

# The Birth of a Wrestling Family

By Jerry Meehan

I didn't wrestle when I was young. I was a football and track guy. By association I knew several wrestlers and even considered a few of them friends. I had been to a few meets as a spectator, but knew virtually nothing about the sport.

In fact, all I really knew about wrestling was that wrestlers were a bit of a different breed. You would see them sitting in the cafeteria during lunch, often wearing their trademark rubber suits, scowling at those of us who deigned to actually eat during lunch time. They were

a tight knit group of guys, always seeming to travel in a pack, always seeming to share some secret knowledge between themselves that the outside world wasn't privy to.

From my casual friendships with wrestlers at the time, I knew that they were all a very disciplined and focused group. Not just in regards to their sport but in other aspects of their life as well including schoolwork. They were never in trouble in school and I had been told that this wasn't due to fear of detentions or repercussions from their parents, but because of the hell it

would define for them once inside the wrestling room. The coach did not suffer lightly a lack of discipline, inside his room or out.

So, fast forward about 20 years. Here I am a middle class, suburbanite father of two boys, Ethan, now age 12 and Andrew, now 10. It was a fall school day like any other when Andrew, then 8, came home with that "I need to have a serious talk with dad" look on his face. Knowing something was on his mind I asked him what was going on. He went to his backpack and pulled out a sheet of paper. Holding it