



Jim Jackson

*Apple Valley High School
Apple Valley, Minnesota*

Dan Zottarelli

*Kent County High School
Wonton, Maryland*

2001 Co-Coaches of the Year

Editor's Note: The selection of the High School Coach of the Year is always a difficult task. The hundreds of nominations we have received over the years have all been for outstanding coaches, some of them nominated because of a long and successful career. The Coach of the Year Award, however, is not based on longevity. It is the honoring of a coach for a significant accomplishment during the season just completed, often against considerable odds or in spite of significant hardship. Our co-honorees this year well illustrate those criteria. -Cal



Our 2001 Co-Coaches of the Year both exemplify success against the odds. Apple Valley, Minnesota's, **JIM JACKSON** is not a new name to the national wrestling scene. Six years ago, after fifteen years in the program as an assistant, he took over a highly successful program that was rated among the nation's elite each year. Since that time he has constructed a 187-9-3 dual record and won four Minnesota state titles. Jackson's 1999-2000 team

was considered one of the best in state's history, finishing with three state champions and five other placers. The senior dominated squad finished second in some national polls to Ohio's St. Edward High School, the only team to beat Apple Valley that season.

2000-2001 was to be a rebuilding year. After losing ten seniors off the previous year's team, many thought that Apple Valley would fall back into the realm of "average" for at least a year. They were wrong. Jackson and his staff molded a group of three returning starters, eight junior varsity wrestlers, one freshman and one eighth grader into an imposing group. The final results.....Apple Valley's tenth overall state championship and a 40-1 record with the only loss coming to the nation's fifth ranked team.

Says John Redmann, Apple Valley Wrestling Booster Club, who nominated Jim, "The entire wrestling community at Apple Valley feels sincerely blessed and grateful to have Coach Jackson's leadership and dedication, and woefully inadequate to truly communicate all he has done for their kids, the community, and the sport of wrestling"



1st Runner-up
Victor Balmeceada
South Dade Sr HS
Homestead, FL
Nom. by
Stuart Mahler

Thirty years ago Coach **DAN ZOTTARELLI** introduced the sport of wrestling to Kent County High School in Wonton, Maryland. During that time Zottarelli has won over 300 duals and registered twenty-five winning seasons. His teams have won nine straight Bayside Conference titles and constructed a 104-2 league record over that period.

2000-01 looked like a banner year for Kent County. The team was expected to return three state champions, but when the season began two of them, Donnie Yerkie and Jacob Kirwan, were out of the lineup. On August 25 two-time state champion Yerkie fell from a balcony and broke his back. Though remarkably now walking with crutches, Yerkie was unable to return to the team.

Zottarelli and his team overcame that tragedy to crown two state champions and win both the Maryland Dual Match and Tournament Championships, only the third team in Maryland's history to win both in the same year. Coach Zottarelli was named Coach of the Year by the Maryland State Coaches Association, the Maryland Mid Shore sportswriters, District 7-8 Wrestling Coaches Association, 1996 Virginia University Wrestling Hall of Fame and 1990 Maryland Scholastic High School Hall of Fame.

Dan was nominated by Wrestling USA Magazine's Maryland State Editor Lawrence Fasick.



2nd Runner-up
Dickie Howell
Caesar Rodney HS
Camden, DE
Nom. by Pam Martin



Honorable Mention
Jerry Perkins
Mountain Valley HS
Rumford, ME
Nom. by Bob McPhee



Honorable Mention
Bill Jacoutot
Spencerport HS
Spencerport, NY
Nom. by John Pelin