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**Spring forward - after the main event**

By Steve Fraser

Now that the NCAA's and all the high school wrestling state championships are completed it is a good time to reflect on our seasons. How did we end up? Were we the champion or did we place somewhere below? Did our result meet our goals and expectations or did we fall short? Was our preparation effective and did we improve throughout the year or could we have prepared better and learned more?

For all the wrestlers that did not win the title you were after, DON’T BE DISCOURAGED! Now is your opportunity to spring forward!

At this year’s NCAA tournament I had the good fortune of sitting with John Peterson one session. John, like me, never won an NCAA championship title. However he went on to become an Olympic champion. John is a great example of someone who fought being discouraged and continued to look for answers while striving for excellence in the sport.

Our analysis and evaluation of our training throughout the past season is important in our quest to keep moving in the direction that we feel will continue our climb to the top, assuming that we want to climb to the top. Will we allow our results to motivate us to work even harder and smarter or will we go back to business as usual?

Look back on what our coach’s priorities were and how they tried to develop our technical skills, physical conditioning/strength, and mental toughness. How did we utilize their guidance while taking our career into our own hands at the same time? Did we take responsibility for our actions, attitude and training commitment while being fully accountable? Or are we relying totally on our coaches to insure our success?

We all rely on our coaches to train and teach us but remember one very important thing; "WE" are the most important factor in our success. It is "OUR" career that we are working on, not anyone else's.

Is our wrestling career over or are we still on a path to greater heights? If you are graduating, are you going to college? Are you going into the international wrestling scene? Or do you still have more eligibility at your school?

Either way, are you planning to wrestle freestyle and Greco this spring and summer? You do realize that wrestling freestyle and Greco will make a huge impact on your next folk style season, right?

How many coaches and wrestlers will we try and learn from this off season? Remember, if it is "our" career, and if we accept full responsibility of it, and if we are in control of it, then we will search for knowledge from many people (not just one coach). We will study many champions and learn from many coaches.

I just recently watched the Foxcatcher movie again and it reminded me of how our beloved Olympic Champion, Dave Schultz was a master of the game of wrestling by learning from everyone. He had so many coaches and athletes that he learned from and studied to become so good.

Long ago I asked the legendary Dan Gable what was one of the main reasons he became such a success. His comment surprised me. He said that he always tried to be naive when learning and listening to coaches and athletes who were trying to help him improve. He even considered advice from much less accomplished people than himself. He would consider everything that was suggested, take what worked for him and then maybe disregard what didn't make sense to him or his style.

Regardless of our folk style seasons final result; let's move forward from this day with a renewed sense of life! Let's be coachable and search beyond our immediate surroundings for new knowledge and inspiration that will continue our paths forward. We can achieve anything we really want if we believe it from deep in our hearts!

As always, "Expect to Win!"