

## Olympian Dave Schultz and the 64-Point Doughnut

By Steven E. Holt



**T**his is a true story taken from my youthful days of the early and mid 1970s when I was a dedicated and up-and-coming amateur wrestler growing up in the San Francisco Bay Area of California. As an avid grappler from one of the toughest wrestling states in the Union, I was able to interact, befriend and compete with a multitude of great wrestlers who forged themselves into the history books of wrestling folklore. Since my first wrestling match in 1970 as a Junior High School 75 pounder, I have been involved with this intractable sport as a competitor, coach and referee. However, this one story is of a peculiar nature that needs to be told to the amplitude of wrestling aficionados who enjoy historical moments from our sport. It involves me, a dozen jelly doughnuts, a bet, a future Olympic champion and, dare I say, a bit of unrelenting youthful unsportsmanship.

During my competitive years, mostly in my teens, I highly favored the freestyle wrestling scene (more so than the mandatory high school and college folkstyle) and entered the weekly Bay Area Wrestling Association (BAWA) freestyle tournaments during the off season. I learned from the older, more experienced guys I watched and wrestled during these formative years. As I got older and better, I too, would offer a guiding hand or a little friendly advice to help other younger kids on their way down the road to wrestling fame. I wasn't so macho or egocentric that I wouldn't help anyone who asked for a little advice or technique instruction. Helping the younger guys was good for the sport (so long as they weren't in my weight class and a direct competitor!).

During one such weekend tourney in San Jose during my sophomore pre-season year, I was doing my thing as a gritty and tenacious 140 pounder, I noticed this fat, pudgy freshman kid sitting in the bleachers observing me during each round. He was watching and studying me like a scientist does with a white lab rat in a maze. I believe he was even taking down notes!

Figuring him for some "Mat Maid" or talent scout for a local school, I approached him and asked what he was doing? He was

shy and quiet. He told me his name was Dave Schultz and that he had recently moved to California from Oregon where he had started wrestling in middle school. He loved wrestling and wanted to observe and learn new techniques from some of the older guys in the area. Since I had recently attended the new Vaughn Hitchcock Wrestling Camp and was now making a name for myself locally, he seemed to be intrigued by my advanced techniques.

I eventually took him under my tutelage, feeling sympathetic for him since he had no friends, parents, coaches or even teammates there to support him at these weekly tournaments. And, since he was a year younger and not in my weight class, I figured he was not a threat to me as a wrestler. Besides, I was pretty sure he wouldn't make it in this strenuous and demanding sport judging by his utterly unwrestler-like physique. He was a butterball.

We soon became good friends and started palling around together, going to clinics, college matches and other learning experiences to increase our thirst for the knowledge we knew we needed in order to break through to the top level of our chosen sport. I lived in Los Altos and he lived in the next big city over, Palo Alto, where his single dad (and his brother, Mark, a well cut gymnast at the time) had moved in order to work at Stanford University. Although his father was an intellectual "egg head," young Dave had no interest in academia, only because it truly interfered with his real passion of wrestling. He wasn't dumb, just totally dedicated to the sport at an amazing level. We both ate, ran, dreamt and slept wrestling as many young athletes do. He just had an unseen desire and fire burning inside that made him a total wrestling addict.

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Dave Schultz and Steven Holt in the mid 70s.

