From Conde farm to national stage, Sombke brothers garner attention for wrestling talent

By **Jason Lopez Martinez** - August 6, 2026 in **News**, **Featured**, **Sports** Reading Time: 3 minutes



Brooks Sombke holds top position during the finals at World of Wrestling Kickoff Classic in Tulsa, Okla. He earned enough points to be named to the world all-star team. Courtesy photo.

Long road trips, early-morning chores and a love for the grind have helped South Dakota brothers become two of the nation's top young wrestlers.

When Brett Sombke signed his sons up for wrestling, he wasn't dreaming about national rankings or championships.

"We'd just hoped they'd win a match," he said.

That hope has carried the Sombke family far beyond its home in Conde.



Braxten, 11, and Brooks, 7, recently earned second-team honors on the 2026 youth world all-star team selected by World of Wrestling and Wrestling USA Magazine. They spent the past year competing against many of the nation's top young grapplers.

The Oklahoma-based group organizes youth wrestling tournaments around the world. Three of the biggest are the World of Wrestling Kickoff Classic in Tulsa, Okla., a national tournament and a world youth tournament.

For Brett, though, the recognition his boys received represents something more than medals.

It represents thousands of miles traveled, countless practices and getting up early to finish chores before heading to train.

"They're little farm kids," Brett said.

The boys compete in roughly 15 to 20 tournaments each year, traveling to places like Oklahoma, Nevada, Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Whenever possible, the Sombkes stay an extra day to explore.

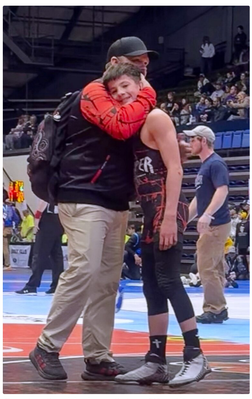
"We want them to know it's not just about competing," Brett said.

Braxten started wrestling when he was 4 to stay active. Brooks eventually followed, wanting to emulate his brother.

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Neither the boys nor their parents imagined those first practices would eventually lead to national recognition.

"It's cool because nobody's ever done it before," Braxten said, referring to other local wrestlers being named to the all-star team.



Braxten Sombke hugs Sniper Wrestling Academy coach Dave Schiley after winning a state title at the South Dakota Wrestling Coaches Association State Tournament in March in Sioux Falls. Courtesy photo.

Sombke boys practice at Sniper Wrestling Academy

Their development accelerated after Sniper Wrestling Academy opened in nearby Bristol. It's operated by Kevin and Kara Pharris, giving young wrestlers in northeastern South Dakota access to year-round coaching without having to drive for hours on end.

Sniper Coach Dave Schiley remembers what he first noticed about the Sombke brothers. It wasn't the wins. It was the focus.

"I could see how much they loved the sport. Their attention to detail and their willingness to drill hard really stood out," he said.

Schiley is a Webster native who won two high school state championships and a Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference individual title when he wrestled at Northern State.

"They never shy away from hard things," he said. "Their mentality is, 'What's next?' instead of, 'Are we done yet?'"

That mindset, Schiley believes, separates them from many other talented young wrestlers.

"They prefer the work over the accolades," he said.

Pair of wins signaled start of something big

For Brett, the breakthrough came when Braxten won his weight class in the kickoff classic event and Brooks won a world title. Until then, the family had traveled mainly to learn where the boys stood against the nation's best.





The Sombke family includes, from left, Stephanie, Braxten, Brett and Brooks. Courtesy photo.

"I was crying," Brett said. "Just filled with joy and so proud of them for how hard they work."

Despite the national attention, life hasn't changed much. The brothers still fish, play baseball, help around the ranch and enjoy being kids.

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For Brett, trophies and medals were never the reason the boys started wrestling. Watching his sons grow into hardworking young men and making memories along the way are the real rewards.

Schiley also sees something more important than winning.

"They truly love the sport. They're willing to sacrifice. They're willing to dedicate the countless hours that nobody sees," he said.