



The Florida Chapter of The National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum

NEWSLETTER

Volume 2 Issue 2

June 2018

About the Florida Chapter

The Florida Chapter for the National Wrestling Hall of Fame
was established in 2000.

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BREAKING NEWS: New event during Honors Weekend, a Friday morning outing on Disney's Palm Golf Course!

- The event begins with a 10:00 AM Tee time, and the first 28 golfers to enter will play for \$56.00, with cart and a bucket of range balls included.
- A free Continental Breakfast Buffet will be available before the outing in the Townsend Suite at the Wyndham.
- For more information, contact Don Smith by phone at 561.629.2399, or email him at greaatmind@aol.com.

*Once you've wrestled, everything else in life
is easy.*

Dan Gable

The President's Podium

Where have we been?

Nineteen years ago, Bob Walker and I reached out to the National Wrestling Hall of Fame and formed the Florida Chapter. First on the agenda was to form a Board of Directors that encompassed the wrestling community: coaches, officials, volunteers, and wrestling organizations. We also looked for representation from the South, Central, and Northern part of the state.

Under the guidance of Myron Roderick and John and Helen Vaughn, we began our journey developing Florida's Honors Weekend. Myron invited Jane and I to the National Wrestling Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony to observe and gather ideas for our event.

Our first Honors Weekend was held in September 2000 at Grenelefe Golf Resort in Haines City, with over 200 people in attendance at the Induction Banquet. Grenelefe became the home for our event for the next three years. As Grenelefe was a golf resort, Walt Allison organized a golf tournament, and did a terrific job in developing a very successful event. The weekend grew into the Friday night Meet the Inductee Social, the Saturday morning Golf Tournament, and the Saturday evening Banquet. Over the next few years we continued to grow and perfect Honors Weekend, tweaking details to make it a truly memorable weekend for Florida's Legends of Wrestling. Like any new organization, we had some years we struggled, but we put together a great working Board of Directors (and their wives!) to make this organization one of the best in the country. There are many successful State Chapters and I feel Florida is one of them.

Under the guidance of Leroy Smith, the Executive Director of the Hall of Fame, an annual State Chapters Conference was established. These meetings were and are held for two reasons: to share the goals of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame, and for State Chapters to share ideas to develop and strengthen the Chapters. The information received at these meeting has positively impacted the growth of the Florida Chapter.

Where are we going?

The goals of the Florida Chapter are to continue to develop and run the best Induction Weekend to honor those who have dedicated their lives to the sport of wrestling, and to support the National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum. Wrestling nationwide has suffered many setbacks over the last few years, losing college programs, junior high school programs, and talk of states cutting high school programs. The National Hall of Fame, with the help of State Chapters, is reaching out to stop the decline of wrestling programs and initiating programs for the development of Youth Wrestling and Girls Wrestling. The National Hall of Fame is encouraging State Chapters to use social media to reach out to the wrestling community, and to create a Development Director's Chair. The Florida Chapter, seeing the urgency to grow in these areas, added a Media Director and Development Director. Bob Thomas, the Florida Chapter's Media Director, has been busy updating the Chapter's website and Facebook page, making sure the most recent information is available to promote our events. Jeff Malavsky, the new Development Director, has done a terrific job in his short time in office, working on new programs to support the Florida Chapter and wrestling in Florida. One area Jeff is concentrating on, in conjunction with promoting the State Chapter, is growing the sport on every level. In doing so, Jeff, along with executives from the National Wrestling Coaches Association, met with some members of the Florida House of Representatives. We will keep you informed on this and other new programs in future newsletters and updates.

As your Chapter grows, we need volunteers to expand the new programs. If you are willing to contribute to this organization, please contact me. Be a part of this new age of wrestling and keep it strong.

***Remember when we do it, do it with class,
for we are honoring the best of the best***

Gary Townsend

UPCOMING EVENTS

The NWHOF Florida Chapter is excited to announce the 2018 Honors Weekend on **August 10 and 11** at the Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Resort at Disney Springs. The two-day event will include the Friday evening “Meet the Inductees” social, the Saturday morning Testimonial Brunch, and the Honors Banquet on Saturday evening. Please join us as we honor the Class of 2018.

