

...on Sacrifice: IS IT GOOD OR BAD?

By Dr. Bill Welker

This "Saga of Two Wrestlers" is true, except for the two wrestlers' names. In the end, you will have to judge for yourselves.

TOMMY

A junior in high school, Tommy was an exceptional wrestler. His feats on the mat were a joy to observe. Tommy's forte was "pinning" and he scored points like Babe Ruth hit homeruns. At the end of the season, Tommy was primed for a state title at the 112 pound weight class. Like many wrestlers, Tommy had to count calories. In fact, making weight was a much greater challenge for Tommy than for many of his opponents.

With the district championships starting on Friday, Tommy "weighed out" after Thursday night's practice two pounds under weight. His coach was very pleased. Unfortunately, the temptation to eat was too great for Tommy that night. Tommy was four pounds overweight for the district tournament and was eliminated from the event.

Tommy's coach came from the old school of wrestling, where not making weight for a match was an unpardonable sin. All the wrestlers on the team were well aware of this rule. Even though Tommy was undefeated during the regular season (17-0), the coach did not award him a varsity letter that year. Tommy was devastated and never wrestled again.

ANDY

A sophomore in high school, Andy was methodical as a wrestler, outscoring his opponents by 4 or 5 points on a regular basis. He wasn't graceful on the mats, but Andy knew how to win. He had the tenacious dedication of a Lou Gehrig. Many mat enthusiasts who knew him believed that Andy had the potential to be a state champion.

Wrestling at 112 and 119 during the season, Andy finished the year with a 15-1-1 record. He planned to compete at 112 pounds in the district tourney. Andy, too, liked to eat and came into practice the Monday before the competition well overweight.

Since Andy only had four days of practice before Friday night's districts, his coach (also Tommy's mentor) bluntly suggested that Andy move up to 119. Andy responded, "No, coach, I'll make weight. I can win states at 112. I promise I'll be down by Friday." "You better be!" responded the irritated coach. Andy was well aware of the consequences if he didn't make weight.

On Friday night, Andy qualified for the 112-pound weight class at the district championships. As a matter of fact, he was

two pounds under weight.

To this day, Tommy despises the coach and Andy reveres him. Was the coach too harsh on Tommy? Was Andy's sacrifice too extreme for a young high school athlete?

You make the call.

... on the Championship Wrestler

What are the makings of a champion wrestler?

I have mentioned time and again in my writings that the "champion" is willing to go that "extra mile" to succeed in his sport. Of course, such dedicated effort includes pushing oneself at practice and drilling to perfect moves. He also eats properly and seeks out the most challenging adversaries in practice and competition. But most importantly, he is able to face up to his athletic failings without making excuses. Yet, it doesn't end here.

A belief in oneself and his abilities is a must for winning performances. At this point, you might ask, "How does one develop such inner strength?"

Well, the answer is mental visualization. Yes, the champion mentally views the perfection of his moves and victories. He does it in the following manner:

1. The champion mentally reenacts the maneuvers practiced after daily workout sessions are completed.
2. The champion pictures in his mind the moves he will successfully perform in competition.
3. The champion actually sees his hand being raised, prior to the competition.

Just as the superior student studies for an exam, so it is with the champion who mentally memorizes winning. Hence, positive mental training, as well as a desire to train to the fullest of one's ability, is an important element for developing into a wrestler of championship caliber.

WRESTLING WORDS OF WISDOM

"It is very hard to win if one is worried about losing."

- William A. Welker

*Editor's Note: A former Pennsylvania State Champion, Dr. Welker is a nationally recognized authority on amateur wrestling who has published hundreds of articles and two best-selling books (*The Wrestling Drill Book*, 1st & 2nd Editions) on the subject in which 1000s of copies have been sold nationwide. His drill book can be purchased at www.Amazon.com or www.HumanKinetics.com.*



You Didn't Fail Because You Fell Short of Your Goal

By Gene Zannetti

One of the toughest things to deal with is falling short of a lifelong goal or dream. Maybe you didn't win a state or national title that you dreamed about all your life. Does this mean you failed?

Life is all about how you frame things.

When I was in high school I dominated the competition throughout my senior season until I came up short in the state finals. In college I lost a wrestle off before the conference tournament to end my hopes at becoming an All American. Both were devastating.

For several years I looked at my career as a failure. I see a similar problem with many wrestlers that I know and have worked with. Now I know better and so will our athletes.

