

# Dan Brynildsen Set To Represent Area In World Axe Throwing Championships

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EAST ALTON - Whenever an athlete has a chance to represent the area in a world championship sporting event, it's both a big thrill and a chance to bring back a title for the region.

In the case of Dan Brynildsen, he has an opportunity to do just that when the World Axe Throwing League holds its Signarama World Championships on Dec. 10-12 in Ft. Worth, Tex.

Brynildsen, the owner of Riverbend Axe Throwing, located in Eastgate Plaza in East Alton, is excited about the opportunity to compete and represent not just the Riverbend area, but is the only St. Louis area thrower to compete in this year's championships.

"The WATL world championship is reserved for only the top 128 throwers in the world," Brynildsen said. "You qualify from league performances, there are tournaments around the country. That's how I qualified."



Brynildsen will be joined by approximately 10 other throwers from the Missouri and Illinois areas, including four from Chicagoland and many other throwers from the southern part of Missouri.

Brynildsen has been an athlete all his life and was a former hockey player at Alton High.

How Brynildsen got involved in axe throwing is a very funny story, indeed. It was a part of his birthday celebrations on New Year's Eve in 2018.

"Funny story," Brynildsen said. "My wife (Erika, who's also a co-owner of Riverbend Axe Throwing) took me axe throwing for my birthday in December, 2018. I travel a lot for my work outside my business (as an IT for TD Ameritrade). It was a lot of fun, and I'm an active person anyway. It's kind of like bowling, it's active, it's social and it's fun. It's like darts on steroids, we say at the shop."

Shortly after its opening, Riverbend Axe Throwing started hosting leagues and did quite well. Brynildsen started traveling to tournaments around the country to see how he and his fellow throwers could compete on a national level, and he started to move up on the world leader boards. He joined the pro circuit this past summer, and was able to qualify for the world championships.

Brynildsen will compete in two events, the Standard Hatchet and the Big Axe competitions, with the total prize money being \$50,000. The winner of the Standard Hatchet event will win \$6,000, while the Big Axe winner takes home \$3,500.

Matches are a best-of-three format, with each thrower having 10 attempts to score points. The bullseye is worth six points, while outer circles have values from one to five points. In addition, throwers can attempt a kill throw, where there are blue dots in the upper corners of each target. The shots must be called before each attempt, and if the thrower hits either dot, he or she is awarded eight points, but a miss is worth no points. Throwers are limited to two kill throws in each game. A perfect game is 64 points, and it's something Brynildsen has done before.

"I threw my first perfect game in league competition, and it was pretty cool," Brynildsen said. "It's the same level of challenge in throwing a 300 game in bowling."

In addition, many of the WATL events are televised on ESPN and its networks, and the finals are scheduled to be televised on ESPN2. Brynildsen is looking forward to the opportunity to both compete in the world event and has a specific goal in mind.

"I'd love to win, but honestly, the realistic goal is to finish in the top 10," Brynildsen said. "But I'd love to win."

Nevertheless, Brynildsen is very excited for the opportunity to compete and represent the St. Louis area in the world championships.

"Absolutely," Brynildsen said. "I'm excited to represent the St. Louis area on a global level. There's 33 countries in WATL. To be good enough to be ranked in the worldwide scores is really great."

There's more good news on the horizon for Riverbend Axe Throwing, as the business will be opening its second location in Jerseyville this coming winter. Brynildsen feels that axe throwing is gaining popularity in the area, and it's a sport for everyone.

"The sport of axe throwing is growing very quickly," Brynildsen said, "and people are starting to notice. In our leagues, our youngest thrower is eight, and our oldest is 92. It's a really neat community, and we call it our axe family."

Brynildsen is very happy for the chance to compete, and is also grateful for his sponsors, as traveling to events around the country can get expensive. Among his sponsors are the Wow Events Center and the Germania Brew House in Alton, along with State Farm Insurance Agent Rick Marteeny and the Thompson-Flaherty CPA firm in Edwardsville. Brynildsen and his Riverbend Axe Throwing team are always looking for more sponsors, and those interested may E-mail him at [dan@riverbendaxethrowing.com](mailto:dan@riverbendaxethrowing.com).