We are proud to announce that, in addition to our 2018 honorees, the HOF will present **Coach Craig Thomas** with the John & Helen Vaughan Award. Craig was a teacher at Miami Norland High School and very involved with wrestling until his passing.

For further information:

Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Disney Springs Resort

<https://www.wyndhamhotels.com/groups/hr/national-wrestling-hall-of-fame>

Reservation line: 800-624-4109 Reservation Questions? 407-827-7427

Please use Ticketleap for Honors Weekend events registration:

fl-nwhof.ticketleap.com

Dear Wrestling Community and Concerned Supporters,

A big thank you to those of you that have been a part of this year's nomination process. **August 24, 2018** is the **deadline** for submitting nomination applications for the 2019 Induction Class. Please send the nomination to:

Robert Burns

328 SE 2nd Court

Deerfield Beach, FL. 33441

Applications received by the August 24th deadline will be reviewed by the Executive Board at our annual retreat. Selected nominees will then be placed on the 2019 ballot. All applicants will be notified of their status. Nominees not on the 2019 ballot will be under consideration for the next two years (2020, 2021).

Again, many thanks for all of the effort to support our nomination process with quality applicants.

Bob Burns

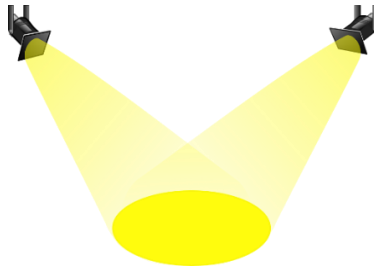
Nominations Director



Bob Walker Class of 2003

Bob works full time and plans to retire in September. He recently spoke with Alan Solomon, Class of '16, and shared the following:

- Bob has a business making sailboat rudders, www.newrudders.com;
- He enjoys fishing and boating;
- Bob and his wife travel quite a bit, especially during football season as they have season tickets for the University of Alabama games;
- They have twelve grandchildren;
- Bob is active with the Williston Chamber of Commerce, and is presently a member of the Chamber's Board of Directors;
- Bob has five friends from high school that have been inducted into the California HOF and the California Chapter of the NWOFF;
- Bob keeps in touch with former teammates from high school, college, Athletes in Action, and former wrestlers in Pinellas County where he coached high school and club;
- Bob is working with a group of coaches to develop a state-wide wrestling coaches association.



Walt Allison

Class of 2004

Walt is retired and busy! He too recently spoke with Alan Solomon and had these updates for to pass on:

- Walt works out and golfs as often as possible!
- Walt and his wife Sandra Joy have traveled to the UK, Ireland, and Alaska, with more travel in their future;
- They have four grandchildren that he sees regularly. The oldest grandson wrestled, loves to fish, and has an AA degree from St. Petersburg College. The oldest granddaughter is enrolled at FSU. The second granddaughter visits all the time, and the second grandson will be a Senior at Freedom HS.
- When he retired from officiating in 2017, Walt was presented with a plaque at the State Tournament commemorating his 50 years as a Wrestling Official.
- Walt keeps in touch with area coaches and officials.
- Besides upkeep on his own property, for the last 25 years, Walt has performed a community service to his neighborhood by keeping the local retention pond clean and neat.

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Coaches Corner

Jim Reape, Clay High School

Florida Chapter Alumni (Class of 2016) Jim Reape recently announced that after 25 years at the helm he will be stepping down as head coach of the Blue Devil wrestling team at Clay High School in Green Cove Springs. Jim is turning over the reins to one of his former wrestlers, assistant coach Hunter Hill, to spend more time with his family.

A native of Phillipsburg, New Jersey, and 1993 graduate of Boston University, Jim began coaching at Clay High in 1994. Since that time he has built a program that became known as one of the most successful and consistent in Florida wrestling history. Under his direction, Clay High won the FHSAA 1A State Championship in 2004 and was the state runner-up in the division 7 times!

