



VINCENT PAOLANO

Vincent Paolano began his wrestling career his junior year at Calhoun High School with Hall of Fame Coach Bob Bury. As a senior in only his 2nd High School season, he was an undefeated Section 8 Champion, and runner-up in the 1967 New York State Championship!

During the summer after High School, Vinnie trained with Syracuse University's Freshman Coach, Dick Slutsky, and wrestled his way to the Finals of the U.S. Junior Olympic Camp in Chicago. Upon returning home from the camp and finding that he had received numerous scholarship offers... Vinnie chose Syracuse with some strong encouragement from Slutsky, Coach Bury, and Tom Schlendorf (also a Calhoun and Syracuse grad, as well as recent NCAA Champion). Good for Vinnie, and good for Syracuse!

As a Freshman, Vinnie was undefeated, and wrestled to become the Plebe Champion at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

For Vinnie's Varsity career, he was unbeaten in dual meet competition, with the outstanding record of 73-0-1 !

As a Senior, he was the Champion at the Wilkes Tournament, defeating the defending NCAA champ for the title! He was also a champion in the prestigious C.W. Post Winter Holiday Tournaments, winning his third title in three years!

At the 1971 NCAA Championships in Auburn, Alabama, he was an All-American and runner-up to the eventual Olympic Gold Medalist, Ben Peterson, who edged Vinnie for the victory in their seesaw battle for the championship.

For his outstanding accomplishments, Vincent was presented the Syracuse University OUTSTANDING ATHLETE AWARD for 1971, to be immortalized along with prior recipients such as Jim Brown, Larry Csonka, and a host of other well-known elite Syracuse athletes, including wrestlers Dick Slutsky, Jim Nance, and Bob Rust, all of whom Vinnie gives credit to for his success. Upon his graduation, Syracuse immediately offered Vinnie the Assistant Wrestling Coach position to mentor the underclassmen and very promising group of wrestlers. He readily accepted the offer for a two-year stint with "his guys."

Vinnie continued his love for the sport and concluded his wrestling career by representing the New York Athletic Club with U.S. Olympic Coach Bill Farrell and was an alternate for both the '72 and '76 Olympic Games. He also trained and wrestled with the USA Freestyle World Team with legendary Coach Dan Gable, traveling to wrestle in Tblisi, Russia and Istanbul, Turkey in 1974.

Vinnie returned to active participation in wrestling in 1992 by Officiating in Section 8 with the Long Island Wrestling Officials Association. He's a 15-year Executive Board member and has served three terms as President. He has been and continues to be a valuable asset, and ambassador for, Wrestling.

We are proud to welcome Vincent Paolano into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.