

Steve Farr

Division III

National Wrestling Champion

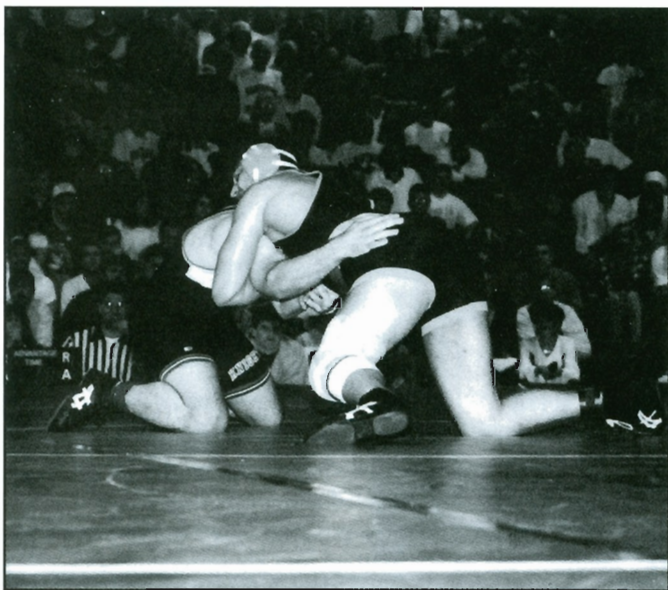


Photo: Ann Bready

Steve Farr with a 2-1 Sudden Death Tie Breaker Decision, Sealing the National Championship for NCAA Division III Ithaca College

"I got to Nationals and tore my right lateral collateral ligament in my opening match," related Steve. "Then, I tore the other leg. It was the lateral meniscus. It was kind of scary. I could bend my knee in a whole new direction."

By Dr. Greg Shepard

"It was unbelievably exciting," said head wrestling coach, John Murray. "The way the whole meet unfolded was one of the most melodramatic things I've ever seen." Murray has been Ithaca College's wrestling coach since 1980 and his team's have won three Division III National Championships in the last six years. The third one came last March in a dramatic come-from-behind double overtime sudden death victory.

It was a perfect Hollywood ending. Coach Murray was named Division III

Coach-of-the-Year and his team claimed the national title. Coach Murray wrestled from the 167 to heavyweight class at Cornell University. He has a Master's Degree from Ithaca and is NSCA certified. Coach Murray knows what it takes but nothing prepared him for his 190 pounder Steve Farr.

Steve should not have even been in the gym. First of all, he was an Ivy League football player at Penn. Second of all, he's had numerous surgeries. Third, he was supposed to wrestle for Nebraska. Fourth, Steve bent his knee a whole new direction before his championship match. Wait a minute. I'm get-

ting ahead of myself. I'd better start at the beginning.

Steve attended Johnson City High School in New York. He won the sectional championship in both junior and senior years. At state Steve placed 4th and 5th in the 177 pound class. He won the Empire State Games in Free Style and Greco Roman in the 191.5 pound class right after high school. However, football is where Steve really shined. He played fullback and linebacker for coach Cal Rucker and was a 5-11 200 pound All-Metro running back and an All-State linebacker. Steve rushed for 1200 yards. "I lifted on the BFS program like crazy in high school," remembered Steve. "I went from a 140 pound 9th grader to a 200 pounder my senior year and ran a 4.75 forty. I remember reading the BFS Journals. They were really inspiring, especially the Tim Green and Barry Sanders articles. They influenced me to workout. Now, I can't believe that I'm going to be in it."