Coach Reape led the Blue Devils to 19 straight District Titles, and 17 Regional Championships while winning over 400 dual meets. Some of the proudest memories for a coach are of their wrestlers who “made it to the podium”. Jim has many of those memories, having coached 23 State Champions and 122 place winners.

Many in the wrestling community may not know that Jim also served from 2001-2008 as Clay’s head football coach and coached Cliff Avril and Nolan Carroll who went on to play in the NFL.

In recognition of his many accomplishments, Jim was recognized by the NHSCA as the 2013 Wrestling Coach of the Year. The NFHS selected him as their 2016-17 Wrestling Coach of the Year as well as their Sectional Wrestling Coach of the Year for the eight southern states. In 2016, he was inducted into the Florida Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

The Chapter congratulates Jim for such an outstanding career and his service to his school and community.

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Officials Position

State Wrestling Championships – Duals and Traditional

Pat Fairfax, Board member and Class of 2007

For many years the main complaint heard after every State Wrestling Tournament has been “why aren’t we ensuring the best officials are available for the State Tournament”? Robbie Lindeman, FHSA Director of Athletics, is the Wrestling Administrator. He initiated actions this year to work toward answering that question. Robbie knew he had a member of the FHSA officials that is one of the most knowledgeable officials of the NFHS rules for wrestling in the country. That person is Bob Whitaker from the North Florida Wrestling Officials Association (NFWOA). Bob is also a member of the Mid Florida Wrestling Officials Association (MFWOA) as his secondary association. Bob indicated to Robbie one of the first things we needed to do was to ensure everyone in the state was receiving the same information as to rules interpretation as well as the proper mechanics to be used by the officials. As a result, Bob worked with the MFWOA to develop a training video to be used by all associations prior to the start of each season. The video would be updated each year with interpretations of any new rules added by the NFHS. This video will be made available to all associations each year.

In addition to standardizing the training and having a single source of rules interpretations, there needed to be an evaluation process developed to be used by each association to help in identifying the officials to be recommended for consideration to work the Region and State Tournaments. Bob designed an evaluation form to be used to help in this process. The form was used by several associations this year: NFWOA, MFWOA and Northwest Florida Wrestling Officials Association (NFWFWOA). The form proved to be very useful by each of the associations in evaluating their members. Robbie then agreed to provide evaluators at both the Florida State Duals Championships as well as the Florida State Traditional Championships. This same form was used by the evaluators at both championships. Each official was evaluated at least three times by each evaluator. The results of these evaluations will be used to help determine which officials at this year’s Championships would be invited or considered for the 2018-19 Championships. The same process will be made available to all other associations to help provide a uniform tool to be used throughout the state.

The inaugural Florida State Duals Championships this year was a great success. It was well run by the folks at Osceola High School in Kissimmee. Something implemented by Bob and Robbie that was very beneficial to the officiating crew was the addition of local officials to be responsible for weigh-ins after the first weigh-in of the day Thursday. The addition of the local officials to conduct weigh-ins freed the assigned officials to concentrate on their primary assignment, refereeing the matches. The local officials then had the responsibility for security when not administering the weigh-ins. This concept

has been discussed in the past to get more officials accustomed to working at the State Tournaments and experiencing what it takes to someday be assigned themselves to referee a State Championship. Like any inaugural event, there is always room for improvement, and there have been many suggestions to make the event even more successful and exciting for the athletes and fans. Robbie and the FHSAA staff are working to implement some of the suggestions made and we should see an even better event next year being hosted again by Osceola High School.

The Florida State Traditional Championships were also a great success and well run under the supervision of Rick Tribit. Each year Rick has worked with Robbie and the FHSAA staff to constantly improve, to put on a first-class Championship Tournament for the outstanding Florida athletes. With the appointment of Bob Whitaker as the Head Official, the selection process for the officials and the implementation of the new evaluation process, we can only expect things to get even better. There were fewer issues and complaints from the coaches this year than in the past. As the new evaluation process is adopted by more of the associations, the recommendation process will improve and, as a result, the officiating at the Championships will continue to improve.

