

## Three Things I've Learned in College Wrestling

By Tommy Clum

**T**aking "STEPS" in wrestling has always been a focus and center of plenty of discussions. Steps like, moving on to the next level (state to national, high school to college), or adding and perfecting transitions, or taking a step closer to the kid that beats me regularly.

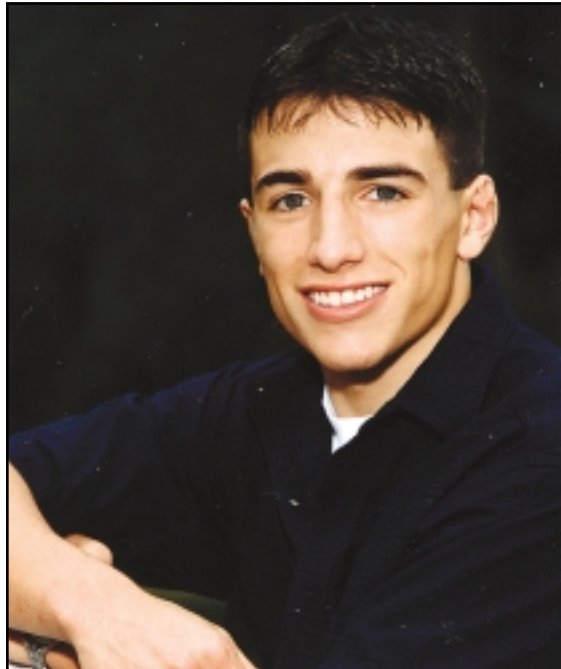
Just recently I took a major step in going from high school level wrestling, to college level wrestling. I thought I was plenty ready, and expected the change to be tough, but I did not expect what I got. I walked into the room confident that I would be able to hold my own. I had seen college wrestling and picked up some key differences, and now I was going to see for myself how big those differences were.

But when the season started the only thing I was seeing was the ceiling of the practice room. I held my own against the other incoming freshmen, but the starters were different. These guys didn't care what I did in high school, or if we were friends or not. The only thing they thought of in practice was a new way to take me down and pin me. And, giving up a point to anybody, let alone this new freshman, was out of the question. For a while I didn't think I could get to this level of intensity or be able to go through these kinds of workouts for a whole season.

The next big STEP was INTENSITY. But after just one semester I have gone through such great changes in my wrestling, and my outlook on wrestling, that I can't imagine, and really look forward to what I will be like in four more years when I'm finished with college.

Another part of wrestling in a college room is that NO ONE IS CONTENT.

High school was great. I loved calling Gary Dack on Sunday after a tournament, waking him up and begging him to go work out at Excel, but I hated it when he did that to me. I think about the practices that we always had together, and I think about the workouts between myself and my brother Danny, Gary Dack and Derrick Hendren. We had plenty of good workouts, and we had plenty of good cheap shots and fights as well (we were like brothers in all aspects). As much fun as we all had, there is one thing I would have changed, and I think it is an important one for others to



learn.

As hard as we wrestled, we all became too content. We were content with what moves we could do and what we couldn't on each other. We had figured one another out. Instead of being content, Gary should have definitely found a way to score on my back leg, instead of getting into the exact same scramble we always did when he shot a high crotch. And I should have found a way around my brother's stupid funky counters that he frustrated me with and kept me from ever getting a takedown on him. And when one of us had a bad day, the others saw it as a way to have an easy workout. When someone had a bad day, we should have wrestled him really tough, so he wouldn't let himself have another bad day. When you wrestle him really tough, you keep yourself sharp,

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• TAKE A STEP IN INTENSITY •  
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you do not slump. The biggest thing that I have learned is that during practice you are there to make yourself and your TEAM better. I didn't make Gary, Danny, Derrick or myself any better by being content, and letting us slack when we were feeling sluggish.

A friend who was in town and watched a Wisconsin practice asked me, "Is it hard to bring intensity every day." My answer was, "No, if I don't bring that intensity I will get my butt kicked by ALL of my teammates, and my coach will be one inch from my nose letting me know about it." After that happens to you once, you will not be content with a slack day ever again. No one at Wisconsin is content to have buddies in the practice room. If they are your buddies, they deserve your best against them. They let you know about this understanding. We go very hard in our room at Wisconsin, and no one takes it personal when they get pounded. The wrestlers are so good, that you do not have to be far off your game to really be beaten. Day to day, one guy or another has a real tough time. This simple change in philoso-

phy has really changed the results I have taken out of the practice room.

Bring intensity to the thinking part of the game. Ask your coach for a new setup to get to that back leg. Think of, and then drill, a new finish to stop that funky scramble your teammate (or brother) kills you with.

As with a great high school or club coach, our coaches at Wisconsin have a plan for us. We do not have to worry about what our wrestling future holds for us, we just SUBMIT TO THE PLAN. If coach lays out a workout schedule, you do it. If he says get an extra workout in, you do it. I have needed work getting out of bottom, so coach says come after practice and work with Troy, I do it. By submitting to the plan, everything just takes care of itself. Everyone out there has someone who cares about them, and gives them advice that will have a positive influence on their future. Well, just submit to the plan.

I will end by saying, that there is a greater power that can guide all of us with great advice. Above all things, spiritual guidance and reassurance has brought me

success. If you want happiness, good conscience, honor, and the most out of your life, just SUBMIT TO THE PLAN.

**Editor's note:**

Tommy Clum competed for Pomona High School under head coach Tom Beeson. Tommy, in my mind, is the best wrestler ever to grace a wrestling mat in the state of Colorado. A three time state champ he finished his career with an impressive 148 wins to one loss.

Tom's 148 wins places him No. 6 on the national list of consecutive matches won. During the 2001 state tournament he surpassed Ryan Cunningham of Fulton-Middle, Mich. The nation's longest winning streak is held by Lance Ellis of Indianapolis Cathedral at 177.

I have always been impressed with his aggressiveness, and mat savvy. Tom was relentless, never giving his opponent an opportunity to regroup during a match. He kept constant pressure on everyone he wrestled. It was a treat to see him wrestle. 🇺🇸



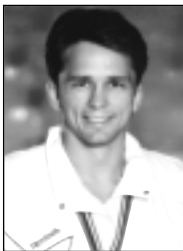
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