

“THE CONNECTION”

Football and Wrestling

“I am convinced that wrestling as a sport is extremely beneficial to football and believe that high school coaches would benefit greatly by allowing their players to wrestle and by recruiting wrestlers.”

“Wrestling helps develop discipline to stay in one’s stance. Wrestlers also generally have good balance, understand leverage and know how to use their hands. This benefits them in blocking, defending blocks and tackling. Perhaps the greatest benefit of wrestling is developing mental toughness and physical toughness. I am a football man, but have the greatest respect for wrestling and all those who compete in the sport.”

Bob Stoops

Head Football Coach

University of Oklahoma

National Champions 2000, 1985, 1975, 1956, 1955, 1950

Air Force's Hennings ascends into College Football Hall of Fame

Chad Henning says his journey to the College Football Hall of Fame was anything from a solo flight. Hennings, arguably the best defensive tackle in the Air Force Academy history.

Hennings already has an impressive trophy case. He became the first player to win the Outland Award as the nation's best lineman. Hennings led the county with 24 sacks. He also earned Academic All-American accolades his last two seasons.

He went on to the NFL and helped the Dallas Cowboys to three Super Bowl titles in the 1990's.

Hennings says his football success can be traced back to his experience as a high school wrestler.

"I believe wrestling was my favorite sport growing up," he says. "It's pure sport in the truest sense. I strongly encourage kids who play football to take part in wrestling. They play off each other so well as far as the concept of applying leverage."

***Notre Dame's starting defensive end is *Trevor Laws*. Trevor was a State Wrestling Champion for Apple Valley.**

***Air Force Academy's *Steve Larson* was a State Wrestling Champion for Apple Valley, where he plays defensive end and wrestles for the Falcons.**

"I have never seen a good wrestler turn out to be a bad football player"

**Kirk Ferentz
National Coach of the Year
2x Big Ten Coach of the Year
Head Football Coach
University of Iowa**

World-class wrestlers grapple with football in Jets camp

Konrad, a two-time NCAA wrestling at Minnesota is one of 51 players participating in the New York Jets' mini camp.

Eric Mangini (Head Coach for the Jet's) who wrestled in high school is intrigued by their athleticism. *"What we like about these guys is they're in a foreign environment, yet they're not fazed by it. They go out and compete like crazy because that's how they're wired, and that's a great characteristic."*



"I would have all of my Offensive Lineman wrestle if I could."
- John Madden, Hall of Fame Football Coach

"Well-respected by coaches and teammates for his tough, aggressive nature (comes from his prep wrestling background)"
- NFL Draft Scout on Alex Stepanovich

"One of the messages Denney hopes to relay to the Valley high school coaches and athletes is that **wrestling is the perfect complement to football**. While football is in its off-season, **wrestling provides the perfect opportunity for the athletes to remain active, while working on their agility and conditioning**, Denney said.

Shawhan can attest to Denney's theory, also having an extensive gridiron background. Along with playing semi-pro football, Shawhan also has years of being an assistant football coach throughout the Rio Grande Valley (Mission High, Harlingen High, PSJA High, McAllen Memorial and McHi).

"In Texas, everyone knows that high school football is king," Denney said. "I'm telling you, though, Texas is catching up in wrestling. **And a lot of the football coaches are realizing how much wrestling can help their football team. And believe me, that's the truth. I know it firsthand.** You have to remember when I started out I was a football coach in high school, and **I would go to the wrestling team and get everyone that could to sign up for my football team.**"

- By Wade Baker, The McAllen Monitor McAllen, Texas.

"My football coach told me, 'You better get in wrestling or I'll beat you up,'"
-- Tim Lee, Texas High School All-American

Lee said that wrestling helps him on the football field because he knows he has to stay low.

"In wrestling, you've got to have self-discipline and self-motivation. As a lineman, it's the same thing ... me vs. you. He brings that mentality to the football field."
- Lee's High School Football Coach, Tim Howard

"Some of Matt Roth's intensity can also be attributed to his successful run as a state-champion wrestler in high school. Many coaches, scouts and wrestlers-turned-football-players will laud wrestling for the leverage and quick hands it provides for football. Roth credits wrestling for the never-say-die attitude it gave him.

"It's the attitude. (Wrestling) helps you with your hips, your hands and your balance, but more than anything it helps you with your attitude," he said. "A lot of these kids that are basketball players, we eat those kids up. It's just our mentality - you're going to get the job done and you're going to punish them."

Roth said his dream partner on the wrestling mat would be Ravens LB Ray Lewis, himself an accomplished high school wrestler."

