

# Nothing But No. 1 for John Zito

John Zito, East Rochester High School's "super athlete," has achieved his scholastic career goal . . . winning the New York State 167 pound wrestling championship.

Now he has his cool eyes on greater heights. Like competing and winning in the college he selects as his choice. Then the peak goal of being East Rochester's first athlete in the 1984 World Olympics.

"Just dream?" Hardly. Zito won the 1979 New York State 167 crown last Saturday night in the Onondaga Memorial Auditorium in Syracuse by beating four more rivals.

It took four matches and none of them were tough.

In fact, in the championship argument against Guilderland's Ron Czarnetzky, the final count was a winning 7-2.

Zito opened with a first round 13-0 decision over Section 10's Rod Dashnaw of Gouverneur and cruised past Tyrone Terry of Section 1's Mt. Vernon High School, 11-1.

In the semifinals, a close score of 3-1 hardly indicated Zito's superiority over Section 11's Jim Matuszewski of Sachem High School.

Zito gave up a sole point when charged with a stall, but Matuszewski failed to provide any opposition and was charged with a stalling point and was taken down by the ER wizard of the mats.

For Zito, the four wins stretched his unbeaten string of victories this season to 36.

Last year in the annual New York State Wrestling Tournament, Zito lost in the finals to Ed Banach of Port Jervis, 9-5.

He made a pledge to return and even at midseason was lauded as the 1979 champ.

Zito, who also plays football and was an all-state defensive end on coach Don Quinn's 10-0 football team that was tapped for state and northeast USA honors, is heading for the University of Wisconsin this weekend where assistant wrestling coach Russ Hellickson has offered him a full scholarship.

University of Nebraska mat coach "Bob" Frear, who was one of many major college wrestling coaches among the 5817 spectators watching last weekend's tourney has invited him to that Midwest school.

Keith Cotroneo, a former ER matman and a second place winner in the state tourney in 1971 at 126 pounds is trying to get Zito to attend the University of Georgia, where Cotroneo is assistant wrestling coach.

North Carolina State is anxious to get Zito and so are many other big time colleges.

"He has the pick of the nation," Quinn said.

At the end of the tourney, Zito was selected as the third outstanding wrestler in the competition.

But at the Gitsis Party House in Rochester last Monday night, Zito was named Section 5's outstanding wrestler and Quinn was tapped the No. 1 mat coach in the "A" division.

Quinn said college coaches rate Zito the superb wrestler who had no weaknesses.

Hellickson, Wisconsin assistant coach who won a silver medal in the 1976 World Olympics at 191 pounds said, "We can use Zito right now."

Quinn eulogized Zito this way: "This past weekend, John Zito has achieved one of the many goals he has set for himself as a wrestler.

By doing so, he has brought pride and honor to himself and his family, his school and the Village of East Rochester."

John is the third ERHS wrestler to become a state champion. The other two are Timmy Gay in 1970 and Richie McPhee in 1974. To become an individual state champ is by no means an easy accomplishment.

Many have the talent and the hope but few have the self-discipline, drive and heart to make it.

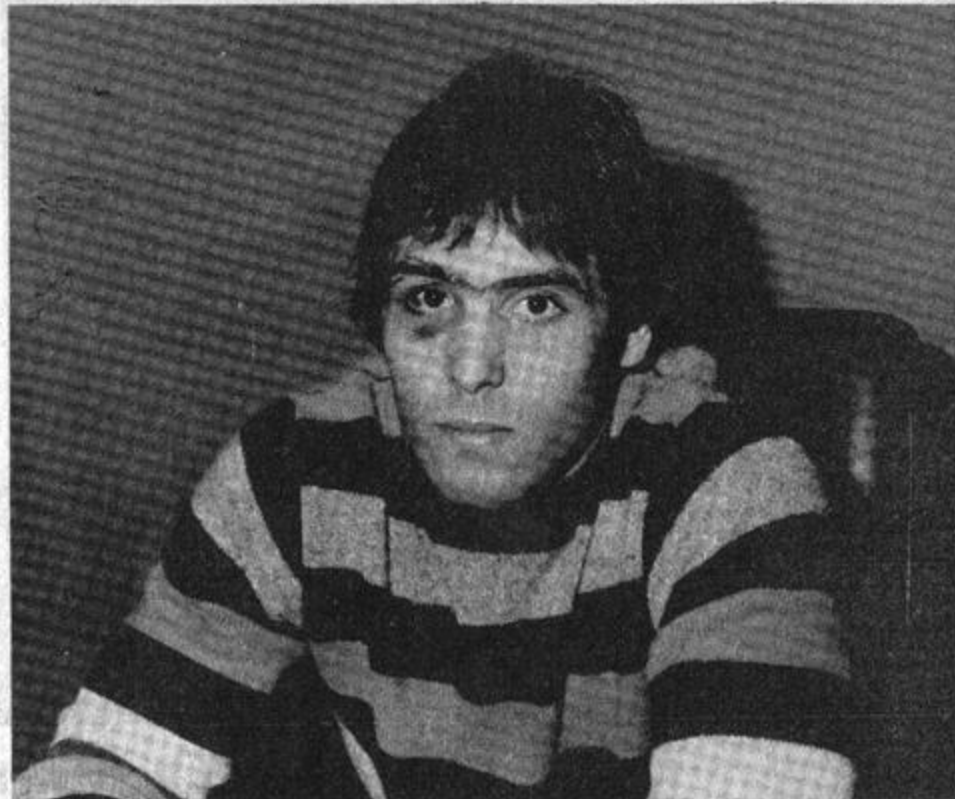
It is coach Don Quinn's opinion that no one more deserving of a state championship than John Zito.

He has been an ideal athlete to coach.

His God-given talent and early successes created a love for the sport. He then set his goals high and gave the time, efforts and self-sacrifice needed to achieve his goals.

He is the gentleman, good sport, leader, good example and dedicated athlete who deserves the title he has earned as champion."

Zito was the lone Section 5 wrestler to win first place. Section 5 finished third among 11 competing state sections with 193 points. Section 11 won first place with 235.



John Zito