Steve benched 310, squatted 450 and cleaned 250 pounds. "It was really good for wrestling and football. Steve also worked hard in the classroom and achieved a 91 GPA. Even at Ithaca with its high academic standards, Steve accumulated a 3.1 GPA in corporate communications and will attend law school this fall. When asked about his SAT score,

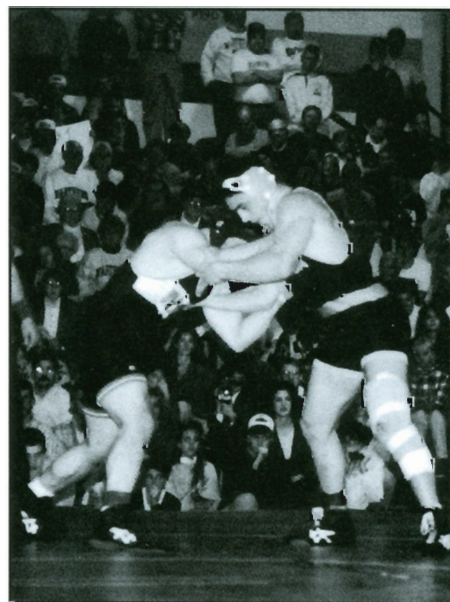


Photo: Ann Bready

**Steve on Far Right
Winning The National
Championship**



Steve replied, "It was 1200. I should have done better but I had a football game."

Steve accepted a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania to be a full-back or running back. He did not wrestle. Then a series of events changed Steve's life. There was a coaching change in football. Steve's heart yearned to try wrestling again. He entered a tournament in New York. He had no idea what the meet entailed. Steve won the tournament in 220 pound class and was amazed to learn that he had qualified for the Olympic Festival in Los Angeles. "I just had to go," remembered Steve. "Heck, all my expenses were paid." "The wrestling coaches couldn't believe that I hadn't wrestled in over two years." Steve lost to the champion 4-3 and ended up taking the bronze medal. That meet was a qualifying meet to represent the United States in the Olympics! Well, it just about blew Steve away.

"That was a real turning point," reflected Steve. "I realized, I wanted to wrestle." Steve looked around for wrestling opportunities. On the basis of his showing in Los Angeles, Nebraska offered Steve a scholarship. He was all

"I have been coaching for 13 years and by far Steve has been the most dedicated athlete I've coached. He is a role model for youth today. I only hope my own children have his determination and character."

Coach Ron Miller

set to go but changed his mind at the last minute. Ithaca College was close to home, his parents, and had academic excellence. "My father is in a wheelchair," explained Steve. "He always makes my events. My family is very important to me, so I chose Ithaca."

Ithaca is the largest private residential college in New York State. There is a 12:1 student-faculty ratio with nearly 6,000 students. Athletic facilities include a 2,500-seat gymnasium, 5,000 seat football stadium, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, weight and training rooms, all-weather track, tennis courts, playing fields and a boathouse.

Ithaca sponsors 24 varsity sports: 12 for men and 12 for women. The Bomber teams in every sport usually make it to post season play. For the 1992-93 season, Ithaca had 35 student-athletes earn All-American recognition.

"I decided not to play football," said Steve thoughtfully. "The plan was to totally dedicate my efforts to wrestling." Steve was able to squeeze three years of wrestling at Ithaca culminating in his national championship. He has now graduated and Steve's goal is to try to make a positive difference in the world. He will go into environmental law. He

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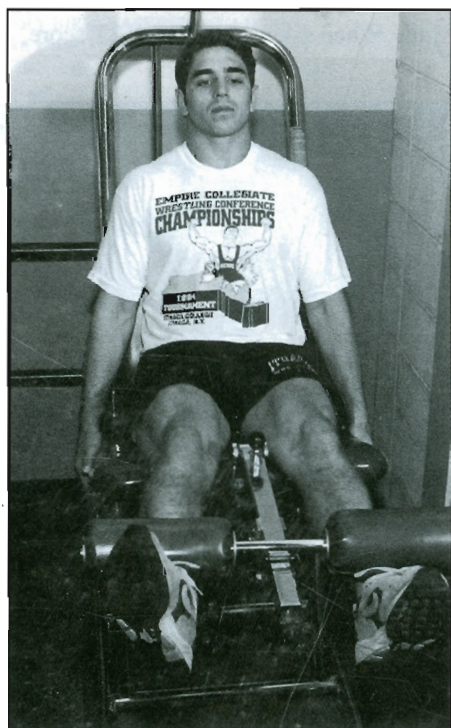


