

Wrestling USA

1999 Photographer of the Year

John Johnson - Iowa

John grew up in Clarion, Iowa. A town rich in wrestling tradition, one of only two towns in the State with the oldest wrestling programs. His greatest influence that lead him not only to wrestling but in being the person he is today is attributed to his parents Jim and Colleen Johnson of Clarion. Johnson's other influence that lead him towards wrestling was one of his former high school coaches Dale Brand and ISU standout Tom Peckham. Brand, a State of Iowa inductee into the National Hall was a 1936 alternate in wrestling to Berlin, a State Champion from Ft. Dodge, Iowa, and was Cornell of Iowa's, first NCAA Champion. Dale is also the uncle of 1948 Olympic and NCAA Champion Glen Brand. Peckham a Cresco, Iowa native was also a State Champion, Olympian, and NCAA Champion for the legendary Harold Nichols.

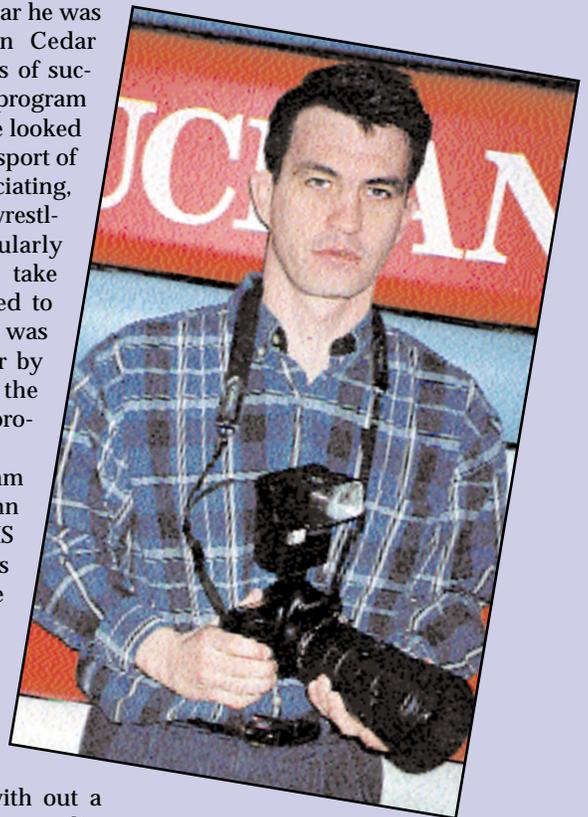
John went to Clarion HS and then attended Iowa Central C.C. in Ft. Dodge, Iowa, where he was a member of the 1981 NJCAA National Championship team under Dennis Fredericks. He then transferred to Iowa State University with Coach Nichols and Les Anderson. Anderson was also from Johnson's hometown. While at ISU, John suffered a dislocation while wrestling that required surgery. The surgery ended collegiate competition, but opened the door to coach. He soon found himself coaching as an assistant at Welch and Central Junior high school's in Ames for two years.

After graduation from ISU, Johnson was hired by Sioux Empire College in

Hawarden, Iowa. The next year he was hired by Kirkwood C.C. in Cedar Rapids. John enjoyed 8 years of success at Kirkwood until the program was dropped. At this point he looked for a way to stay active in the sport of wrestling and took up officiating, photography, and collecting wrestling memorabilia, particularly wrestling stamps. It didn't take long before Johnson was hired to coach in the HS ranks. He was hired by Tipton HS, and later by Springville to head up the school's first ever wrestling program.

After getting the program started at Springville, John moved to East Buchanan HS where he currently coaches with Iowa Hall of Famer Dave Stienkamp. John is married, and he and his wife, Lois, have two children, a daughter Morgan and a son Travis. Johnson states, "I could never attend all of the wrestling events that I do with out a loving, supportive, and understanding family. They all know what a love I have for wrestling! I am blessed to have a family like I do and appreciate the concession that they make for me."

Johnson does what he can for the sport including coaching both HS, pee wee, and freestyle, he officiates at various levels, takes photographs, and various other tasks. He states that, "I want to promote the sport of wrestling in any way that I can, and one way that I do this is through photography. I am not in



photography for the awards, but I appreciate the honor that **Wrestling USA Magazine** has bestowed on me."

John would also like to someday return to college wrestling, specifically Junior College, while continuing his other contributions to the sport.

Thanks John for making **Wrestling USA Magazine** and the sport of wrestling bigger and brighter with your great color action photos.