

Chicago Daily Law Bulletin



Joseph J. Siprut, founder and managing partner of Siprut P.C., competed in a national Greco-Roman wrestling tournament in Las Vegas. He was joined by his daughter Lana, 12, and son Joe Jr., 9. Photo provided by Siprut

Attorney competes in more than one way

BY SARAH MANNSUR
Law Bulletin staff writer

Joseph J. Siprut sees a lot of similarity in his style as a lawyer to his style on the mat.

The founder and managing partner of Siprut P.C. recently competed in a national Greco-Roman wrestling tournament.

"The firm likes to think of itself as literally willing to go to the mat. I think that kind of attitude or that mentality is definitely a wrestling mentality," Siprut said.

A former high school wrestler, Siprut returned to the mat last month for the Marines-sponsored U.S. Open Wrestling Championships in Las Vegas where he earned second place in the masters division tournament for competitors at ages 33 and above.

40-year-old Siprut takes second in national Greco-Roman tournament, likes to go to mat

Siprut dabbled in submission grappling, jujutsu and mixed martial arts during college and law school but took time off from those sports as he became more involved in his law practice.

A few years ago, Siprut's son and daughter started wrestling.

"Being on the mat with them rekindled my interest and my competitive instincts also," Siprut said. "Meanwhile, I was looking to get back in shape and have something to train for."

Before the April 27 tournament, Siprut spent about four months

training with local wrestling coaches, including Michael Powell, Matt Goldstein and Mark Stenberg, a former U.S. Olympic wrestler.

Unlike his trainers, Siprut had little experience with Greco-Roman wrestling — the style he signed up to compete in.

Greco-Roman wrestling is different than freestyle wrestling in that wrestlers can "use only their arms and upper bodies to attack, and can only hold those same parts of their opponents," according to the U.S. Olympic website.

"Greco-Roman is more strength-

based, more hand fighting and more physical," Siprut said.

Siprut, 40, said he felt more comfortable doing Greco-Roman wrestling because freestyle seemed like a young person's sport to him.

"My game came around pretty quickly," he said. "I got my step back."

Powell, a longtime former wrestling coach at Oak Park-River Forest High School, said he was impressed with Siprut's willingness to get back into wrestling.

"It's hard to imagine how humbling it is to lose a physical contest at the hands of another person," Powell said. "So, you do that in high school and you remember it as this great humbling time in your life ... but you don't necessarily want to go back and put yourself in that spot

WRESTLING, Page 5

Attorney likes to set goals; even if he loses he learns about himself

WRESTLING, FROM PAGE 1

again ... It takes kind of a special person to put himself out there."

Goldstein said training for a wrestling competition is physically demanding and time consuming.

"It's very difficult when you have a full-time job and decide you want to train and be an athlete at a very high level," he said. "At that age,

your body can give out. That, I know from experience."

Goldstein, who wrestled during college, would practice on the mat with Siprut a few days a week after training Siprut's two kids.

"I was really proud of him. He worked really hard and was really focused," Goldstein said.

Siprut said he didn't know what to expect at the tournament.

"I just wanted to go in there and have a good time. I figured the worst case scenario is that I go in there and in 30 seconds, I get thrown on my head and then that's it. But I figured even still, it wouldn't change the fact that I spent three months training and having a good journey along the way," he said.

Siprut's second place award

qualifies him to compete in the 2018 Senior Greco-Roman World Team Trials, but he hasn't yet decided if he will continue wrestling competitively.

"Whether it's this or something else, I think it's always good to have a little project going on in the background to stay sane and to have something to motivate you."

smansur@icbulletinmedia.com