-- By Chris Neubauer, Pro Football Weekly

PLAYERS LIST:

Shane Olivea
Alex Stepanovich
Nick Leckey - TX State Champ
Gregory Walker - State Finalist
Jonathan Condo
Zachary Wilson
Chris Laskowski
Luis Castillo, DT, San Diego Chargers (First Round Pick)
Lincoln "Drew" Hodgdon, C, Houston Texans - CA State Champ
Nick Hardwick
Fred Weary, C, Houston Texans - AL State Champ
Coy Wire, SS, Buffalo Bills - PA State Champ
Kevin Breedlove - SC State Finalist
Kevin Sampson - NJ State Champ
Benjamin Claxton - GA State Finalist
Trevor Johnson
Clinton "C.J." Brooks, Jr.
Tai Tupai
Leon Robinson - GA State Runner-Up
Roddy White, WR, Atlanta Falcons - 2x SC State Champ (First Round Pick)
Eric Ghiaciuc, C, Cincinnati Bengals - MI State Champ
Joey Hildbold
Adam Seward, ILB, Carolina Panthers - NV State Champ
Cody Johnson
Rodney Michael
Marques Harris - CO State Champ
Larry Turner
Andrew "Tyler" Lenda - District Champ
Tim Anderson - OH State Champ
Tony Pape
Matt Roth - IA State Champ
Mike Patterson, DT, Philadelphia Eagles (First Round Pick)
David Pollack
Tim Burrough - OK State Champ
Antoineo Harris - IL State Champ
Claude Harriott
Scott Wells - TN State Champ
Alex Lewis - District Champ
Ronnie Brown, RB, Miami Dolphins (#2 Pick)

Rodney Leisle
 Nick Newton
 Sean Tufts
 Brian Save
 Kevin Atkins
 Josh Minkins - District Runner-up
 Tim Euhus
 Andrew Tidwell-Neal - MN State Champ
 Renaldo Works
 Patrick "Bucky" Babcock - IL State Champ
 Morgan Pears
 Art Baker, RB, Buffalo Bills
 Rhonde Barber, SS, Tampa Bay Buccaneers
 Tiki Barber, RB, New York Giants
 Walter Barnes, DL, Washington Redskins - SEC Champ
 Eric Bateman, OL, New York Jets
 Harris Benton
 Brad Benson, New York Giants – PA State Champ
 Greg Boone, RB, Oakland Raiders
 Jeff Bostic*, C, Washington Redskins – SC State Champ
 Tedy Bruschi*, ILB, New England Patriots
 Bob Bruenig*, LB, Dallas Cowboys
 Phil Bryant, Philadelphia Eagles – 2x National Prep Champ
 Ralph Cindrich, Houston Oilers – PA State Runner-Up
 Jonathan Condo, LS, Dallas Cowboys - PA State Champ, Dapper Dan Champ
 Tom Cousineau*, LB, Cleveland Browns – 3rd State
 Tom Covert*, OT, Chicago Bears
 Chris Cooley, WR, Washington Redskins
 Roger Craig*, RB, San Francisco 49'ers
 Damien Covington, LB, Buffalo Bills
 Curley Culp*, DL, Kansas City Chiefs – NCAA Champ
 Larry Czonka**, RB, Miami Dolphins



Hall of Fame Running Back from
 the Miami Dolphins, Larry Czonka,
 pounded opponents on the
 wrestling mat as well as the
 gridiron.

Rob Davis, ST, Green Bay Packers
 Dan Dierdorff**, OT, St. Louis Cardinals
 Donnie Edwards, OLB, San Diego Chargers
 Carl Edwards, San Diego Chargers – 3x MD State Champ
 Rob Essink, Seattle Seahawks – NCAA DII Champ
 Jim Everett, QB, New Orleans Saints
 DeMarco Farr, St. Louis Rams
 Patrick Flannery, OL, Houston Oilers
 Ed Flanagan, C, Detroit Lions
 Terrell Fletcher, RB, San Diego Chargers

Bill Fralic*, G, Atlanta Falcons
 Doug France*, LT, Los Angeles Rams – OH State Runner-Up
 Frank Garcia, C, St. Louis Rams – 2x AZ State Champ
 William George, Chicago Bears – 2x PA State Champ
 Charlie Getty, RG, Kansas City Chiefs – 2x NCAA All-American
 John Gilmore, TE, Chicago Bears
 Kevin Glover*, C, Detroit Lions
 La'Roi Glover*, DE, Dallas Cowboys
 Mike Goff, G, Cincinnati Bengals
 Bob Golic*, DT, Cleveland Browns – OH State Champ
 Mike Golic, DE, Philadelphia Eagles
 Darien Gordon, PR/CB, Denver Broncos
 Scottie Graham, RB, Minnesota Vikings
 Tim Green, DE, Atlanta Falcons
 Kelly Gregg, NT, Baltimore Ravens, 3x KS State Champ
 Morlon Greenwood, OLB, Miami Dolphins
 Archie Griffin, HB, Cincinnati Bengals
 Nick Griesen, LB, New York Giants
 Randy Grossman, TE, Pittsburgh Steelers
 John Hannah**, G, New England Patriots
 John Hartunian
 Carlton Haselrig*, Pittsburgh Steelers, 3x NCAA Champ
 Ron Heller, TE, Seattle Seahawks
 Chad Hennings, DT, Dallas Cowboys – IA State Champ
 Jay Hilgenberg*, C, Chicago Bears – IA State Runner-Up
 Orlando Huff, MLB, Seattle Seahawks
 Corey Hulsy, G, Oakland Raiders
 Bo Jackson*, RB, Oakland Raiders
 Mario Johnson, DT, New England Patriots
 Dahanie Jones, LB, New York Giants
 Henry Jordan**, DT, Green Bay Packers
 Dave Joyner, OL, Green Bay Packers
 John Jurkovich*, DT, Cleveland Browns
 Alex Karras, Detroit Lions
 Tim Krumrie*, DL, Cincinnati Bengals – WI State Champ
 Ernie Ladd, DL, Kansas City Chiefs
 Nick Lecky, C, - KS State Champ (in 2004 NFL Draft)
 Jess Lewis, LB, Houston Oilers

