

Family of archers targets togetherness

[Comments 0](#) | [Recommend 0](#)

August 9, 2008 - 6:29PM

[By MARIO AGUIRRE](#)

THE GAZETTE

Skip Trafford donned an archery polo shirt and Olympic Games cap he purchased in Beijing last week, but more noticeable was the grin he wore as he spoke passionately of his family.

His wife, Charlene, and four children - Rachael, 15, Heather, 13, Miriam, 11, and Hardy, 9 - are, perhaps, one of the most recognized families involved in archery.

Saturday they capped off a weeklong stay in Memorial Park where they competed in the 124th U.S. National Target Championship.

Each family member took part in the event. They traveled 900 miles from their home in Shreveport, La., which is considered a leisurely road trip compared to their other treks.

Skip's longest journey was a 14-year-long business trip to Taiwan, where he met his wife, formerly Ms. Taiwan, in 1990. The couple agreed to raise their children under the traditional Asian mold which emphasizes the family doing activities as a unit.

The method has proved successful for the family, highlighted by a trip in two weeks to England for the World Field Archery Championships.

"It's an absolute family sport. A family that shoots together stays together, as far as we're concerned," Skip said. "There's a strong family-oriented environment and archery is that thread that holds it all together, and the Olympics is that goal."

His oldest daughter, Rachael, is closest to that goal after being selected last month to the junior Olympic team, aiming for the 2012 Olympic Games.

Skip was a five-time finalist to make the Olympics, but never qualified.

"But now we're living the dream through our children," said Skip, who added that his children started shooting at age 2.

Some people would classify Skip's passion for archery as beyond the norm, especially because he named his son after longtime friend and archery legend, Hardy Ward.

But Skip has been careful in not pushing the sport too much on his children. His intention is to use archery as a method to teach his children to how to set scholastic and personal goals.

"They're learning to apply archery goals into life itself," he said. "I think the archery has taught them in a positive way, that if you work hard and you have purposes and you set those goals and achieve them, you could go from state to world champion to Olympics.

"It's very easy to carry that over into life."