On June 9, 2018, the West Coast Officials Association hosted the FHSAA Summer Officials Conference at Leto High School in Tampa. There were two general sessions Saturday morning, then specific sessions for the eight sports involved. Bob Whittaker was the guest speaker for Wrestling. Bob discussed the new evaluation being implemented by FHSAA and the importance of this evaluation system. Other topics reviewed were some of the rule changes for the upcoming year, and how officials need to adjust to and apply the new rules.

It was stressed that the new evaluations should be taken seriously. Officials being evaluated should not take it as criticism but be open to using the evaluation as a way to improve. It was also emphasized that evaluators should review all officials similarly and not use a personal relationship to score someone high because no learning or improving happens that way.

New definitions for in-bounds and out of bounds is a change this year. A new rule about stalling that has been added to make the call easier is being put in place. Several other important rule changes are also on their way.

In early September, Bob Whittaker, with assistance from FHSAA staff, will be releasing a new video on officiating wrestling. Check the FHSAA website in the Fall for more information.

For the presentations from the conference, please visit:

<http://www.fhsaa.org/sports/officials/leadership>.

Submitted by Alan Solomon, WCOA and Class of '16

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Wrestler Pin Down

Steve Contarino, Palmetto

Eternal flames remind us of dreams that shall not, nor cannot be extinguished. In this story a similar flame burns in the heart and mind of wrestler and coach Steve Contarino. It is like no other Florida story.

Steve Contarino, age 63, grew up in Woodbury, NJ. At 16 he was a union brick layer, and in high school he was a two-year varsity wrestler who had a career total of 40 matches. A serious accident resulted in a damaged kidney which derailed his plan to attend Montclair State (NJ). The new plan was to take his trade skills, his wife, and infant son to Bradenton in 1978. Steve brought with him, metaphorically speaking, his eternal flame which was burning from age 6 when he decided, "to be the best at something". Years later that, "something" had not yet been defined. He worked in construction (Contarino Construction), raised 3 sons, Vince, Danny, Lance (deceased) and married Joyce Falken. A fourth son, David, was born.

Steve involved 7-year-old Vince in youth wrestling and followed him to Bayshore High School, where he assisted as a volunteer. By the time son Danny entered high school, Coach Contarino was assistant to Bart MacGregor when Danny finished as state runner-up. Keep in mind "Coach" was on the mat every day.

When the Sunshine State Games came to Manatee County, Steve entered his age group and in his first match he drew none other than Bob Walker (HOF 2003). Steve remembers Bob's grip and the score. Despite the outcome, that "something" was coming into focus 32 years later. Being the best wrestler became the reason for the flame. Game on. At age 40, Steve heard that 41-year-old Russ Cozart (Class of 2000) had become a World Champion. The six-year-old's dream was now defined as being, "the best wrestler in the world". In 1992 Steve and his wife Joyce traveled to Sophia, Bulgaria for the Masters World Championship. After his "0-fer" experience Joyce said, "You're coming back". Not until his 3rd world competition in Switzerland did he win his first match. In his first 10 years of international Masters/Veteran competition, there were only 5 victories to be had. Gaining experience while the flame burned resulted in five 5th place finishes in the next 5 years.

2007 was a turning point when Steve met Russian Champion Ivan Lyamin in the Palmetto High wrestling room. He had the training partner he was waiting for, someone who would teach him how to wrestle as a European - controlling hands, keeping your head up, and moving forward. It was all about defense.

In 2009, Steve lost a finger in a work-related accident. Six weeks later he was competing internationally. The 2010 Worlds were in Poland, where Ivan coached him to a Greco-Roman bronze, Steve's first. In Greece 2015, Steve had a narrow freestyle loss to India's World Champion and finished as runner-up. Steve competed for another Greco bronze and won.

Following elbow surgery in 2016, Contarino placed fourth in Greco and immediately traveled to Poland where he defeated a World Champion on the way to another fourth, this time in freestyle. With the dream alive in 2017, Steve traveled to Bulgaria in spite of the fact the International Federation had eliminated competition for the Freestyle and Greco over-60 division. His pleas fell on deaf ears.

In mid-April, 63-year-old Contarino wrestled in the USA Nationals held in Las Vegas to compete in the E division at 87kg. Steve won freestyle with a win over the World Champion and took silver in Greco-Roman.

