

1998-99 SEASON - COLUMN #1 by Don Shaffer

Welcome to the Reynolds Wrestling web site. It has been constructed and developed by ACW Productions. Congratulations to the Reynolds wrestlers, coaches, and fans! Once again you have proven that you are among the best in the state! Reynolds Wrestling has long been associated with great wrestling in the state of Pennsylvania. However, how many outside of District 10 really know where or who is Reynolds? Do you fall into any of these categories?:

- **I was going to school at Reynolds** I followed the team. Now that I have moved away I miss following them or the news I get is late arriving. How can I find out more information about the team and how they are doing? When I come home for a visit will the team be wrestling and if so, where and against who??

- **I wonder what the coach has to say** about the match or what are his thoughts on the upcoming match? How did the team do during the tournament trail?

- **Just how successful has the team been** from the start till now? How many wrestlers have over 100 victories? Who was the winningest wrestler to date? How many different head coaches have there been?

- **I wish I could tell someone what I think** about the match. Or.... I really would like to know the match-ups before I go to the match. I can't be at the match tonight, but I can't wait until tomorrow's paper to see the results.

Well, wrestling fans.....this site is for YOU and I feel sure that it will take care of your questions and concerns. With today's technology, any relocated Raider fan or Reynolds grad can keep track of what is happening back home. The site will include a current season (starting with the 1997-98 season) schedule, each match preview with a follow up post match summary. Included in the match preview will be projected lineups (match-ups), coaches' comments, and my predictions. The post match will include pictures, results, and coaches' comments. The pictures will then be moved to a season photo gallery. All tournament results will become available following completion of the tournament.

With the help of past and present coaches, teachers, administrators, and wrestlers, the Raider wrestling story will be told. The Raider History will tell of how and when the team started, how the mascot was named and how the school colors came to be. It will answer the question of where Reynolds is located (we are NOT in Reynoldsville), along with the size of its enrollment.

Stats, stats, and more stats! Reynolds wrestling has been documented from its start (thanks to all the past coaches and Coach Hills). Now Reynolds and wrestling fans can check out the team stats from the past and see them continue as we **RELOAD** season after season.

The Editorial Column "Bleeding Blue and Gray" is the perfect chance for wrestling fans to be heard, to voice their opinion, ask a question, and read my own thoughts. Although there are many team sites on the internet, this is where you can tune-in for news about the Reynolds Raiders with some focus on P.I.A.A., District 10, and Mercer County wrestling. I will write about wrestling topics that come up during the season, ask for your comments, take polls, give trivial questions, and have **YOU, THE FANS** give me your ideas of an all time "Raider Dream Team" made up of past Reynolds wrestlers.

I will exercise extreme caution to try not to offend anybody by what I write. This column is to help promote and inform others about the sport of wrestling. Any and all comments made on this editorial page are my own thoughts and not those of ACW Productions, the Reynolds Wrestling team (its coaches or wrestlers), and the Reynolds School District. I ask that those who wish to communicate their thoughts on this page use common courtesy, and watch their use of language. I will be checking daily for messages, comments, and suggestions. If asked any question that I don't have the answer to, I will research and try to get the answer.

Other things to look for in the coming season: player/coach profiles with pictures; Reynolds Boosters bulletin board with news, events, and "Raider Gear" for sell; a fan support page that list those who contribute to the booster club, and a guest book that can be signed and used for comments.

Once again, welcome to the Reynolds Wrestling web site. You too can be a big help by telling others to check out the site. I will try to write a new article every week or so. This week's question—From what you have read in today's article, what do you like and/or dislike about the site? Do you have any suggestions?

Trivia Question: What is the stick that the Raiders carry onto the mat with them and what does it mean?

1998-1999 SEASON - COLUMN #2 by Don Shaffer

Tradition = Success

Welcome to the Reynolds wrestling web site. I'm glad that you have decided to check out the site! I hope that through the years everyone will come to the site for exciting news about the Raiders and wrestling.

With the overwhelmingly successful season that the Raiders have just come off of and the anticipation of the 1998-99 season, I sit and ponder, what has made the Raiders such a power for so long in the high school wrestling world? How can the Raider's success be measured? What has been the key to this success?

Often I hear that the fans are spoiled with the team's success. If the Raiders lose more than 2 or 3 matches or have no one place at the state tournament, it is sometimes a bit of a downer. However, other teams measure their success on how they do against the Raiders. The fact is that the fans (many from the very beginning) have been there to support the Raiders through their 38 seasons. I myself have been to many welcome home parties, with each being a lifting moment in its own way.

The fans and their given support through the years has been more than great. At times they are quiet and seem to sit and take in the match. But, when the Raiders take the mat for a big match, the fans are on their feet filling the air with such electricity! There have been years that not even a college gym could hold them all. When the match was over, the fans were soaked from sweating and hoarse from yelling. They worked as hard as the team themselves. Support is a key element in the success of anything... from a sports team or Fortune 500 company to a lasting marriage.

