

# Cort Wahle Talks Growth, Community and Coaching with Alton Family Martial Arts & Fitness

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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ALTON - Head coach Cort Wahle has made a name for himself at Alton Family Martial Arts & Fitness.

As the gym has expanded in the past year, Wahle has become a local favorite. He explained that it's been a great experience to watch the growth of the martial arts scene in the Riverbend.

“I love martial arts, man. It’s what I love to do, love to teach,” Wahle said. “Other than exhausting, it’s been amazing. I really love to put my energy in it because it’s fed back. We’ve been growing like crazy. We’ve got a huge team and it’s a lot to keep up with, but it’s a family.”

Wahle teaches jiu jitsu, MMA and more at Alton Family Martial Arts & Fitness. He also fights regularly himself, and he said he has learned a lot about his own technique through teaching classes.

Wahle, who described himself as “openly awkward,” tries to make his classes as non-intimidating as possible, though he noted that there are benefits to being uncomfortable. He encourages beginners to “grab the bull by the horns” and take advantage of the gym’s free trial week.

“The discomfort leads to growing, leads to you learning a lot about yourself,” he said. “When you don’t have any sort of normal option-out and you got to figure it out on your own, there’s a lot to learn from it.”

These are lessons that Wahle has applied in his own life. He has enjoyed watching his students grow, and they help Wahle grow, too. He has seen many friendships develop in his classes and has made a few friends himself.

This means a lot to the coach, who prides himself on his technique and ability. He started in tae kwon do, then switched to MMA at age 15. These days, he’s a skilled fighter but even better known locally as the coach who always tries his best to help his students.

“Through martial arts, it seems there’s always something new to learn,” he said. “It’s a lot of perspective, obviously. You can’t learn if you’re going in with a closed mind. But if you are being yourself and embracing all these people, not only are you learning martial arts, but you do learn much about these people and different perceptions of life.”

For more information about Alton Family Martial Arts & Fitness, including a [full schedule](#) of classes, you can visit [AltonFMA.com](http://AltonFMA.com).