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March 17, 2012

National Wrestling Media Association names National Wrestling Journalism Awards winners

ST. LOUIS, Mo. - The National Wrestling Media Association, the national professional organization for wrestling journalists, has named the recipients of its Annual Wrestling Journalist Awards. The NWMA has honored the top wrestling journalists in the following categories: Broadcaster of the Year, Print Journalist of the Year, Photographer of the Year, Publicist/SID of the Year, Publication of the Year and Website of the Year. A new category is added this year, for New Media Specialist of the Year. This year, the NWMA will also present two Special Awards for an outstanding achievement in wrestling journalism. Candidates were nominated by the NWMA members.

Print Journalist of the Year – Willie Saylor, The Open Mat and W.I.N. Magazine

Saylor was a champion wrestler for the historic program at Easton High School in Pennsylvania, ranked among the nation's best. He competed at Bloomsburg and received a degree in English and literature. His grad work at Nebraska and Wyoming was in fiction writing. Over four years ago, Saylor began writing for The Open Mat website, with a special focus as its high school wrestling editor. The niche he has created has been recruiting analysis. Saylor modeled his coverage on football recruiting journalism, and transferred that model to wrestling. He has been a regular contributor and columnist for W.I.N. Magazine in recent years. Saylor has also been a wrestling stringer for the Allentown Morning Call. Saylor is respected for his innovative tournament previews and recaps, with a focus on being more comprehensive than ever. He has developed a recruiting top prospects feature which is very popular with wrestling fans. This has also led Saylor to do more and more audio reporting. He has provided commentary for the Ironman and Clash high school tournaments, and was a live announcer for the USA Wrestling Junior/Cadet Nationals in Fargo, N.D. He also appears on a weekly internet radio show, the NHSCA Sports Hour.

Broadcaster of the Year – Ben Hupke, Hupke Wrestling Productions

A high school wrestler from Cherokee, Iowa, Hupke went on to wrestle at Wartburg, where he was a mass communications major. He did some coaching with his brother on the high school level in South Sioux City, Nebraska. However, his major involvement in the sport in recent years has been as a radio announcer and internet broadcaster. Working with radio station Y99.3 in northeast Iowa, Hupke did was the play-by-play announcer for University of Northern Iowa wrestling, as well as for Waverly-Shell Rock High School. He also moderated the Brad Penrith Radio Show each week, when Penrith was head coach at UNI. Since then, Hupke has done a number of other regular audio broadcasts through Hupke Wrestling Productions (mywrestlingfever.com). He produces broadcasts for nationally ranked Iowa City West High School, Div. III national champion Wartburg, NAIA national champion Grand View, as well as Davenport Assumption High School. The year, he called the NAIA National Championships for NeuLion, as well as the NCAA Div. III National Championships for Turner Sports. Hupke is very passionate about wrestling, and gives his energy and efforts so those who can not be there in person can enjoy great wrestling action.

Publicist/SID of the Year – Steve Lomangino, Lehigh University

Lomangino serves as Media Relations Director for Lehigh University, and has worked for its media relations department for Lehigh for eight years. A New York City native, Lomangino attended Syracuse University, where he received a degree in broadcast journalism. He went to work with Lehigh as his first position after college. Lomangino had no wrestling background prior to his Lehigh assignment, but began working as the sports information director for wrestling upon his arrival. With support from Lehigh's wrestling coaches and the wrestling community there, Lomangino learned about the sport and developed a passion for it. In addition to handling all sports information duties for one of the nation's top Div. I college teams, Steve also does the commentary for the radio broadcasts of all of Lehigh's matches, both home and away. When Lehigh wrestles at home, Steve's commentary is also used for the live webcasts. For the past two years, Lomangino has directed the media relations department. In addition to wrestling, he handles football, swimming and diving, softball, golf and tennis. It is for his excellence in the sports information role for wrestling that Steve Lomangino is being recognized by the National Wrestling Media Association.

Photographer of the Year – Brooke Zumas, Lehigh Valley Athletic Club

Brooke Zumas grew up around wrestling. Her father Nick is very active in the sport, and Brooke went to wrestling events starting in early childhood. Wrestling became her favorite sport, an activity she shared with her father often.

Zumas went to Lehigh, where she received an undergraduate degree in psychology. A camera was a graduation gift, and she traveled across the nation taking landscape and wildlife photos. She also tried her hand at wrestling photography and became hooked. Her early assignments were Lehigh wrestling matches, local high school events and the Beast of the East Tournament, which she has shot a number of times. Her success led her to shoot the NCAA Wrestling Championships, which she has done five times. She became the photographer for the Lehigh Valley Athletic Club, and began shooting many major USA Wrestling events including the 2008 Olympic Trials, the U.S. Open, the World Team Trials, the Dave Schultz Memorial, the FILA Junior Nationals, the Beat the Streets Gala events, the Body Bar Women's Nationals and more. She photographs the ASICS Journeymen Duals each year, and also shoots the Pennsylvania High School State Championships. Brooke has photographed three Adam Frey Classics and regularly shoots at wrestling clinics. She is very generous with her images. Her photos have appeared in USA Wrestler, W.I.N., numerous college media guides, on wrestling posters and on many individual athlete websites. Her images were used by 12 different daily newspapers, as well as by AOL Sports. Her photos have appeared in books about Adam Frey as well as Greg Strobel. Zumas has received her master's degree in psychology from University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and is working on her doctorate now. Her knowledge of wrestling as a fan, as well as her understanding of sports psychology, has helped to anticipate compelling shots at wrestling events.