Looking back, he has 7 victories over World Champions, 8 AAU National Free and Greco championships along with 12 USA titles. He said that, "Having kids wrestle and coaching kids stoked my fire". The dream of a 6-year-old shall not, nor cannot be extinguished. Steve Contarino still has plans.



Contarino

Interviewer's note:

- In 2002 he started the wrestling program for 1A St Stephens and coached the team through 2011.
- Steve is an avid spear fisherman and sometime snow skier
- After 26 international competitions, Steve Contarino plans to continue USA age group wrestling

Wrestling was the third national championship sport established by the NCAA, following Track and Swimming.

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USA Wrestling Nationals 2018

U.S. Masters National Championships returned to Las Vegas, NV, April 24-25 at the South Pointe Hotel. The Championships offer athletes a chance to continue their inner warrior and prove they still have what it takes to win the coveted USA Wrestling “Stop Sign.”



Davis

The event was held for age groups 25 and above. Florida Masters Jeff Davis (Florida Jets), Steve Contarino (Florida Unattached), and Russell Schenk (Florida Brandon WC) competed in the annual event with strong results. Contarino of Palmetto, FL entered the event as returning 2017 double champion in division D and E.

Davis and Coach Schenk (HOF 2013) competed in Greco Division D, 78kg. Schenk finished 3rd with a pin over Bruce Moe (Bison Wrestling Club). Igor Llin (Chicago Wrestling Club) won gold after a tech fall of Craig Pollard (Team West Coast Toyota).



Schenk

Jeff Davis (HOF 2004) and Steve Contarino competed in the Division E, 88kg freestyle and Greco-Roman categories. Contarino won Greco silver to Valery Sorokov's gold. Zdzizlaw Brozowski (Las Vegas WC) defeated Jeff Davis in the consolation finals.

Steve Contarino avenged his one Greco defeat with a finals match victory over Valery Sorokov (CWC), a past World Champion, 7-6. He earned the finals berth with a TF over Dean Barnard (MF), and a major decision over Jeff Davis. Jeff finished in 4th place.

All competitors in Masters Class C, D and E must present a letter of medical clearance at USA Wrestling National Events medical check to Weigh in that states the competitor is cleared to compete without any restriction. The letter must state that the competitor has the cardiovascular ability to compete in an intense, vigorous competition per UWW Federation regulations.

Congratulations and thank you for representing our state at the National level.

Dave Schultz and Tricia Saunders High School Excellence Award Winners Announced

The National Wrestling Hall of Fame recently announced the 2017-2018 state, regional, and national winners of the Dave Schultz and Tricia Saunders High School Excellence Awards. The awards recognize and celebrate the nation's most outstanding high school senior male and female wrestlers for their excellence in wrestling, scholastic achievement, citizenship, and community service. Regional winners are selected from state winners, and the national winners are chosen from the regional winners.

Florida's Joey Silva, of Lake Highland Prep was recognized as the award winner of the Dave Schultz High School Excellence Award for the state of Florida, and also honored by being selected as the U.S. Southeast Region winner.

Ana Luciano of Osceola High School, Kissimmee, was recognized as the winner of the Tricia Saunders High School Excellence Award for the state of Florida.

The National Wrestling Hall of Fame announced on May 14th that David Carr of Massillon, Ohio, was named the Dave Schultz High School Excellence Award winner, and Alleida Martinez of Selma, California, the winner of the Tricia Saunders High School Excellence Award.

"In Mongolian culture, Khutulun is remembered by the sport in which she so excelled. These days when Mongolian men wrestle, they wear a sort of long-sleeved vest that is open in the front to prove to their opponents they don't have breasts. It's a tribute to the woman wrestler who was never defeated."

