

HSGL - Historical Society of Greater Lansing

Nancy Vogl · eSrtndpoos31cgcf5e75g:thd h1fa36aYes30mM aigtr0luA71i 3184yg

My dear friend Don Behm's extraordinary worldwide wrestling feats spanned over four decades. First, he was a two-time undefeated state champion.

For Michigan State, he was a two-time All American (1965 and 1967), two-time Big Ten champion, and three-time Midlands champion.

In his post collegiate freestyle career, Behm became a dominant and formidable force both nationally and internationally. In AAU and USWF tournaments between 1969 and 1973, he won five national championships, received All-American honors 11 times, and was twice named Outstanding Wrestler.

Representing the United States in the 1968 Olympic games in Mexico City, Behm earned an impressive silver medal in the first and only "no match final" in the history of the sport.

In 1970, he was the first American to capture a gold medal at the grueling Tblisi tournament, wrestling seven nine-minute matches in one day.

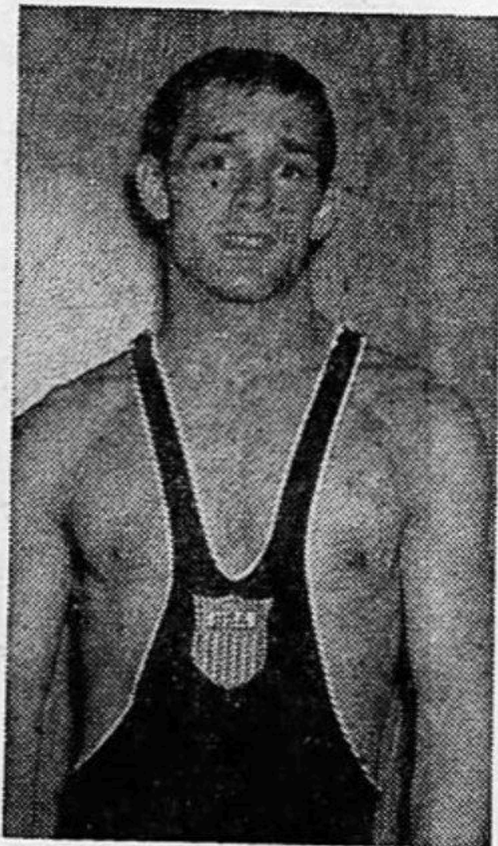
He captured two silver medals at the World Championships (1969,1970) and another silver at the World Cup (1973). He added more gold in 1971 at the Pan Am Games and, in 1993, he stood on top of the victory stand one more time to receive the gold medal at the Veterans Worlds.

Don also had a stint on the U.S. wrestling coaching staff from 1977-83. In 2004, he was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame, and in 2007 he was inducted into the Greater Lansing Area Sports Hall of Fame.

Aside from Don's impressive wrestling career, he was a longtime PE teacher with East Lansing schools and the East Lansing High School's longtime wrestling coach.

All of my daughters had "Mister Behm" as their elementary gym teacher. Don would correct me if I said "Gym," declaring he was their P.E. teacher! Don played an important part in my daughter's lives, and in the growth and confidence of hundreds and hundreds of East Lansing children for over three decades.

Don Behm Advances In Olympic Wrestling



DON BEHM
Wins Olympic Match

MEXICO CITY (UPI) — Don Behm, a former Michigan State University wrestler, gained a first-round victory Thursday with a bantamweight decision over Sardar Mohammad of Pakistan.

Behm is one of the U.S. wrestlers in the freestyle competition. Lone American casualty in the first round was Bobby Douglas of Toledo, who was fourth in the '64 games.

Another ex-Spartan, Joe Puleo of Detroit, was eliminated in the weightlifting competition. Puleo, who is a light heavyweight, failed to place when he was unable to lift 325 pounds in each of his three presses.





WINS BERTH—Don Behm, former Michigan State mat great, made the United States Olympic Wrestling Team Sunday at Alamosa, Colo., beating No. 1 seeded Richard Hossman, 5-3, in the finals of the 125½-pound freestyle class. Behm was seeded No. 2