1980

1980 National Championship Team

Don Murray

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John Leone Assistant Coach of the Year

SUNY College at Brockport Assistant Coach wins national award from Wrestling USA Magazine

John Leone, assistant wrestling coach at SUNY College at Brockport since 1988, has been named National Collegiate Assistant Coach of the Year by Wrestling USA Magazine.

A 1989 graduate of Brockport, Leone has assisted 20-year head coach Don Murray the past two seasons. In his two years as assistant coach, Brockport has finished 12th (1989) and fifth (1990) at the NCAA Division III National Championships.

When John Leone was a four-time Division III Wrestling All American, including being the 1987 national champ at 158 pounds, he was known for his intensity. His work ethic and drive were unmatched in Brockport's extremely competitive wrestling room.

After leading the team to back-to-back second place finishes at the nationals, John has helped Murray rebuild the program. At the 1988 nationals, the year after Leone graduated, Brockport finished tied for 59th in the nation, the school's lowest performance at the national level in Murray's coaching tenure. Working with a predominantly freshman squad, Murray realized he needed someone close in age with his raw but talented team. Re-enter John Leone.

"John's work with the team the last two seasons has been outstanding," Murray said after watching the still young Brockport team finish fifth in the nation. Of their eight qualifiers, five were sophomores. Two of them, Fritz Zagorski and Brian Quick, captured national titles.

"Because of his age, John is able to get right on the mats and in the middle of the action during practice. The kids respect his knowledge of the sport and what he accomplished as a wrestler here. His contributions to the program have been invaluable," said Murray.

Leone came to Brockport from Penfield High School, in Section Five (Rochester). After a solid career, he flourished almost immediately for the Golden Eagles, becoming just the second four-time All American in school history. In his first two NCAA appearances, he placed fifth. As a junior, he took second, and as a senior, he walked through the tournament, taking first place easily. His finals match was 16-3. Frank Famiano, an Olympian and Brockport's other assistant coach, was the school's other four-time All American.

A graduate assistant in the Department of Physical Education and Sport, Leone has had to balance quite a load this year, including a full schedule of graduate classes, teaching physical education classes, and coaching wrestling. "He was busy last month as Brockport hosted two World Dual Meets with the Soviets and Cubans. Leone is also a coach for the Rochester Gold Force Wrestling Club. He has worked closely with Murray on hosting the USA Wrestling Northeast Junior National Tournament earlier this spring, and the USA Wrestling Training Camp earlier this month.

In addition, he has prepared a presentation for Brockport's Scholar's Day, an annual campus-wide event, titled "Pyrometric Training - Its Effect on an Athlete's Explosive Power."

As a competitor, Leone used an awe-