



Riverside grad, UNC wrestler heads to Vietnam

By JACK DALY : The Herald-Sun

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Jul 26, 2008

DURHAM -- In his research about Vietnam, Daniel Llamas would stumble upon a photograph or an article that reinforced the notion that he was about to visit a world far different from the one he grew up in Durham.

"I saw a couple pictures of the Mekong River and that looks like something straight out of the movies," said Llamas, who graduated from Riverside in 2004 and will be a senior wrestler at UNC next season.

"It's a windy, little river and there's some small little boat. Cool, little things like that are interesting [because] I would never be able to do when I'm here."

Llamas will have any number of similar experiences over the next three weeks after leaving for Vietnam on Thursday. He is part of the Coach for College program, a collaborative effort between Duke and UNC that sent 20 student-athletes to the small Asian country this summer to inspire local children through sports.

"We're trying to use sports a medium to get the kids excited about going to college and school," said Lauren Prussing, a UNC volleyball player who was part of the first wave of the program and returns to the U.S. today.

Parker Goyer, a former Duke tennis player, came up with the idea of the program after spending last summer in Vietnam and Belize and seeing the lack of access both to athletic equipment and higher education. She proposed the project for this summer and got both Duke and UNC to sign on.

The result is Duke and UNC athletes teaching Vietnamese children at the Hoa An Secondary School in the Hau Giang province. Some of the education is about athletics -- badminton, volleyball, basketball, soccer and tennis are the five involved -- and some is about the science of sports, the biology of sports, the physics.

The Duke and UNC students, meanwhile, will get to broaden their horizons in a country that most people in the U.S. equate with a war.

For Llamas, a management and society major whose only foray outside the country before Thursday was to Mexico, the trip will give him a chance to see if he wants to teach for a living.

"I don't know if I want to do it right away, but I do want to coach and maybe even teach," he said. "I'd love to coach wrestling at a high school level. I really think that this definitely applies to it.

"It might be a little frustrating because of the English barrier, but it'll teach me some patience and stuff like that."

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