



Jack Mahoney and Sachem High School Wrestling By Stan Bishop



Jack Mahoney

The Long Island chapter of the National Hall of fame and Museum is honored to induct Jack Mahoney into the National Hall of Fame for his lifetime service to wrestling.

For Jack, this lifetime in wrestling began as a Lindenhurst schoolboy where he learned the sport under the tutelage of Jack Stanbro. He

continued wrestling at SUNY Brockport, graduating in 1970. He received several teaching and coaching offers, but he chose the first one—a position at Sachem High School. Apparently it was love at first sight as Jack stayed there for the duration of his career. A resident of the town of Babylon, Jack still carries on the well-established Long Island coaching tradition by serving his community as lifeguard.

Any write-up of Sachem High School wrestling successes since Jack Mahoney took over the program in 1972 could fill this publication. Remarkably, this occurred during the same period when Section XI rose to ascendancy, not only on Long Island, but in New York State. Fiercesome competition provided by Suffolk County's big high schools such as Huntington, Islip, Hauppauge, Rocky Point, Deer Park, Brentwood, William Floyd, Smithtown, Patchogue-Medford, Lindenhurst, and Longwood make rising in the standings difficult.

A short list of stellar Mahoney's wrestlers includes:

- **Dan Mayo**—
New York State Champion,
USA Wrestling Jr. Freestyle National Champion, Penn State, 2nd and 3rd NCAA finishes,
'92 Olympic alternate
- **John Carvalheira**—
New York State Champion,
NHSCA High School National Champion
1993, Rider University, 7th and 8th NCAA finishes
- **Isaac Ramaswamy**—
USA Wrestling Espoir National Champion,
Espoir World Place Winner, 2x
USA Wrestling Senior Greco-Roman National Champion,
Pan Am Games Silver Medalist,
1996 Olympic Team alternate

- **Wade Genova**—
National Sports Festival Gold Medalist,
USA Wrestling All-American,
1984 Olympic Team alternate
- **Jason Kraft**—
New York State Champion,
University of Nebraska, 4x Big Eight Placewinner

These and many other standouts have led to incredible team successes such as 341 dual meet wins (2nd only to Huntington with 405), 19 championship seasons in 32 years, and five Section XI Championships. Individual achievements include 154, All-County wrestlers, 33 Section XI Champions, 27 All-State wrestlers, seven NYS champions, nine Div. III All-Americans, four Div. I All-Americans, two NJCAA All-Americans, and three members of Team USA.

New York State Sportswriters ranked Sachem in the top 22 teams every year but 1999 from 1977-2004. Sachem garnered *Amateur Wrestling News* Team Awards in 1992, 1993, and 1995. In addition, *USA Today* ranked Sachem as #12 in the country in 1992. Jack has been honored as well. He has been inducted into the Suffolk County Hall of Fame as well as being selected as its Man-of-the-Year.

In Coach Mahoney's view, wrestling success is caught up in character development. In his own words, "Athletics build character; wrestling reveals character. If you have never crossed over that line on a mat, gone one on one with someone who wants to beat you and only you, you can't imagine what it is like.... We demand hard work, discipline, punctuality. We want to outwork our opponents. ... If a wrestler is cutting corners, he will soon find out that that's how one fails." And to this he adds, "These are lessons the wrestlers will take with them forever!" To the old adage that once you have wrestled, everything is easy, Jack admits that that may be a bit of a stretch, but "it certainly gets you ready for what is about to come!"

Jack Mahoney finds value in the accumulated wrestling relationships over the years. He tracks his wrestlers' careers through college. He frequently gets letters from former wrestlers who attribute success in life from wrestling. He welcomes former wrestlers on his staff. Jack does not see the Sachem split as cause for heart-wrenching even though his staff will be split along with the school. Seeking the positive, he declares that the split "cannot erase our strong tradition of Sachem wrestling. It will only start new traditions."