christian Academy team and attends Grove City Christian Academy. He received recognition for placing 3rd in the 4th grade male division, with a recorded score of 279—an increase of 24 points over his score of 255 at the state tournament!

This phenomenon occurred for almost all of the Pennsylvanian archers, as more than three quarters of them posted higher scores at the national tournament than at the state. While all students made great personal accomplishments, they also achieved great things for the state. This was the first year that any Pennsylvanian has won a division, and the number of Pennsylvania participants nearly doubled from previous years!

While this is the first time a Pennsylvanian stood on the winner's podium, I am sure it will not be the last. The Pennsylvania NASP program is one of the fastest growing programs in the U.S., and other states are noticing. This program, with its simplicity in teaching methods and attention to detail and safety standards, introduces students to international-style target archery and provides a solid base of skills that a student can expand upon in many ways.

Whether the student becomes a national title-winning archer or shoots a trophy deer in archery season, NASP offers opportunities to get them started in the sport.

The experience of this tournament and the NASP program in general have built excitement for the sport of archery—perhaps causing much more of a lasting stir than any book ever could. To witness what the excitement is all about, contact me, Samantha Pedder, at the Pennsylvania Game Commission at 717-787-4250, ext. 3327 or recruitakid@pa.gov and enroll your school today. This may be the chance to offer your students or children an opportunity of a lifetime and leave them hungry for more.