



DON JANTZEN

There are some names that are forever linked to the sport they dominated. Mention the name Lombardi and football coaching excellence comes to mind. Palmer needs no introduction when it comes to discussions with regard to the beloved icons of golf. Such names endure with the sport long after achievements have been documented and debated. The rich history of wrestling over the past several decades on Long Island cannot be written without a chapter dedicated to the name Jantzen.

The late Don Jantzen's varsity wrestling career began at Comsewogue High School in 1968. He was the team captain in 1972 and he won the Suffolk County Wrestling Championship at 115 pounds. With that win, he became the first county champion in Comsewogue school history.

Don was offered a wrestling scholarship to Long Island University at C.W. Post and became a four-year varsity starter. He amassed 105 wins during his college career to become the first C.W. Post wrestler to surpass the century win mark.

After graduation, Don returned to his alma mater, Comsewogue, as the varsity wrestling coach. Don coached for four years until he had to leave his official position due to scheduling conflicts that arose when he joined the Suffolk County Police Department (SCPD). He continued to work with wrestlers and his position with the D.A.R.E. program within the SCPD helped him become a very effective kid wrestling coach. His patient style and ability to communicate with children helped build the Comsewogue Kid Wrestling program. Don organized the first Shoreham-Wading River (SWR) Wrestling program and continued to introduce the sport through fun and encouragement.

Don volunteered as a clinician at the SWR school district from 1990-93. He became the SWR junior varsity coach from 1993-2001 and the varsity coach at SWR High School from 2001-2007. Don pioneered the "crab ride" or "Jantzen ride" that was popularized by countless wrestlers throughout Long Island and perfected by his son's Jesse and Corey. Those who wrestled for him described his style as inspirational. He fostered a love for the sport and convinced his grapplers to use wrestling as a vehicle to improve their lives. While a varsity coach, he won

a Suffolk County title, had twelve county champions and three state champions. Many of his wrestlers went on to compete at prestigious universities.

Don's wrestling coaching career will be forever linked to the outstanding accomplishments of his sons Jesse and Corey. Jesse, a 2000 SWR graduate, won 4 NYS Championships. Jesse wrestled at Harvard and won a NCAA title. Corey won two NYS Championships and then also wrestled at Harvard. Debbie and Don Jantzen also had three accomplished daughters. They helped guide Jami through a successful gymnastics career, they helped Doni to become a two-time All-American field hockey player at Hofstra University and they helped their youngest daughter Debi to become a member of the U19 US National Field Hockey team and a National Champion at Princeton University.

Don Jantzen will be remembered for the profound influence he had on Long Island Wrestling. He was an inspiration to all that had the privilege of knowing him. In recognition of a lifetime of service to the great sport of wrestling, we are pleased to place Don's name in the National Wrestling Hall of Fame along side all of the other great men and women who have left such an indelible mark on our sport.