Website of the Year – The Open Mat

Over four years ago, past wrestlers Ray Brinzer and Eric Betterman started an internet project called The Open Mat. Brinzer competed for Oklahoma State and Iowa, and Betterman at Minnesota, and both also wrestled on the international level. It was first developed as a message board, then was expanded to a website. It was built on the concept that there was a place for opinion within wrestling, and that news should be free. Brinzer provided the technical focus, and they both pursued content. More than two years ago, Willie Saylor was brought on to expand high school coverage and provide editing. The website has doubled its traffic annually. The site covered more than 80 events last year, using its readers to serve as reporters. It has developed its own voice and following within wrestling. The Open Mat also launched a recruiting website a month ago, which will provide extensive information and services to both college coaches and high school athletes, seeking to help both sides to find the right fit. The Open Mat prides itself in doing extensive previews of major events, and by striving to ask the tough questions in order to make the sport better.

Publication of the Year – Wrestling Insider Magazine (WIN)

W.I.N. Magazine was founded in 1994 by Mike Chapman, a nationally-respected wrestling journalist. Chapman served as publisher and editor for four years, building the large-format newspaper into a respected publication. In 1998, Bryan Van Kley purchased W.I.N. Magazine and served as its publisher and editor. Tim Tushla was its editor for a year, then in 2003, Mike Finn became editor of W.I.N. Magazine. The publication covers all levels of wrestling, from youth and high school levels, through college and international competition. It takes pride in its depth of coverage, as well as printing issues immediately after major events. Its prep coverage is extensive. Its level of international coverage is impressive. Regular columnists are Outstanding photography comes from Ginger Robinson, Tushla and many other award-winning wrestling photographers. Many top journalists are also regular contributors. Regular columns are provided by Van Kley, Finn, Chapman, Kyle Klingman, Jason Bryant, Ben Peterson and Sandy Stevens. Wrestling legend Dan Gable does a regular Q@A column. The publication now publishes in full color throughout. Diana Strickland is a staff member who has a big impact. W.I.N. publishes 12 times a year, with 80 or more pages each issue. W.I.N. previously received the NWMA Publication of the Year for 1997 and 2006.

New Media Specialist – Cole Schrupp, Digital Horizon Productions/GuillotineFlo

Schrupp was a high school wrestler in Watertown, Minn., and began filming wrestling matches and creating videos of the competition he and his brother participated in as a hobby. He first attended Minnesota State at Mankato, where he was a mass communications major for two years. He then transferred to Northern Michigan University, where some of his wrestling friends, Chas Betts and Andy Bisek, attended school and were involved in the U.S. Olympic Education Program. He took the digital cinema program at Northern Michigan for his undergraduate degree. Most of his video projects were related to wrestling. After college, he continued doing his wrestling videos at the Minnesota State High School Championships. Schrupp is working full-time, but has found time to expand his video projects. Chad Erickson at the University of Minnesota has been a supporter of his efforts. Working with the Gopher wrestling program, Schrupp began creating videos to help promote the team through the new media. In addition to doing weekly videos with the team, which included practice, interview and match footage, he also travelled with the team to many of their events. Among the features he created were at the NWCA National Duals

and the Big Ten Championships. His videos appear on GopherSports.com, and have also been placed with the video website GuillotineFlo. Schrupp's goal is to make his projects more creative and artistic than normal sports highlight films. He uses graphics and interesting angles and other techniques to keep his content interesting and fresh.

Special Award – Christian Holiday, Global Media Marketing

The NWMA presents a special award to Christian Holiday, who has produced numerous wrestling events for national television broadcasts in the last three years. An Oregon native from a wrestling family, Holiday competed for Liberty University, then Cal State-Fullerton, where he was an Academic All-American. He spent three seasons as an assistant coach for Fullerton during grad school, then entered the advertising business. His knowledge of both television production and the advertising industry opened the doors for him to place wrestling broadcasts on national networks. Holiday produced and placed a national broadcast for the NWCA All-Star Classic three years ago, and has done the event for three years. His relationship with Fox College Sports has led to considerable college wrestling exposure. This season, he estimates he has produced and placed 300 hours of college wrestling, and up to 600 hours of wrestling from all levels on national TV. This year, he produced shows from all four of the NWCA National Duals Regional events, then also produced shows from the NWCA National Dual finals held in Stillwater, Okla. He has done international events with USA Wrestling, producing the 2011 U.S. Open in Cleveland, as well as the historic Beat the Streets Gala USA vs. Russia event in Times Square. The visual broadcast images of wrestling from Times Square was breathtaking. Holiday plans to continue to find ways to link advertisers with wrestling programs and television networks, bringing even more wrestling to television.

Special Award – Shawn Van Leeuwen, Takedown Wrestling Media (USA Wrestling Weekly producer)

The NWMA presents a special award to Shawn Van Leeuwen, who serves as Executive Producer for USA Wrestling Weekly, a weekly half-hour news broadcast which is carried by a number of cable networks and is posted weekly on the internet. An Urbandale, Iowa native, Van Leeuwen got involved with video production as a hobby since he was a child. He was also active in music in school. He attended Des Moines Area CC prior to his professional career. Van Leeuwen was hired by Takedown Wrestling Media in November 2010. He was named Executive Producer for USA Wrestling Weekly in January 2011, and has produced shows for the last 62 weeks. USA Wrestling writes the script and collects the materials, and Van Leeuwen handles the filming, production and final editing of each episode. In addition, he is a producer of Takedown Wrestling Media's weekly television show. He will serve as Executive Producer of an upcoming video project for the National Wrestling Hall of Fame. His skill and commitment with the USA Wrestling Weekly broadcast and his other wrestling projects is recognized with this special award.