

2009 Dave Schultz High School Excellence winners announced for 49 STILLWATER, Okla. -- The National Wrestling Hall of Fame & Museum has selected its 2009 state and regional winners of the Dave Schultz High School Excellence Award as part of its Educational Outreach Program.

Forty-nine seniors from those states that sponsor high school state wrestling championships have been chosen for the honor.

The High School Excellence Award is named in honor of Olympic and World Champion Dave Schultz. Each award recipient is evaluated on excellence in wrestling, scholastic achievement, character, citizenship, and community service.

A graduate of Palo Alto High School and the University of Oklahoma, Dave Schultz was one of the most respected high school, collegiate, and international wrestlers the United States has ever had," said Lee Roy Smith, Executive Director of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

Regarded as a tireless competitor and supreme technician on the mat, Schultz was beloved throughout the world of amateur wrestling for his friendliness and eagerness to lend help or advice to teammates and opponents alike. He was inducted into the sport's Hall of Fame as a Distinguished Member in 1997.

Since the Dave Schultz High School Excellence Award's inception in 1996, the Wrestling Hall of Fame has recognized 579 student-wrestlers. The national award winner will be chosen from the state and regional winners and announced on April 30. The winner will attend Honors Weekend on June 5 and 6 to personally accept the award.

For the third straight year, the High School Excellence program will include a leadership camp for those individuals selected for the award. Thanks to a grant from a private foundation, we are pleased to provide the winners of our Dave Schultz Award with the opportunity to attend an all-expense-paid leadership camp from June 15-18 at the United States Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo.,? Smith said.

USA Wrestling, the sport?s governing body, will host the camp at the Olympic Training Center.

USA Wrestling is equally excited to join the Hall of Fame in providing a world class program at the Olympic Training Center for the student-athletes chosen to participate in this camp,? said Rich Bender, USAW Executive Director. ?The camp agenda will include instructional sessions with our freestyle and Greco Roman national coaches and wrestlers, and will also feature presentations on sport psychology, strength and conditioning, nutrition, leadership development and public speaking, all presented by experts in the field.?

Part of the foundation?s funding criteria requires that, prior to the camp, the award winners speak to youth groups in their communities on the benefits of participating in extra curricular activities like athletics.

Smith said the leadership and public speaking sessions will help student-athletes become more effective in sharing their personal success stories with young people.

These student-wrestlers are role models in their communities and have an opportunity to influence young people in a very meaningful way.

Statistics show that both male and female students are more likely to stay in school, graduate, and become more productive citizens when they are involved in extra curricular activities and after school programs like sports, theater, debate and music.?

The five regional winners are:

#### Northeast Region

Alexander Ekstrom compiled a record of 226-19 in winning four New York State AA high school championships for Palmyra Macedon High School in Palmyra, N.Y. As a senior, he was honored with the "Most Outstanding Wrestler" award while competing in the 135 pound weight class. He is also a freestyle state champion and was a national folkstyle champion in 2008. In addition, he won the Sportsmanship Award for Section V in 2007 and 2008. He serves as a Pee Wee Wrestling Volunteer Coach and Officiates Pee Wee Tournaments. He also received an Internship with the Middle School Physical Education program, where he serves as a motivational speaker to students. Ekstrom also participates in the Palmyra Rotary Club and serves as a mentor for youth in the area. He carries a 3.38 G.P.A. and will be attending the University of Oklahoma next fall as a student-wrestler.

#### Midwest Region

David Taylor is from Graham High School in St. Paris, Ohio. and has a career record of 180-2. He is a four-time state high school champion and in each of the last two years was named Ohio Wrestler of the Year. Taylor was the Outstanding Wrestler of the 2009 state tournament. He is a Cadet and Junior National Freestyle and Greco-Roman Champion and FILA

Junior World Team member. He was also named to the 2008 Asics All-America First Team. He has won championships at the Beast of the East and Ironman tournaments. His community service activities include being a member and officer of the 4-H Club, where he has won numerous awards including an Ohio State Championship in barrel racing. In addition, he enjoys spending his off-time to "roll around" with youth wrestlers. Taylor is ranked in the top 10 of his graduating class and carries a 4.0 G.P.A. He will be attending Iowa State University next fall.

#### Central Region

Dallas Bailey is from Catoosa High School in Catoosa, Okla. With a career record of 132-5, he won four Oklahoma 4A wrestling championships. He was selected to compete in both the Dapper Dan Classic and Dream Team Dual Meets in 2009. In addition, he earned 2008 All-America honors at the USA Wrestling Junior Nationals in Fargo, N.D., and was Outstanding Wrestler at the Beat of the East Tournament. As a FILA Cadet, he was a national runner up. He donates his time with the wrestling program at Versus Athletic Training Facility in Tulsa and serves as a mentor for the Boys and Girls Club of Tulsa. In addition, he volunteers to clean up the high school campus, and participates in various church activities. Aside from being a National Honor Society member and Valedictorian of his class, Bailey is president of the Student Council at his school. He carries a 4.18 weighted G.P.A. and will attend Oklahoma State University next fall.

