

## Architects of the California State Championships

By Al Fontes



**T**his past season, the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) State Wrestling Championships entered its thirtieth year as a true state meet. Only thirty years? Yes, many states have a longer history of high school wrestling dating back in the forties and fifties, but California's first true state meet only began in 1973. After several years of discussing the idea, Lynn Dyche (Oak Grove H.S.), Jim Root (Westmont H.S.), and Webber Lawson (Fremont H.S. of Sunnyvale) acted on the idea and formalized the concept of having a single meet, combining the Northern, Southern and San Diego areas into one true state championships. Prior, these areas conducted separate meets, which at the time were considered state meets.

Traveling to Los Angeles to meet with the CIF Commissioners during a quarterly meeting in 1972, the trio of Lynn Dyche, Jim Root, and Webber Lawson presented their much thought out concept to the executive committee. After a ninety-minute presentation, with detailed bracket plans, qualification process, logistics, and an overall plan to run the tournament, the CIF Commissioners returned after lunch enthused and convinced the concept of true state championship should happen. The committee agreed to give Lynn, Jim and Webber a one-year "trial" to prove that a tournament of this magnitude could be successful.

Not too long after the CIF approved

the implementation of the first true state championships, Jim Root accepted a position as the head coach at West Valley College in Saratoga. This left much of the responsibility to coordinate and initiate this big event with Lynn Dyche. "There was a great deal to think about in organizing the first state tournament," Lynn said. This included obtaining wrestling mats from local schools in the Hayward area (home of the first CIF State Championships), preparing an advanced information sheet which would be distributed to all wrestling coaches throughout the state, selection of officials, determining how many rounds would be wrestled per session, and preparing a tournament program.

Lynn had several years experience running tournaments; league, sections, and Bay Area Wrestling Association state tournaments. He felt his experience would suffice to get the tournament afloat, but he was concerned about key logistic: supervision, gate control, and floor supervision. It didn't take long, but many district administrators and coaches in the Central Coast Section area were eager to help.

Serving as the first state tournament director, Lynn Dyche felt an immense satisfaction and pleasure being part of the process to help implement, direct and lead an event of this level. Needless to say, the first true state meet was a success, with San Diego's Monte Vista High School, coached by Bill Clauder capturing the state team

championship.

Thirty great years have passed, and the California State Championships has become one of the toughest meets in the nation. With over 800 competitive programs statewide, California is one of the few states, which conducts a single class championship. This equates to a level of competition not seen at many state meets with multiple divisions. More recently, the cream of the crop coming out of California has established themselves among the nation's elite at the Senior High Nationals, winning several national team titles, and bringing home a large number of All-Americans each year.

Throughout the thirty-year history, many great wrestlers have come out of the Golden State. Many have gone on to become stars among the collegiate ranks, and represent the United States at the World and Olympic games. These great wrestlers include those listed at the top of following page.

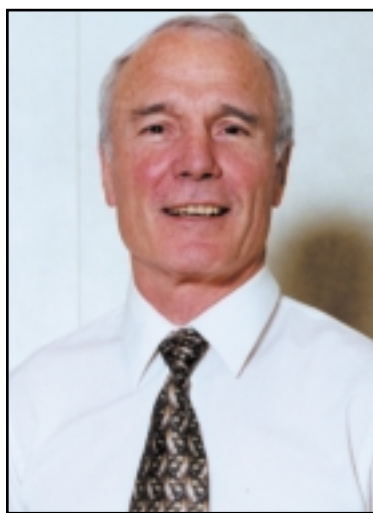
We can't forget about many of the great High School wrestlers in the 3X State Champion Club. They include, Lawrence Jackson (Santa Monica H.S.), Mark Gerardi (Valhalla H.S.), Scott Chapman (Rim of the World H.S.), Jimmy Aguirre (Clovis H.S.), Alex Tirapelle (Clovis H.S.), and Jacob Palomino (Independence H.S.). This past year, after thirty years, the Golden State finally crowned its first 4X State Champion in Darrell Vasquez of Bakersfield.

Many great teams have come and gone, but a few have been a fixture among the California elite, such as Clovis, Poway, and Clovis West. The Church Boyz from Calvary Chapel dominated the scene throughout the mid nineties up to the turn of the century with a record seven state team titles. On the thirtieth anniversary, Bakersfield broke almost every record possible with their championships performance. These records include; crowning the state's first 4X Champion in Darrell Vasquez, a record seven finalist with four champions, nine state medalist overall, and a team scoring record of 226.5 points, beating the previous record held by Calvary by 56.5. Considering the average score to win the state championships in the seventies was 58 points, this is a feat, which may never be broken in a hundred years.

According to Lynn Dyche, the state wrestling tournament has been a financial



Lynn Dyche



Jim Root

David Schultz (Palo Alto H.S.): NCAA Champion, World & Olympic Champion  
 Mark Schultz (Palo Alto H.S.): 3X NCAA Champion, World & Olympic Champion  
 John Azevedo (Grace Davis H.S.): NCAA Champion, Olympic Team member  
 Townsend Saunders (Torrance H.S.): NCAA All-American, Olympic Silver medalist  
 Stephen Neal (San Diego H.S.): 2X NCAA Champion, World Champion  
 David Lee (Bella Vista H.S.): NCAA Champion \*First 3X California State Champion  
 Dan Henderson (Victor Valley H.S.): Olympic Team member  
 Tim Vanni (Monache H.S.): Olympic Team member  
 Mark Fuller (Lincoln H.S.): Olympic Team member  
 Eric Guerrero (Independence H.S.): 3X Ca. H.S. Champion, 3X NCAA Champion, World Team member  
 Stephan Abas (James Logan H.S.): 3X Ca. H.S. Champion, 3X NCAA Champion, World Team member  
 Marty Kistler (Notre Dame H.S.): 2X NCAA Champion  
 Dan Cuestas (Merced H.S.): 2X NCAA Champion  
 Quincey Clark (Lincoln Prep. H.S.): 2X NCAA All-American, Olympic Team member  
 Adam Cuestas (Merced H.S.): NCAA Champion  
 Steve Barrett (Miraleste H.S.): NCAA Champion  
 Joe Gonzales (CS Bakersfield): NCAA Champion  
 Adam Tirapelle (Buchanan H.S.): NCAA Champion  
 Mark Munoz (Vallejo H.S.): NCAA Champion  
 Eric Wais (Woodland H.S.): NCAA Champion  
 Fred Bohna (Clovis H.S.): NCAA Champion  
 Dan Chaid (Gunderson H.S.): NCAA Champion

success, and is second only to basketball in state high school tournaments. The past fourteen years, these championships have been held at the Spanos Center in Stockton. It is obvious to many that have attended, it's definitely the time to move to a larger venue, which can accommodate more people, and who knows, we might even sur-

pass basketball in attendance and revenue. In closing, there are many great wrestlers, coaches, and individuals not mentioned in this article, which've contributed to the success of this great tournament. Just think if Lynn, Jim, and Webber had not taken the initiative to make this championship a reality, think of how many

great match-ups, and competitions we would have never been privileged to witness. The California State Championships continues to grow, as well as the caliber of competition each year. If you have never been privileged to take part, or watch, I encourage everyone to come to the 2003 meet. It is expected to be a barnburner.

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