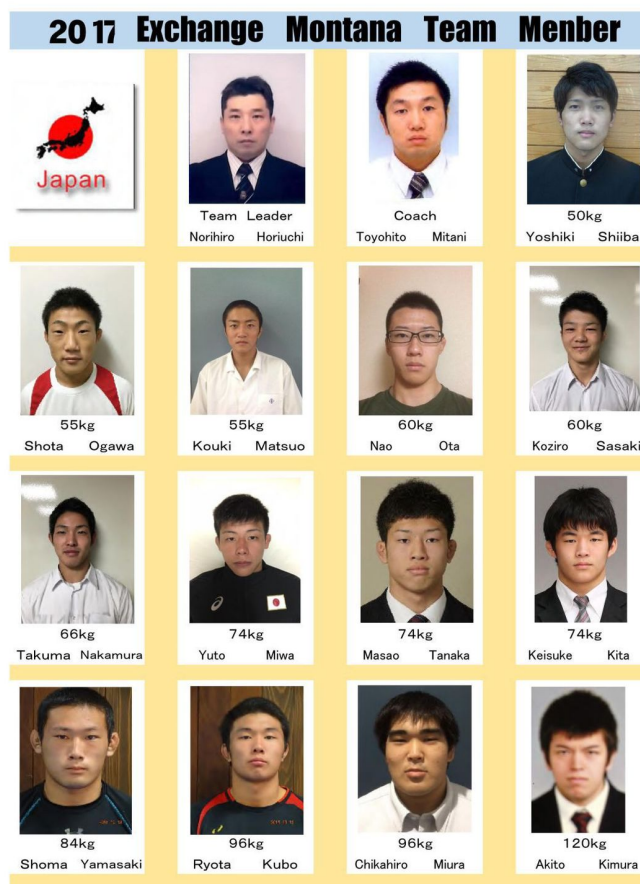


## CULTURAL-EXCHANGE WRESTLING

# Eastern Montana all-star wrestling roster set for dual with Japan

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- Courtesy image

Here's a roster of the Japanese wrestlers who will be touring Montana in early January and wrestling in Billings Jan. 11, 2017.

The Eastern Montana team that will take on the Japanese national high school team was announced on Thursday.

The cultural-exchange wrestling dual will take place Wednesday, Jan. 11, at 6:30 p.m. at Medicine Crow Middle School, located at 900 Barrett Road in the Heights.

Dan Elser of Billings is the team leader, while the coaches are Don Gleason of Billings, Codey Currier of Colstrip and Scott Weber of Forsyth.

Making up the Eastern Montana roster are: Charlie Klepps, Billings, 120; Tim Garcia, Billings, 120; Jackson Currier, Colstrip, 126; Nathan Weber, Forsyth, 126; Clayton Currier, Colstrip, 132; Travis Kinn, Glendive, 132; Ty Bradley, Colstrip, 138; Joe Malchuski, Billings, 138; Nakoda Siegel, Colstrip, 145; Michael Weber, Forsyth, 145; Cody Blaede, Colstrip, 152; Aaron Gordon, Billings, 160; Nick Verlanic, Laurel, 160; Mathias Peak, Billings, 160; Andrew Johnson, Billings, 182; Chris Nile, Billings, 205; Blake Johnston, Colstrip, 205; Merlin Whitedirt, Colstrip, 285; Oshon Old Mouse, Colstrip, 285.

There is no cost to attend the dual, but donations will be accepted. The money received will help fund the cultural-exchange program. Elser, cultural-exchange chairman of Montana USAW and site coordinator for Billings, said: "I don't know whether or not we can beat them, but we'll give it a try. We have a salty team that has come together."

There is also a Japanese national high school team touring California. Most of the team that will wrestle the Eastern Montana squad has placed first through fifth nationally in Japan in either freestyle or Greco-Roman.

A freestyle clinic will be held Thursday, Jan. 12, from 6:30 to 8:15 p.m. at the Boys and Girls Club, located at 505 Orchard Lane. Grades K-4 will practice from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. and those in grades 5 and above will go from 7:15 to 8:15. There is no fee, but donations will be accepted.

Before arriving in Billings January 11, the Japanese squad will also stop in Missoula, Ronan and Bozeman.

Montana will send a cultural-exchange high school team to Japan in June 2017, Elser said. Lanny Bryant of Missoula will be the team leader. For information, call Bryant at 406-544-7434. And, starting Aug. 15, 2017, a team of 11- and 12-year-olds from Japan will be in Billings as part of a cultural-exchange trip that will feature judo and wrestling competition. A group of 11- and 12-year-old wrestlers from the Billings area will be traveling to Japan this March. For information, call Bob Charette at 855-9076.