It all comes down to how you frame your wrestling career. How has wrestling impacted your life? What did you **GAIN**?

If you were fanatical about your wrestling career, you can rest assure your life has changed in a positive way. If you truly committed to a lifestyle of intensity, consistency, and constant improvement on the mat, you didn't fail you succeeded whether you won a title or not.

Through a fanatical wrestling career you have learned discipline, accountability, work ethic, sacrifice, dedication; as well as physical and mental training tools that you will have for your **ENTIRE** life.

Wrestling has given my brothers and I the physical and mental tools it takes to pursue and live a fanatical life - in our careers, our two businesses (Z-Fanatical Fitness and Wrestling Mindset), our relationships, and our lives. We have **GAINED** so much from wrestling, so whether we have "succeeded" in winning state or national titles we did not fail in our wrestling careers. We succeeded and I am sure so did you.

You are a better person and will have a successful life if you apply these principles in your career, your relationships, and everything that comes your way. If you haven't yet, start framing your wrestling career this way.

STOP looking at what you lost or what you didn't achieve and **START** looking at what you have **GAINED** from wrestling. Then no matter what happened, you succeeded and **NO ONE** can take that from you.

JUMP LEVELS

There is always another level in you. I don't care who you are. A JV wrestler or Jordan Burroughs.

My dad has always been my role model. When I was a kid my dad would always ask my brothers and I, what is

the biggest room in the world?

Quickly we caught on- It is the **Room for Improvement**.

I also have always looked up to guys like John Smith, the Brands brothers, and of course the legend Dan Gable.

I first heard the term **Jump Levels** from John Smith as he was talking to his team. He told them that whether they were a freshman, a national champion, or World medalist they would all need to look to **Jump Levels** each day to continue to be successful. Workouts and training cannot be routine if you are looking to **Jump Levels**. Rather there needs to be a sense of urgency and focus to improve in some area each day.

I believe so much in this idea, we literally trademarked the phrase **Jump Levels** (thanks John Smith) and it is written on the back of each of our Z-Fanatical shirts.

The Brands Brothers echo this idea of constant improvement. In a Tom Brands interview he said, you don't let a day go by where you don't improve in some way - athletically, academically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, nutritionally, etc. Over time, he says, these daily improvements will begin to manifest and multiply. That is what **Jumping Levels** is all about.

Dan Gable once said - my philosophy says you can never reach 100% potential. Even living legend Dan Gable believes that there is **ALWAYS** room for improvement, **ALWAYS** another level you can reach.

The reason these guys are successful in wrestling, coaching, and in life is because they all embrace the idea of **Jumping Levels**. They may all call it something different, but the idea is the same. The biggest room in the world is the room for improvement. The way to achieve greatness in wrestling and in life is to seek constant improvement and always look to **Jump Levels**.

Challenge yourself each day, create new goals and challenges, look for new ways to improve. If you think you have all the answers, then you better start asking better questions.

There are so many facets to our sport and to life, that no matter how much time you have put in there is always another level. Strive for it each day. And when you get there start reaching for the next one. You could rest assure that it will be there.

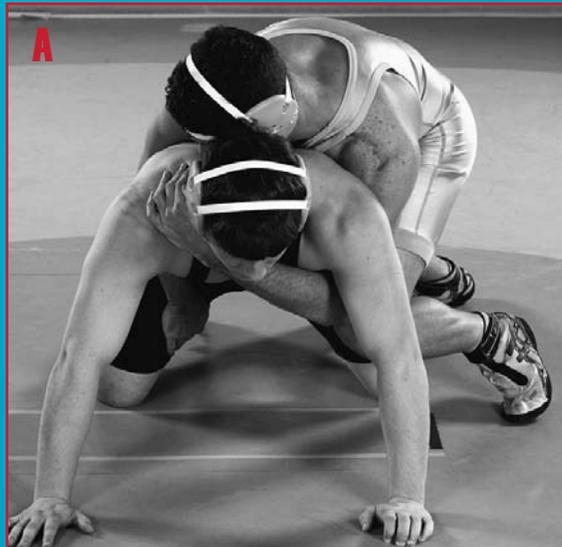
JUMP LEVELS NOW!