Photo: Patricia Reynolds

**Steve on Leg Extensions
an Auxiliary Lift**

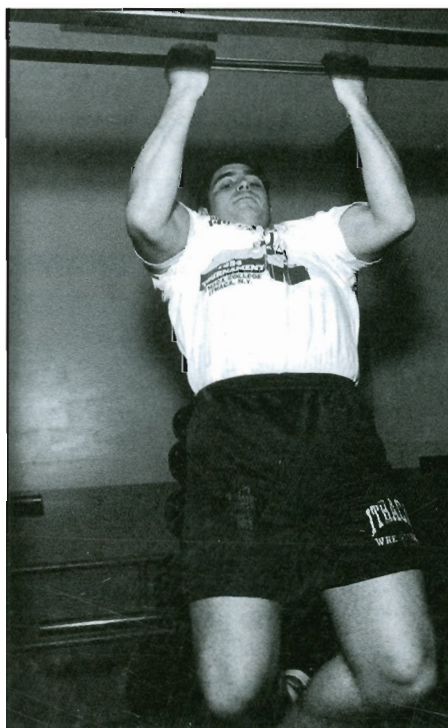


Photo: Patricia Reynolds

**Steve Doing Chin-Ups:
A High Priority Auxiliary
Exercise for Wrestling**

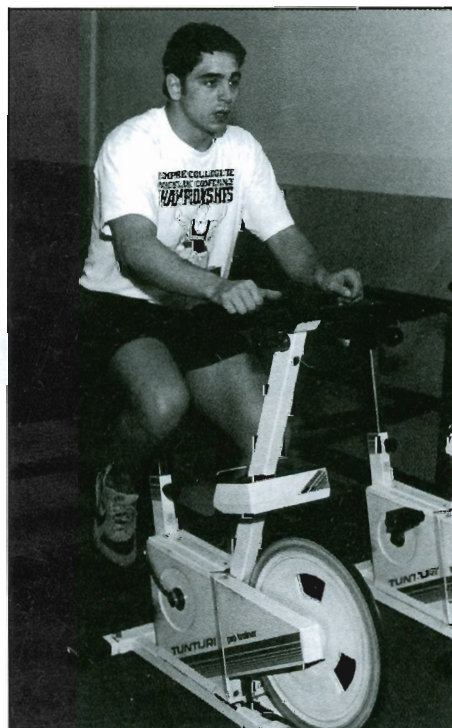


Photo: Patricia Reynolds

**Steve Keeping His
Aerobic Conditioning
at a High Level**



may try out for the national Greco-Roman team but he will also try his hand at coaching. This fall he will help long time friend and coach, Ron Miller who is the head football coach at Spencer Van Etten High School.

Steve does not believe in a lot of negative partying. "I have never done drugs. The older you get, the less peer pressure affects you. I guess it is possible for an individual to win in sports on drugs but for me there is no way my success would have happened. If you work hard, you can have whatever you want and I'm confident I can make that transfer of thinking work in my future life. I want to thank my family. They are the most important thing in my life. They have always been there for me 110%. They have never abandon me."

Now, let's talk about that championship day. "I got to nationals and tore my right lateral collateral ligament in my opening match," related Steve. "Then, I tore the other leg. It was the lateral meniscus. It was kind of scary. I could bend my knee in a whole new direction." Somehow, Steve made it to the championship round. Wartburg had taken a one point lead with a championship win in the 118 pound class. Steve watched intently as two of his teammates had a chance to retake the lead. It was not to be. The Ithaca Bombers lost heartbreaking last second losses at both 150 and 158 pounds. Since neither team had anyone in the heavyweight finals, the national championship came down to Steve's match in the 190 pound class.

