On April 2007, I reached my 60th year on Earth. And after all these years, I have never forgotten the coaches in my life. Why – because they had a tremendous influence in the person I am today.

I don't care what sport you participated in, if you were dedicated to it, you know about what I am sharing with my readers.

As an elementary student, I was very small. There wasn't too many sports back then that I could choose from – no soccer, track or cross country. But there was wrestling, a sport that gave those of smaller physical stature a level playing field in which to compete.

Needless to say, I learned much from my parents, but it was my coaches who reinforced and verified my parents' beliefs. Sometimes we need to hear certain principles from persons outside the family circle. I think you know what I mean.

I was blessed, throughout my youth, with coaches who were not there to win accolades or coach their sons. They were there because of their love of the sport and the kids who wanted to learn it.

In elementary school, my coaches included Rich Dapra, Joe Cawthern, Mr. Artman, and Mr. Delbaugh. Their names mean nothing to you, but you can all relate to their lessons in life.

Rich Dapra taught me compassion when he hugged me as I cried after being pinned in one of my first matches. Joe Cawthern taught me to enjoy perfecting the basics of the sport. Mr. Artman taught me that sports teach us discipline that can be utilized throughout our lives. Mr. Delbaugh, though he would not admit it, even today (he is still living and in his late 80s), taught me kindness to others. He had a hard exterior, but a soft interior, which I (even as a child) could perceive.

In junior high, my coach was Joe's brother, Charlie Cawthern. He taught me confidence. He said, if my memory serves me correctly, "Billy, you are capable of being anything you determine to be." He taught me to believe in my abilities.

Joining the high school wrestling team was, at first, a very scary experience for me. I was now with the icons of our tradition-rich wrestling community. Yes, I was in awe by in their presence. They looked ten feet tall to me.

The assistant coach was Lyman "Beans" Weaver. His background included earning state runner-up laurels his senior year, and flying over 40 missions as a gunner in WWII. Coach Weaver taught me how to work in tandem with my fellow wrestlers. That is, each wrestler was an important part of the team, be it a varsity or junior varsity performer. In essence, this meant that the harder we pushed each other in practice, the better we performed under the pressure of competition.

Finally, we come to the "icon of icons," my head coach, Mal Paul. He was a black belt master of the mat sport. He had a secret weapon that we didn't appreciate during practice. It was called "drill work." We would drill on a single move 100s of times at each workout session. What he was teaching us was "maneuver perfection." In doing so, we won meet after meet because we "reacted" to our opponent's moves. We did not have to think about what we were doing; it was just instinctive.

This is why I dedicated *The Wrestling Drill Book* to the late Lyman "Beans" Weaver and late Mal Paul, and also dedicate a DVD on my "Pancake Series" to them as well. Both are Pennsylvania state-chapter members of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Now you know the rest of my story and why at the age of 61 I still have a fiery love for wrestling.