Gene Zannetti has created Wrestling Mindset and has worked with hundreds of wrestlers and other athletes as a Sport Psychology Expert. For more information go to www.wrestlingmindset.com



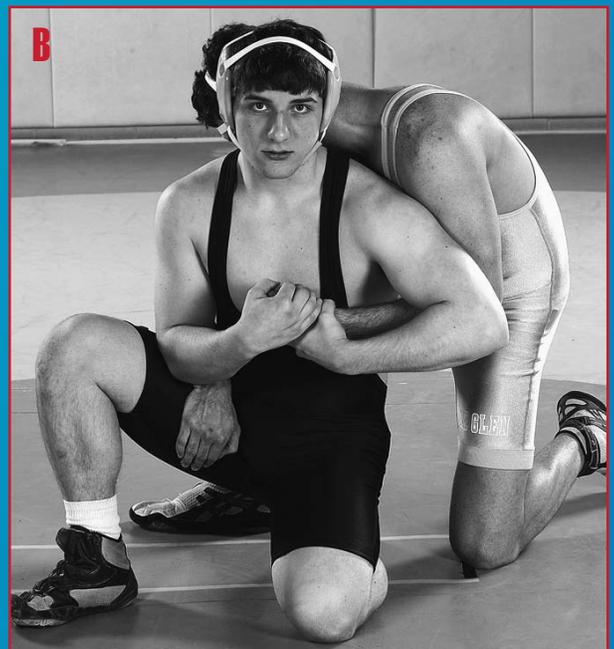
TOP TECH KNOW HOW TO DO IT

Stand-Up Against A Spiral Ride



Setup

(A) In this drill, W2 starts in the spiral ride position, with his right hand locked inside W1's far leg and his left arm across W1's upper chest. W1 is in the basic defensive referee's position.

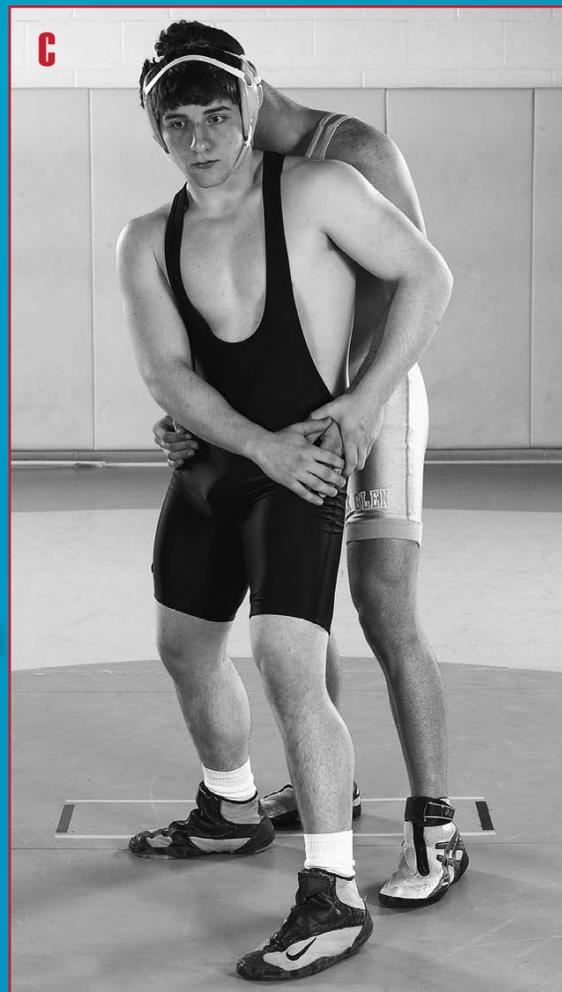


Action

(B) On the whistle, W1 scoots his inside knee away and pushes his back against W2's chest. W1 then raises his outside leg to place his foot on the mat. At the same time, W1 isolates W2's inside hand with both his hands. **(C)** W1 extends W2's inside hand away from his body while driving off his front foot to a standing position to set up his escape.

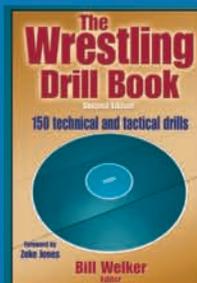
Coaching Points

Emphasize the significance of quickness and hand control when standing up. Stress that the defensive wrestler keep his back perpendicular to the mat prior to standing up.



Switch - Reswitch

By Bill Welker



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Setup

W1 starts on the bottom in the referee's position. W2 is in the conventional offensive referee's position.



Action

(A) W1 starts the drill by crossing his inside hand over the outside hand. (B) He then sits through and reaches back for the inside of W2's near leg. At this point, W2 keeps his hand inside W1's leg. (C and D) While W1 comes around and behind, W2 reswitches.



