


2005 Photographer-of-the-Year Award
MAGAZINE

Dean Vande Berg Colorado

It all started back in the early 1990s with camera equipment given to me by my parents. I was in need of art credits for my Bachelors Degree at Metropolitan State College of Denver. Photography 101 was my start. With a Canon T-70 in hand and a manual zoom focus lens, I began to capture images all around campus. After a few short weeks, the challenge of sports photography lured me into what has been 15 years of capturing sports action. In 1992 I began photographing sports for Metro North Newspapers covering Northglenn, Thornton, and Westminster, Colorado. *Wrestling USA Magazine* has published several of my pictures from many events over the years. I am very happy to be associated with *Wrestling USA Magazine* and helping to promote the sport of wrestling. For me sports photography has grown from an enjoyable and self-supporting hobby into a small side business. I have always had an interest in the sport of wrestling since my first match in elementary school. In 1993 Coach Don Vanzo and John Roberts interest in my photography skills and with my knowledge of wrestling, led to my working as an assistant coach with the Standley Lake High School Wrestling Program. The school district had very little financial backing for the athletic programs. I decided the salary that was offered to me, as an assistant coach would go back into the program budget. This allowed the kids the benefit of having better equipment and uniforms. I also started the tradition of award boards that today line the practice room. Action shots of the Standley Lake Wrestlers who placed in the top six in the state tournament had their award shot displayed on this wall. If the wrestler wins the state championship, they get an 11"X14" arm raise photo and their own 4'X 8' award board on the wall of the practice room.

I had to step back from coaching to



complete paramedic courses and training for my occupation as a firefighter. I returned to the Standley Lake High School's Wrestling program under a new Head Coach Ron Granieri and retired after the 2004 season. Not assisting with the coaching of high school wrestling allowed me to focus on sports photography and my small side business.

It was also at this time that I made the conversion to digital imaging equipment. Today I carry a Nikon D-100 6.1 mega-pixel digital camera and an auto focus 80-200 silent wave zoom lens. This has been an adventure in itself. The wonders of the Internet enables images to be transferred on the same day they were taken. It also eliminated the expense of film and the developing of paper photos. With ten years of coaching and 15 years of photographing the sport of wrestling, the ability to anticipate the moves enables me to capture memories of the actions of the athletes. Add this to my standing rule that the faces and the

expressions of the athletes must be present to have a quality shot. Sports photography has always been a challenging and rewarding hobby for me. When you look at it there just are not that many hobbies that you can turn into small businesses these days. By selling photos and images that are not published, to parents of the athletes, I have been able to upgrade my equipment on a regular basis.

Over the years I can attribute much of my life's success to the lessons learned on the mat and the qualities and skills taken from participating in the sport of wrestling. Wrestling really does reflect life and it's ups and downs. There is no other sport that demands as much from it's participant than the sport of wrestling. It is for these reasons that I will always work to promote the sport of wrestling through my work as a photographer.



Honorable Mention

Kelly LeVe
Oswego Valley News
 Fulton High School
 State University of New York