— Linda Rodríguez McRobbie, author of *Princesses Behaving Badly: Real Stories from History—without the Fairy-Tale Endings*

My Memories of Great Matches Involving Florida Wrestlers
by Ira Fleckman, Contributing Writer

CLINT FREASE, Countryside HS

Sometimes a wrestler just looks like he shouldn't be a wrestler. He is too good-looking, too easy going, too soft-spoken, too something or another. Clint Frease was just too nice a young man. He didn't seem like he was ready to mix it up with anyone. Moreover, Clint broke my team rules. The story goes like this:

Monsignor Michael Devine asked me to recruit a team to compete in New Orleans at the Superdome in the AAU Junior Olympics. This is a freestyle dual meet tournament where each team wrestles about nine to thirteen times over five days. I had asked three outstanding wrestlers to name the wrestlers they wanted on the team with them. They selected a great team and then two of the three told me they couldn't attend.

During the week prior to the tournament, I was going crazy trying to fill out an All-Star team to compete in a national level event. David Frayer, coach at Countryside, had two youngsters, Nick (can't recall his last name) and Clint Frease. I added them to a team of wrestlers which turned out not to be too bad. We had several legitimate national level competitors and we had a bunch of scrappers who would give us everything they had on the mat. We also had two youngsters we had to keep up with every second they were off the mat.

The older more mature wrestlers were housed in New Orleans at the St Charles Hotel. It is right on the edge of the French Quarter and a trolley ride will get you there. The younger wrestlers stayed with me at a motel one hour away in Mississippi.

I informed the wrestlers that I had just two rules: 1. don't get sick and 2. don't get injured. We started off wrestling better than we expected and the team really bonded. They were good kids and they certainly had enough talent to keep Florida in the running. After the second day, Clint broke rule number one: he came down with the flu. He said it was the twenty-four-hour variety and all he needed was to stay in bed one day. I wouldn't usually leave a minor kid alone in a motel room an hour away from the venue, but I was the only driver and I had to get the team to New Orleans. Clint seemed trustworthy and the next day he was ready to wrestle.

I believe it was in his first or second match on the fourth day that Clint broke rule number two. He broke his arm in a bout. We also had a real let down in one of the matches and wrestled poorly. I usually don't get upset with All-Star teams but in this case, I read them the riot act and demanded that they do better. They did better but I didn't get to see their performance, as I was at the hospital with Clint. They put a soft cast on his arm and we headed back to Mississippi.

Clint insisted on dressing out the next day. I was shocked to see him taking to the mat. He accepted a forfeit. I was upset, as I didn't think this was proper. One of the assistant coaches told me that the other coach agreed and that the points wouldn't count. It was done for Clint's morale. The match ended with us ahead by just one point, not counting Clint's forfeit points. Clint didn't know that, and the other wrestlers gave him credit for our victory.

Clint became a combination coach and cheerleader and our Florida team made the finals. We managed to beat the team that we had lost to when we wrestled poorly in a wrestle back format, and we managed to finish fourth with three or four All Americans. Everyone, including the coaches got a medal.

Clint won the State Championship the following year, and I believe he enrolled at Brown University and was an art major. I haven't seen Clint in quite a while but he can break my rules on any team I coach.

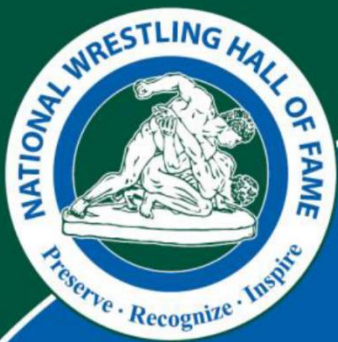
WRESTLING TRIVIA

How well do you know the Presidents?

1. Which president participated in rowing, boxing, running, ice skating, lifting weights, and wrestling?
2. Which president credited wrestling for the mental discipline and maintaining physical stamina he needed thirty years later?
3. How many presidents that had been in the military also wrestled?
4. How many presidents used the "collar and elbow" style of wrestling?

Source: *The Wrestling Presidents* by William S. Worley and Gary M. Gray, 2008.

1. Theodore Roosevelt
2. Dwight D. Eisenhower
3. Ten: George Washington, Andrew Jackson, Zachary Taylor, Franklin Pierce, Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, James Garfield, Chester A. Arthur, Theodore Roosevelt, and Dwight D. Eisenhower.
4. At least three: George Washington, Zachary Taylor, and Calvin Coolidge



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