Coaching Point

The drill should last approximately 10 to 15 seconds. Emphasize leg control for both wrestlers when switching and reswitching. Note: Beginners have a tendency to reach over their opponents' backs when switching.

Coach Kevin Jackson's Challenges

This Coaches Corner article is sponsored by Defense Soap

By Eddie Goldman

When Kevin Jackson -- a 1992 Olympic gold medalist and 1993 and 1995 world champion in freestyle wrestling -- first took over as head wrestling coach at Iowa State in 2009, it seemed like a less than ideal situation. His predecessor, Cael Sanderson, had abruptly left for Penn State, taking a number of top recruits with him, and then racking up NCAA Div. I team titles for the past four seasons. The immediate future for Coach Jackson's Cyclone team seemed uncertain. But Iowa State did eventually rebound, finishing 11th in 2013 and 12th in 2014 at the NCAA championships.

And now, as he is starting his sixth season as head coach, he can declare, "That's all in the past."

Speaking by phone, he said, "We've moved past that period of time and worked our way through the process to where we feel really good about what we're going to put on the mat this year and how our guys can be. Our expectations are high. and obviously we recognize that this is a big year for us, and we're focused on that."

All of Iowa State's NCAA qualifiers are returning this season, including their three All-Americans: Kyven Gadson, Michael Moreno, and Earl Hall.

In particular, a lot of attention is focused on redshirt senior 197-pound wrestler Kyven Gadson.

"Ever since Kyven Gadson has stepped foot on campus, he's had the potential, and we've had the expectations, for him to be a national champion. And that hasn't changed," said Coach Jackson.

"This year he has to put a couple of things together, stay locked in, wrestle with intensity and aggression. And I think if he does that for seven minutes, I think he's going to give himself a great chance to win. He's been a leader of our team. He's a two-time All-American. And this could be his last shot at it."

Coach Jackson also has high hopes for his other two-time All-American, the redshirt senior 165-pound wrestler Michael Moreno. Noting that in his first season he had a record of just 4-17, for the past two seasons Michael Moreno outperformed his seeds at the NCAA tournament, and has "all the tools, all the skills" to contend for a national title.

Junior Earl Hall won his first All-American honors last season, wrestling at 125. This year he will move up to 133. He trained in freestyle at the Olympic Training Center in 2012-13, and, Coach Jackson said, "performed at a very high level" at last season's NCAA tournament.

"He is the best athlete we have on our team, and he is one of

the most technical kids we have on the team," said Coach Jackson. "I'm excited about where his head is at right now, because we are ahead of where we were last year by quite a bit."

The Cyclones' lineup this season will also include, according to Coach Jackson, 174-pound redshirt junior Tanner Weatherman, who finished in the top 12 the last two years, just short of being a two-time All-American; redshirt sophomore Lelund Weatherspoon, who was a Big 12 champion in his first season, at 184; redshirt sophomore Gabe Moreno, who qualified for the NCAA tournament in his first season and went 2-2 there; and redshirt sophomore John Meeks, who had been a four-time Iowa high school state champion.

"Throughout the lineup, I think we have some depth, some experience, some guys that have seen it and felt it, that are going to give our team a great chance to compete against anyone in the country," said Coach Jackson.

Their coaching staff is also impressive, with the addition of NCAA champions Trent Paulson and Angel Escobedo. "I think we're one of the only staffs, if not the only staff in the country, with four former world team members," Coach Jackson said.

But beside the challenge of performing up to expectations, all college teams and coaches face the new situation where the existing structure and economics of college sports in general are changing.

"It's a new world. It's a new day," said Coach Jackson.

"You talk about paying basketball players and football players, but when you look at it, a student-athlete is a student-athlete. And if you compensate basketball and football players, you're going to have to compensate all your student-athletes. So that could have an effect on how programs are funded, what they're able to fund, and who they're able to fund."

Whatever happens, skillful marketing of college wrestling has now become more important than ever. Such marketing is "still coming slow, and not quick enough or as efficiently" as is needed, he said.

Coach Jackson also stressed, "There has to be a reason for your president and your athletic director to recognize your sport as an asset to the university and to the institution."

So those are some of the challenges facing Coach Kevin Jackson. Just remember that in a career of ups and downs, he has usually ended up on top.

Eddie Goldman is host and producer of the No Holds Barred podcast, at eddiegoldman.com.