"I didn't want to let the team down," Steve said. "I was representing all the hard work everybody did through the whole year." His worthy Wartburg opponent was Jon Dawley who was a four-time Iowa Collegiate Conference champion. He knew that Wartburg had lost the national title last year by just one point. On a scale of one to ten, both men were determined at an eleven level. "Don't think it," said Steve referring to negative thinking about not wrestling. "Don't anyone tell me I can't go on." Steve had had numerous injuries in the past and he thought he could wrestle. He just did not want to think about any-

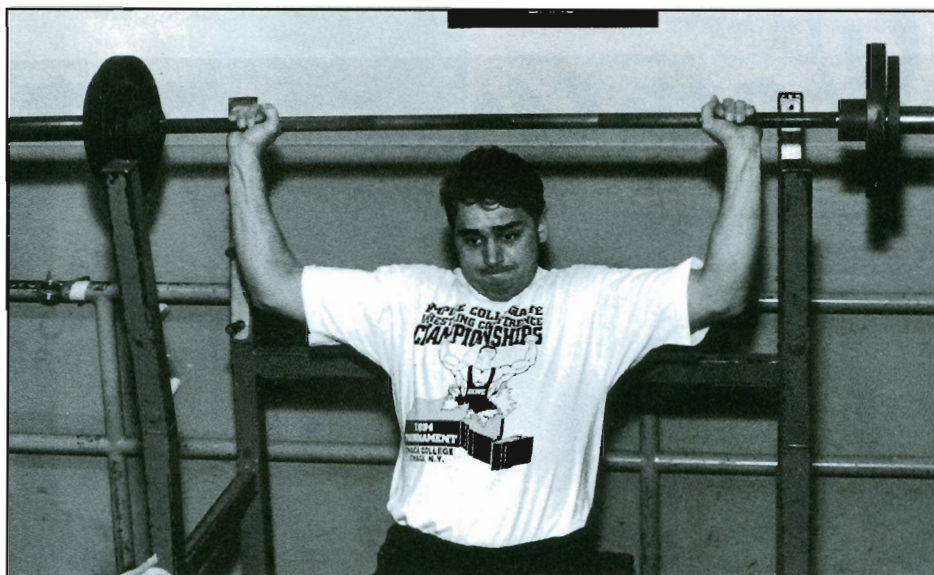


Photo: Patricia Reynolds

Steve Doing Behind the Neck Presses a Good Upper Body Auxiliary Lift

thing negative. Steve went onto the mat with a purpose.

"I wasn't vocal about it. It was personal. My roommate said there was no way that I could keep going. I wouldn't speak to my mother. She is a nurse practitioner and she would have said no." At the end of regulation time, the match was tied 1-1 and remained tied through a two-minute overtime period. The coin was tossed and it rolled along its edge for awhile before it flopped over. Dawley won the coin flip for the

tie-breaker and elected to start from the down position. This meant if Dawley could get out, he would win. If Steve could hold him, he would win. Thirty seconds would determine the winner. "When Dawley won the toss, the crowd erupted like he had won the match and he would get out easily," observed Steve.

Steve said to himself, "I can do anything for 30 seconds. I didn't want to look back and wonder if I gave it my all." Dawley almost wiggled loose but went out of bounds with 20 seconds left. The crowd of 5,000 was almost all for Dawley because it was in his backyard. Steve talked to himself again, "Okay, you can be an also-ran or hold this guy." It was going to be a monumental task. Steve related, "It's probably the longest I've held somebody down all season. In those 30 seconds all the stuff from my career ran through my mind - all the injuries, all the training, everything."

When the time expired, Steve Farr was still on top and so were the Bombers from Ithaca. Coach Murray shook his head in wonder, "The heart and courage he showed was unbelievable. In the overtime, he was in some of the most unbelievable hairy positions. Steve was upside down once and on his butt another time. It was so close to a reversal but he kept battling and battling." □



Photo: Patricia Reynolds

Steve Farr Doing Parallel Squats: A Core Lift