There are many adjectives that come to mind when I think of the success of the Raider team. Attitudes, dedication, hard work, and competition among themselves are just a few that come to mind. If you have ever had the chance to sit in or be a part of the Raider mat men practice room, you would see all of these good qualities at work. Young men with good attitudes that are dedicated to improve each time out and a lot of good old fashion hard work is what I have witnessed in the practice room. Pushing each other to the max would be another key to the continued success of the Raiders.

Then I think about the past in terms of where the program got its start...the tradition side of the success. During the 1970's, the years that I was a part of the wrestling, there were on average 95 wrestlers bidding for thirteen varsity or thirteen junior varsity spots. The practice room was the fiercest place in wrestling for any wrestler to be in. The middleweights could and often had fourteen or more contestants. The elimination bouts would be harder than well over half the opponents from other teams. It would be a hard fought two to three days to get the top guy to represent the Raider team in each weight class. The room at times was filled with teachers, parents, students and fans~all who had a favorite to cheer on. It wasn't very often that a freshman could fight his way into the varsity line up. This competition among each other led to strong unity and a great deal of handed down traditional pride. The younger program to this day is aware of this tradition and has great pride that pushes them to be as good as the group they grew up watching.

Then there is the coaching. From the inaugural season with Dick Sherwood up to the phenomenal past season with Brian Hills, the coaches have shown these teams a great deal of technique and character, along with wrestling knowledge. Any of the past head coaches would be quick to say that you need the combination of dedicated wrestlers and coaches that have a good working relationship. The respect of the coaches and past wrestlers has been evident through the years. The coaches have always welcomed help in the practice room. At times I have witnessed a half dozen-state qualifiers from the past suited up and sweating it out. The coaches have recognized what it takes to elevate the team to the next level. They teach aggressiveness by putting the younger kids in the toughest matches they can at a very early stage. Then they help them learn to lose as well as to win. They have done a terrific job all the way down to the first year kids in the elementary program. These coaches are very dedicated to the wrestlers, fans and each other.

These are a few of the key elements that I have identified to be the building blocks of a program that keeps producing the winningest (89.5%) team in the state of Pennsylvania. I've had the opportunity to see the elementary wrestling program, and I would have to say the tradition of winning will extend well into the next millennium!

I would like to hear your thoughts on what you think the key to the Raiders' success has been or how you would measure the success of the Raiders. There are two ways you can be heard. Sign the guest book; keep in mind that all will see your comments.

Thanks again for stopping in and please keep us bookmarked.

1998-1999 SEASON - COLUMN #3 by Don Shaffer

Welcome again to the Reynolds Wrestling web site, your best and fastest coverage of the Raider 1998-99 season. The Raiders are coming into the heart of the season. The month of December was a great month for the Raiders. They started the season where they left off last year. They went into the Mountaineer Tournament, in Philipsburg-Osceola, and crowned 5 champs and out distanced the field of 8 as they won the team championship. The Raiders followed with a win over Jamestown and then crowned 7 champs, with 13-place finishers and the team championship at the Lewistown Tournament. They opened the Mercer County Conference with a win over Hickory. They ended the month with a great showing at the powerful Manheim Holiday Tournament. The Raiders finished the tournament in 4th place behind 3 nationally ranked teams. They crowned one champ, Steve Popovich, as 6 other Raiders placed.

Steve Popovich is sporting an undefeated record, at 11-0, while Josh Cilas, (a fill in) is also unbeaten at 2-0. Raider Freshman Justin Hollobaugh has been a nice surprise at 9-1 with two Tournament titles and a second place at Manheim. Justin Nestor, a sophomore took his first loss of the season at the Manheim Tournament. His record is currently 12-1. Jason Nestor and Doug Woods also lost their first bouts at the Manheim Tournament and have records of 10-2 and 11-2. Rocky Habel saw his first action of the year after sitting out of the Mountaineer Tournament and sports a record of 6-2. 10th grader Jerry Kendall has been a nice addition at 103# with a record of 10-4, and 3 place finishes in the 3 tournaments. The rest of the Raider matmen have gained a lot of experience during the month and will look to build from that.

