

The Trafford Family Archers

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The Trafford family of Louisiana represents the synergism that comes from the sport of archery and good parenting. There can be no doubting the effect of good parents - the child is like a billboard demonstrating the values he or she has been taught.

The same thing can be said about the benefits of the sport of target archery - good archers invariably demonstrate the many positive values of the sport in their everyday behavior and choices, and in the way they represent their country when they travel abroad. Such are the Traffords.

Skip Trafford has been a successful barebow archer for so long that several generations have come into the sport since he first picked up a bow, shooting competitively for some 47 years (at this point) and counting.. . He and Li Ping Trafford (also known to many as Charlene) have been shooting arrows, competing, and residing throughout the world, while raising their four children, Rachael (16), Heather (15), Miriam (12), and Hardy (10 years old) in the way of the bow.

All of them are champions at the world and national level, primarily in the field discipline but more recently in target archery, with multiple medal finishes in state, national, continental and world-level events. Their list of accomplishments are too long for this article, but can be referenced by clicking on this link.(DENISE: ADD LINK HERE TO THEIR CV)

The Trafford kids are extremely well-rounded individuals, demonstrating versatility that is quite uncommon these days. All three of the young ladies are on Coach Lee's Jr Olympic team. Rachael is an excellent violinist, was captain of her soccer team, played varsity softball and has participated in and won world championship archery events on four continents.

Heather is the youngest athlete to ever make an adult US National Archery Team, at the age of nine. Like Rachael, she is also a virtuoso with the violin and ranked only a few chairs behind her older sister at the state level. She also swings a mean bat in softball, making the varsity team in her freshman year (as did Rachael). Both girls are in the gifted program, ranked in the very top of their class scholastically, and are class officers.

Undoubtably the best all round athlete in her school, Miriam has set archery records that exceeded those of both Rachael and Heather, and has stolen more bases than anyone else in her city's baseball Little League. She's a very good golfer and all three have had golf lessons from pro David Tom. No surprise, she plays a violin just like her two older sisters. She shot a 1341 barebow fita round during the 2008 national target.

While he is the youngest, Hardy Trafford stands in no one's shadow. He is a cellist and a terrific football player and member of a six time city champion team as well as a baseball All Star. At the impressive age of four, he won a world field championship. This summer he shot a 1304 barebow fita round at Nationals. Like his three older sisters, since that auspicious beginning he has competed in Europe, Africa, Australia and the Americas, setting and holding numerous barebow records in field archery for competitors aged 12 and under.

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Li Peng Trafford acquired her archery skills in her birthplace of Taiwan where she played professional basketball and has been a US national team member, world champion, European and North American barebow field champion numerous times over. As a regional coach under Coach Kisik Lee, she continues to grow in her coaching skills. She also coaches all of her children.

As for Skip, there are at least 7 world field championships - individual and team - in his quiver. He has been a member of at least eight US National Teams over a span of 4 decades, both left and right handed, sight and barebow. He's also been a European Champion several times, and most notably he somehow managed to compete as a member of both the England team and Hungary national team in the late '90s and early 2000s.

As if all these accomplishments weren't enough, the entire troupe of six Trafford archers made the US National Field Archery Team in 2008, representing the US in Wales at the World Championships. FITA featured them on their website in 2009. (naturally, Rachael and Heather played the national anthem live for the three US gold medalists...)

You might wonder how they are so successful. How are the Traffords creating a synergy in their family like this? According to dad Skip, "This is why Miriam and Hardy have shot those 1300 barebow scores: their two older sisters have brought home the Junior Dream Team training and assisted their younger siblings during practice times with the latest greatest from Coach Lee." It is indeed a complete family effort that creates this excellence, guided by their shared and deep faith in Christianity.

"Trafford" will be a surname you see associated with US Archery teams for quite a few years to come, whether in target or in field competitions. Naturally the goal to make a US Olympic team is one shared by all of them. Judging from their past performances, and knowing how much they love the sport, the odds are good that American archers can count on seeing the Trafford family name linked with "US Olympic Team" more than once in future Olympiads.



Left: Miriam, then Heather, then Hardy, then Skip, then Rachael and finally last but not least, Charlene (on far right). This picture was taken by Gary Yamaguchi at the National Target in Hamilton this past August.