Joe Valla
A Legend in Long Island Wrestling

Joe Valla

Joe Valla began his intercollegiate wrestling career at Penn State, wrestling for the legendary Charlie Spiedel. Upon graduation, he spent three years overseas in the army during WW II as a 1st Lieutenant.

His first teaching job on Long Island was at Amityville High School, taking over the position of wrestling coach from the "Hall of Famer", Lonnie Kittle. In 1949, Valla and another "Hall of Famer", Cliff Clark, from Bay Shore High School, re-established the Suffolk County Wrestling Championship that had been suspended from 1943 to '48. They also helped to organize the first New York State Interscholastic Wrestling Championships in 1963.

During his tenure at Amityville, Joe Valla's teams compiled an outstanding record of 181 wins – 36 losses – 2 ties, for a win percentage of 84%. One of the highlights of his coaching career came in January of 1955 when his team stopped Sprig Gardener's, Mepham High School win streak at 130 by a score of 17-16.

From 1948 to '63, Valla's teams won six Suffolk County Team Championships and finished second, eight times. Valla produced 149 county place winners, 75 county finalists, 40 county champions, 20 league champions, and 13 Long Island champions.

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In addition to being an exceptional wrestling, football and track coach, Joe Valla was an outstanding teacher, school administrator and counselor to thousands of young men and women at the high school and college levels. We all know Joe as a tough competitor as well as a brilliant teacher, but most of all we know him as a true Friend of Long Island Wrestling.