#### West Region

RJ Pena is from Sprague High School in Salem, Ore. His career record of

160-3 includes 138 pins and three undefeated seasons. Pena is also a four-time state champion, four-time district champion and a two-time Reno Tournament of Champions winner. He was chosen for the U.S. Dream Team in 2009. In 2008, he won USA Wrestling's Junior Freestyle National Championship at 145 lbs. He has also been awarded the Reser's (Tournament of Champion) Student/Athlete award from Sprague High School which deems him "tough and smart." He also competed in high school cross country and placed in the Oregon state meet. He is involved with Athletes in Action, where he participates in Bible studies. He carries a 3.6 G.P.A. and will be attending Oregon State University next fall.

Southeast Region

Eric Grajales compiled an undefeated career record of 217-0 and is a four time district, regional and state winner from Brandon High School in Brandon, Fla. In 2006 and 2008, he won USA Wrestling National Junior Greco-Roman titles and finished third in freestyle in 2008. He also competed on the 2006 and 2007 FILA Junior Greco-Roman World Teams. As a junior, he was selected to the 2008 Asics All-America First Team. As a senior, he competed in the 2009 Dapper Dan Classic and was honored by the St. Petersburg Times as "Wrestler of the Year." The Tampa Bay Sports Commission gave him its "President's Award." He also serves as a counselor for the volunteer youth wrestling program in Brandon. He ranks in the top 10 percent of his class and carries a 4.884 weighted G.P.A. and will be attending the University of Michigan next fall.

2009 Winners by State, Name and School

Alabama / Hayden Countryman/ Prattville High School

Alaska / Nolan McBryde / Chugiak High School

Arizona / Luke Macchiaroli / Corona Del Sol High School

Arkansas / Kyle Coatney/ Bentonville High School

California / David Klingsheim / Liberty Union High School

Colorado / Stryker Lane / Norwood High School

Connecticut / Tim Vallaro / Somers High School

Delaware / Alex Thomas / Sussex Technical High School

Florida / Eric Grajales / Brandon High School

Georgia / Taylor Knapp / Collins Hill High School

Hawaii / Reid Oshiro / Punahou School

Idaho / Kyle Johnshoy / Melba High School

Illinois / Tony Ramos / Glenbard North High School

Indiana / Camden Eppert / Anderson Highland High School

Iowa / Bart Reiter / Don Bosco High School

Kansas / Tyler Caldwell / Goddard High School

Kentucky / Harrison Courtney / Woodford County High School

Louisiana / Johnny Calcote / Archbishop Rummel High School

Maine / Joey Eon / Massabesic High School

Maryland / Andrew Banister / Bishop McNamara High School

Massachusetts / Miguel Guzman / Greater Lawrence High School

Michigan / Brandon Zeerip / Hesperia High School

Minnesota / Kevin Steinhaus / Kerkhoven Murdock Sunburg High School

Missouri / Ryan Mango / Whitfield High School

Montana / Toby Erickson / Helena High School

Nebraska / Michael Klingensmith / Kearney Catholic High School

Nevada / Britain Longmire / Cimarron Memorial High School

New Hampshire / Cody Byrd / Londonderry High School

New Jersey / Ed Ruth / Blair Academy

New Mexico / Max Ortega / Rio Rancho High School

New York / Alexander Ekstrom / Palmyra Macedon High School

North Carolina / Cory Mock / Chapel Hill Senior High School

North Dakota / Evan Gross / Napoleon High School

Ohio / David Taylor / Graham High School

Oklahoma / Dallas Bailey / Catoosa High School

Oregon / RJ Pena / Sprague High School

Pennsylvania / Shane Young / Penn Tafford High School

Rhode Island / Shawn Giblin / Cranston High School West

South Carolina / Eddie Coles / Eastside High School

South Dakota / Tom Davies/ Canton High School

Tennessee / David Graham/ Bradley Central High School

Texas / Erik Spjut / Woodlands High School

Utah / Ethen Lofthouse / Mountain Crest High School

Vermont / Jordan Grey / Essex High School

Virginia / Andrew Clement / Grassfield High School

Washington / Jake Swartz / Auburn High School

West Virginia / Cameron Gallaher / Grafton High School

Wisconsin / Nick Hager / Tomahawk High School

Wyoming / Tyler Cox / Campbell County High School

Founded in 1976, the National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum in Stillwater, Okla., is a tribute and center of information for the sport of wrestling. Its mission is to honor and preserve the history of the sport, as well as recognize extraordinary individual achievements.