



*Alfred F. Fontes*  
*Oakley, California*

## **2001 STATE EDITOR OF THE YEAR**

In the winter of 1978, the concept of amateur wrestling was not part of Al Fontes' life, nor was it a thought. The sport of baseball consumed a majority of his extracurricular time, playing on a Little League team with his neighborhood friends. This all changed when he was introduced to wrestling during a physical education class. His first experience wasn't very pleasant, as he was pinned by a very tough eighth grader. This didn't bother him though, he liked the competitive one-on-one challenges wrestling provided. At the encouragement of his seventh grade math teacher, Al joined the team at Junction Avenue Middle School in Livermore, California. With no prior mat experience, he had a very successful season going undefeated in the dual meet competition, and earning Most Valuable Wrestler honors.

Al continued his mat career at Livermore High School, earning three varsity letters, including two in football. Moreover, he was the wrestling team captain, earned All-League honors for football, and completed his senior year with an individual East Bay Athletic League title. During his four years in High School, he coached at his former Middle School.

After graduating from High School in 1984, Al joined the Navy and spent four years touring the world on several major deployments. He attended Chabot College and competed on the wrestling team. Al continued where he left off prior to joining the Navy, and returned to his coaching duties at Junction Avenue Middle School. In addition, he assisted with his former High School coach Steve Page at Livermore from 1988 to 1996. During this time, Livermore won seven East Bay Athletic League titles and performed very well at



the section and state levels, with several kids earning medals at these competitions. Currently, he is in his fifth year as an assistant coach at Liberty High School in Brentwood, California, which is one of the top programs in northern California. During the off-season, Al is an active coach with the local Delta Wrestling Club.

Al's editorship duties began in autumn of 1994 while attending the Monterey Coaches Clinic of Champions. It was at this clinic where he met Bill Grant, a long-time historian and promoter of California Wrestling. Al took an interest at the promotion aspect of the sport, and volunteered to help Bill Grant with detailed wrestling stats for his state newsletter, the *California Wrestler*. Each year, Al increased his involvement with the newsletter and eventually became a co-editor, along with Jeff Roberts and Jim Lucas.

Desiring to spread the word about California wrestling nationally, Al became a state editor with *Wrestling USA Magazine* in 1999. More recently, he has taken on the task of ranking the toughest high school tournaments in the nation, and creating the *California Pre-Season Review*, which is one of the most detailed high school wrestling reviews in the nation. This review provides detailed information about all the top wrestlers in California, ranging from State, Section placing, All-American honors, and placement in major high school tournaments.

Several articles for the magazine are to his credit. Currently, Al maintains his own website, Coach Al's California Wrestling Page, and along with Bruce Closson is a co-editor editing the website, The California Wrestling Report.

At the California State Championships this year, Al was awarded the Irv Oliner Award for outstanding contributions to High School wrestling by the California High School Wrestling Coaches Association, and was selected as California's Man-of-the-year for *Wrestling USAMagazine*.

Al's main goal is to provide the best coverage possible for the kids because they work harder than any other sport, and deserve first-rate coverage.

Al wants to give a special thanks to his good friend and former Navy Shipmate Kevin Shawhan for helping him with countless hours of web master duties in maintaining Coach Al's California Wrestling Page.

Currently, Al resides in Oakley, California with his wife Patricia of seven years. He is employed at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore as a Senior Health & Safety Technologist.