

Wrestlers Corner Interview with Josh Demas, conducted following the Medina Tournament, and early 2010.

Readers, pay especially close attention to what Josh says about preparing for the big matches, scouting opponents, and his mindset on training. I'll add my commentary at the end.

Wrestlers Corner: **WC**

Josh Demas: **JD**

WC: How long have you wrestled?

JD: Since 7th grade.

WC: That's a relatively short amount of time for an elite wrestler to be on the mat. What did you do when you were 5-8 years old?

JD: I played basketball - "and got beat up by my cousins!"

WC: Any gymnastics, soccer, things like that?

JD: No - I started Judo in 6th grade, did it for about 2 years, then gave it up to concentrate on my wrestling.

WC: In what ways did Judo benefit you?

JD: It really helped me with throws. I hit some throws in Ironman, which surprised some people.

WC: What has been the biggest factor in your development as a wrestler?

JD: My motivation to work hard and train, and learn different techniques from as many different people as I can, and learn as much as I can.

WC: How do you mentally prepare for the Big Match?

JD: Well, I get really nervous, but I tell myself, "I'm going to just beat the crap out of this guy", and I am confident that I am prepared because I have worked hard.

WC: How do you mentally prepare for the not-so-big Match?

JD: Exactly the same way. You have to get up for every match.

Josh also talked about his how he wrestles in a match.

JD: I want to go hard the entire match, never stop attacking. When you stop attacking and trying to score, and let up, that's when you get beat.

WC: Are you staying at 171?

JD: Probably. I want to build up for college, rather than cutting myself down. I need to get bigger and stronger for college.

WC: Let's talk about the State Tournament. What do you do, in the last month of the season, to peak at State?

JD: I consider State as a preparation for Nationals so my focus for the month before state is the same as how I train at the beginning of the season, I train to improve my wrestling.

WC: Do you look at who your top competitors are, where they are, what they do?

JD: I wrestle the same every match, so I don't feel the need to scout my opponents.

WC: How about Nick Sulzer, you lost to him at Medina last year and then beat him in state finals. Did you study the films on him at all? Try to do anything differently?

JD: I study film to look for my flaws and tendencies that I have to adjust, not just for one particular wrestler.

WC: Okay, I understand that, but while you were watching, I'd assume you were taking notes on his style and any weaknesses you saw, from the previous match?

JD: My focus is not on any other wrestler's weakness but on improving mine. Which is better - I correct my positional mistakes and learn to beat everyone, or find some flaw in one wrestler and beat him? I can see a time in the future where I will study my opponents tendencies as in a chess match but for now I feel I have to improve my game and train my body to react automatically to any given situation from all wrestlers.

WC: Excellent, Josh.

WC: What are your long-term goals?

JD: I want to make the Olympics.

WC: Where are you attending college?

JD: Ohio State.

WC: You are going to an excellent school to have a shot at that, with all the Olympic level coaches and athletes that are there at Ohio State. Thank you, Josh, and Good Luck the rest of the way!

I found it interesting that Josh's approach to opponents, even an opponent who had defeated him previously, didn't waiver. His main focus spoke volumes - Improve yourself first so you can beat everyone. I really pushed him on this issue, too - we were talking about an opponent who could possibly stand in the way of a state title, who had beaten him before, yet Josh's approach remained constant. A wrestler reading this column could learn a lot by following this way of thinking.

The most impressive part about Josh Demas is something that didn't come up in this interview, but it is the level of class that he shows on the mat - win or lose. When he gets done, his reaction is one of respect toward his opponent, and thus, the sport itself - regardless of the result.

Thank you, Josh, for taking the time to do this interview, and my very best wishes for the future.