Ray Lewis, Pro Bowl
 Linebacker for the Baltimore
 Ravens, was a Florida 4A
 State Wrestling Champion at
 189 lbs.



Ray Lewis*, Baltimore Ravens – 2x FL State Champ
 Ronnie Lott**, DB, San Francisco 49'ers
 Kirk Lowdermilk*, OL, Minnesota Vikings
 Sean Mahan, G, Tampa Bay Buccaneers
 Mike Malczyk, LS, New York Giants

Joel Mackavicka, RB, Seattle Seahawks
Steve Martin, DT, Houston Texans
Mickey Marvin, RG, Oakland Raiders
Napolean McCallum, RB, Oakland Raiders
Randle McDaniel*, G, Minnesota Vikings
Mark McDonald, SS, Arizona Cardinals
Chris McIntosh, T, Seattle Seahawks
Bryant McKinnie, T, Minnesota Vikings



Future Hall of Famer
Randall McDaniel was a
wrestler before he was
named to 12 NFL Pro
Bowls.

Greg Meisner, DL, Los Angeles Rams
Matt Millen*, LB, Oakland Raiders
Ronald Moore, RB, Cleveland Browns
James Mungro, HB, Indianapolis Colts
Jim Nance, FB, New England Patriots – NCAA Champ
Lorenzo Neal, FB, Tennessee Titans - NCAA Champ
Stephen Neal, OL, New England Patriots – NCAA Champ
Jeremy Newberry, C, San Francisco 49'ers
Chuck Noll, Pittsburgh Steelers – PA State Champ
Leo Nomellini*, T, San Francisco 49'ers – Big 10 Champ
Jonathan Ogden*, OT, Baltimore Ravens
Irv Pankey, Los Angeles Rams – 2x MD State Champ
David Patten, WR, New England Patriots
Scott Peters, G, New York Giants
Bob Pickens, OL, Chicago Bears
Jim Plunkett*, QB, Oakland Raiders
Dave Porter, T, Green Bay Packers
Mike Pyle, C, Chicago Bears – IA State Champ
Rocky Rasley, G, Detroit Lions
Mike Reid, Cincinnati Bengals
Eric Rnett, RB, Cleveland Browns – FL State Champ
Willie Roaf*, OT, New Orleans Saints
Warren Sapp*, DT Tampa Bay Buccaneers – FL State Champ
Mark Schlereth*, OL, Washington Redskins - Alaska State Champ
Cory Schlesinger, LB, Detroit Lions - NE State Champ
Steve Sefter, DT, Philadelphia Eagles, 2x PA State Champ & NCAA All-American
Tony Siragusa*, DT, Baltimore Ravens – NJ State Champ

Pro Bowl Defensive Tackle
Warren Sapp was a Florida
State Champion wrestler in
High School.



Fred Smerlas*, Buffalo Bills - MA State Champ
Bruce Smith**, DE, Washington Redskins
Brad St. Louis, TE, Cincinnati Bengals
Matt Suhey, RB, Chicago Bears
Bill Szott, OL, Washington Redskins – NJ State Champ
Dave Szott, Kansas City Chiefs – NJ State Champ
Woody Thompson, RB, Atlanta Falcons – PA State Champ
Jim Thorpe**, HB, New York Giants
Mike Trgovac, DC, Carolina Panthers – OH State Champ
Kyle Turley*, T, St. Louis Rams
Ryan Turnbull, RB, Cleveland Browns
Tommy Vardell, RB, San Francisco 49'ers
Adam Vinatieri*, K, New England Patriots
John Ward, OL, New York Jets – NCAA All-American
Fred Weary, DB, St. Louis Rams
Charles White*, HB, Los Angeles Rams
Randy White*, DT, Dallas Cowboys
Cory Widmer, LB, New York Giants
Leo Wisniewski, NT, Baltimore/Indianapolis Colts - PA State Champ
Steve Wisniewski, G, Los Angeles/Oakland Raiders - CA State Champ
Ricky Williams*, RB, Miami Dolphins
Coy Wire, LB, Buffalo Bills – PA State Runner-Up
Greg Wojchowski, St. Louis Rams

*Pro-Bowler

**Hall of Famer