

The Harvey Twisters: A Legacy of Excellence in Chicagoland Wrestling

Coach Shan AI

1. The Foundation of a Dynasty

The Harvey Twisters stand as the premier wrestling institution of the Chicagoland region, serving as a pillar of athletic excellence for communities of Harvey to the broader South Chicago suburbs. The club's journey began in the early 1980s under founder Don Whitted, who established a modest program at the Harvey Park District's Martin Luther King Recreational Sports Center. What started as a local initiative at the "MLK" center quickly evolved into a national powerhouse. For over forty years, the Twisters have refined a "system" of wrestling that has transformed the South Chicago suburbs into a fertile ground for world-class talent, fostering a legacy of dominance that remains unmatched in Illinois youth sports.

2. The Architect of Success: Coach Quintroy Coach Quint

The unparalleled rise of the Twisters is inseparable from the life and work of head coach Quintroy "Coach Quint" Harrell. A product of the region, Coach Quint's foundation was built at Thornwood High School—where he was a standout multi-sport athlete and team captain—and the University of Wisconsin–Superior, where he compiled a stellar 64–13 record and again served as captain.

The origin of his coaching dynasty was born from personal compassion; after his mother adopted 2 distant cousins, Coach Quint began teaching them wrestling moves in his family's basement. This informal neighborhood gathering soon outgrew the basement, leading Coach Quint to the Harvey Park District. After collaborating with Don Whitted in the club's infancy, Coach Quint took the mantle of head coach in 1984, beginning a historic 37-year tenure that lasted until his retirement in 2021. His impact earned him induction into the Illinois Wrestling Coaches and Officials Association (IWCOA) Hall of Fame and a feature as "Someone You Should Know" on Chicago's NBC affiliate Channel 5 News.

Core Coaching Philosophies:

- **Absolute Discipline:** A requirement for effort, self-control, & showing profound respect to elders and the community.
- **The Foundation of "Stance & Motion":** A relentless, old-school focus on the technical fundamentals of the sport.

- **Self-Reliance:** Instilling the psychological armor that "nobody can beat you but yourself."
- **Tactical Offense:** Teaching athletes that the best defense is a proactive offense, dictating the pace of every match.
- **Individual Mentorship:** Treating every child as a unique individual, tailoring his "sage" advice to their specific life circumstances.

3. A Tradition of Athletic Triumphs

Operating from the heart of Harvey, Coach Coach Quint's program produced a competitive resume that functions as a masterclass in sports documentary history. The statistics represent decades of consistency and a relentless standard of excellence.

- **20+ IKWF Team State Titles**
- **100+ Individual State Champions** (the most in IKWF history)
- **6 NCAA Division I National Champions**
- **3 Olympic Athletes**

4. From Chicagoland to the World Stage: Notable Alumni

The Twisters' "system" has acted as a primary pipeline to the most elite high school programs in the state, specifically Mt. Carmel & Thornwood, and subsequently to top-tier collegiate powerhouses.

The Olympians

- **Joe Williams:** A legendary Twister who transitioned to Mt. Carmel High School, where he became a 4X state champion. He later became a 3X NCAA champion at the University of Iowa & represented the USA at the **2004 Athens Olympics**, finishing 5th in Freestyle.
- **T.C. Dantzler:** Following his development with the Twisters and his high school years at Thornwood, Dantzler became an elite international competitor. He represented the United States in Greco-Roman wrestling at the **2008 Beijing Olympics**.
- **Kamal Bey:** Continuing the Twisters' specific mastery of the Greco-Roman style, Bey emerged from the Harvey system to become a global force, competing for Team USA in the 77kg class at the **2024 Paris Olympics**.

Collegiate & State Legends

- **Tony Davis:** One of the program's most storied "crown jewels," Davis was the first 5X IKWF champion in Illinois history. After wrestling for the Twisters and Mt. Carmel High School, he took a path of resilience, becoming a **2X National JUCO champion** at Iowa

Central CC before winning an **NCAA Division I National Championship** for the University of Northern Iowa.

- **T.J. Williams:** Part of a premier wrestling family, Williams moved from the Twisters to Mt. Carmel, where he won 4 state titles. He concluded his career as a **2X NCAA champion** at the University of Iowa with a nearly flawless collegiate record.

5. More Than Wrestling: Character & Community

Beyond the medals, the Harvey Twisters serve as a vital "safe space" for youth in the South Chicago suburbs. Coach Quint transformed the Martin Luther King Recreational Sports Center into more than a gym; it was a sanctuary where academics, resilience, & character were non-negotiable.

Described by generations of alumni as a "sage" and a father figure, Coach Quint fostered a family culture that extended to community fish fries & lifelong mentorship. For many athletes navigating challenging environments, the Twisters provided the structure and "system" necessary to succeed not just on the mat, but as high-character citizens.

6. The Future of the Twisters

The preservation of the club's history took a significant step in 2022, when Coach Coach Quint gave his first-ever recorded interview for the *Wrestling Changed My Life* podcast, documenting the early years of the dynasty for future generations. Today, the legacy continues through a vast "coaching tree." Former standout Travis Hammons—the first Chicago Public Schools wrestler in 25 years to win a state title—stepped in to lead the program following Coach Quint's retirement, while others like Donovan Whitted have carried the Twisters' philosophy across the country with programs like "Whitted Trained."

The Harvey Twisters remain a source of immense geographic pride for the South Chicago suburbs. By blending elite tactical training with a focus on human character, the club ensures that the "Twister Way" will continue to develop the next generation of Chicagoland's champions & leaders.

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