While the Raiders have enjoyed the early success during the month of December they still have not reached their full potential. They have seen some good things from many different wrestlers, but know that they must continue to improve with each day. The month of January will provide the Raiders with stronger challenges each time they take to the mats. The Raiders open the first week with very little rest. They start with 2 Mercer County Conference matches. On January 5th they have their first home match with Grove City then travel to Hadley to tangle with Commodore Perry on the 7th. With no rest at all they then jump into the Tool City Tournament in Meadville on the 8th and 9th. The following week and a half are 3 M.C.A.C. matches with Sharpville (Jan. 12th H.), Mercer (Jan. 14th A.), and Greenville (Jan. 21st A.). This should get them ready for the war that will take place in Brookville on the 23rd. The Raiders will be one of the top six ranked AA schools that will compete at the Duals in Brookville. The Raiders will square off with Wyalusing (currently ranked #1) and then mix it up with Canton (currently ranked #5). They finish the month with a M.C.A.C. match with Sharon, January 26th and then host the rescheduled match with Erie Prep. on the 28th. This leaves only a finishing home match with Kennedy Christian on February 2nd.

All of the remaining matches and tournaments give the fans a lot to cheer about. The Raiders will look to capture another M.C.A.C. crown and would have to be a favorite to win the Tool City Tournament. The Greenville match will provide the usual excitement. Wrestling fans will also get a chance to see a couple girls wrestle on the varsity level. Erin Tomeo of Grove City and Micah Kelly of Mercer will challenge to beat the Raiders. However wrestling fans, the place to be on January 23rd will be east on I-80 in the small town of Brookville, PA. I will write a special article prior to this event. The Ramblers of Erie Prep. is always a good match for the Raiders as well. So fans get ready for an exciting month of wrestling. I look forward to seeing many of you at the matches. Best of luck to each of the wrestlers and the coaching staff.

1998-1999 SEASON - COLUMN #4 by Don Shaffer

Battle On the Interstate; Northwest takes on Northeast

January 23rd, 1999

This weekend, along Interstate 80 travelers will by-pass a large-scale war and many may never know. The school, Brookville High, is within a grenade's throw on the north side of the interstate. The gym will be the battlegrounds for the biggest war in the high school wrestling world this year. The troops will be ready to battle, as the fans will be hard pressed not to join in the fight.

The Northwest troops will be lead into battle by the defending state champion Reynolds Raiders. Support will come from the Raiders of Brookville and the Elkers of Ridgway. Brookville tuned up for the war by knocking off nationally ranked Bald Eagle Area, 28-24 and the Elkers finished as a strong second place at the Tool City Tournament. These highly ranked troops, Ridgway #2, Reynolds #3, and Brookville #4, will be in hand to hand combat against the power from the Northeast, Wyalusing, Canton, and Northern Lehigh.

The Northeast is lead into battle by #1 ranked Wyalusing with support from Canton #5 and Northern Lehigh #6. Wyalusing has sat on the top position all year. They bring a strong unit that is lead by multi-state place finishers. Canton, who upset Wyalusing a year ago, has some very strong individuals as does Northern Lehigh, all of whom come out of District 4 and are located in the Williamsport area.

Now you can see why this will be a "war like" wrestling event. The top 6 ranked team in the same gym. This is a dream come true. The egos in the gym will be hard to handle at times. The fans will be downed in their school colors and strutting their stuff. For the most part there is no seating by section or team. Most will attempt to stay close to the ones they know. There will be some that will get lost among the enemy. This could prove to be dangerous. Last year I had to move quickly in order to avoid a missile that was launched at a loud mouth that I mistaken as friendly Charlie. This year I will dress for the event. I will make sure that I can be identified by my school color fatigues. This, I hope will send a clear message to the enemy. I may take along a helmet and a flak jacket for further protection. Who's safer, the wrestlers or the fans?

The action on the mats will be intensive. Don't look away for a second or you could miss 3 scoring changes. The field generals, Brian Hills (Reynolds) and Walt Fisk (Wyalusing) have been drilling their troops and plotting their attack for some time now. They will try to maneuver their men in what they think will be the best position to win the war. Then they will assess the results time and time again before making another move. This will take place among all the field generals and their men, as there will be two small battles going on at the same time. When I logged on to the Wyalusing Web Site, I found that the Rams had been preparing for battle a long time. The picture that loaded up on my screen was of the team dressed in fatigues while standing on and around a tank. Maybe they will drive the tank down I-80. If so they surely won't have to worry about missing the exit. All six teams will display the motto of the Marines, "the few, the proud...the PA wrestler."

When the smoke clears sometime Sunday afternoon, the state will have a clearer idea of who among the top 6 is the best. The fact is that regardless of each outcome the 6 teams can be proud that they will still be among good company and in the top 6. The fans will reflect back on a day of great wrestling action, even if they had their egos deflated a little bit. The wrestlers and coaches are already aware of the fact that there is no shame of going down to defeat when among the best in the state. I will be satisfied and exhausted at the day's end.

I would like to thank the Brookville people for organizing such a great wrestling event and wish all the teams the best of luck. I hope to find many friendly faces from my school, so I can feel safe as the war rages on.

LET THE BATTLE BEGIN !!!