

# **'72 vs. '92: What Would Really Happen**

*by John Peterson & Ethan Bosch*

**#12**

After reading Kyle Klingman's article on the match between the 1972 and 1992 Freestyle Olympic Teams, I felt the strong urge to counter. After all, that is what wrestling teaches us - we do not just learn offense; we also learn defense.

Having had the privilege of being at both the '72 and '92 Olympics, I can speak with some authority on the subject. I realize it is always dangerous to go up against historians when tackling these kinds of tasks. Therefore, I approach this work with some fear, but not to the point of trembling!

Since I let my teammates down by losing a close one to Kevin Jackson, I feel the competitive juices begin to flow with the desire to defend my teammates and somehow help them in this imaginary epic struggle between outstanding warriors. I am sure that Coach Bill Farrell would have figured out a way. With Coach's ability to instill confidence in his men and Wayne Wells as Captain, surely the 1972 team would have prevailed, somehow!

## **105.5: Sergio Gonzalez vs. Tim Vanni (Klingman: 4-3, Vanni in OT)**

The first match is an all-important one. It is safe to argue that a man who ties the returning world champion is worthy of a closer look. Sergio Gonzales also tied the West German in a match that was filled with hometown calls, as I recall. So, given that fact, it is safe to believe that Sergio could just have easily been on the victory stand if we had been in a different arena. Now, I realize that can be said about any match, but here we have a man who went undefeated in Olympic competition and has rarely received the credit he deserves. I give him the victory in overtime, 4-3!

**Team score: 3-1 in favor of '72.**

## **114.5: Jimmy Carr vs. Zeke Jones (Klingman: 17-1, Jones)**

It is obvious to me that Mr. Klingman is too young to know just how good Jimmy Carr was as a 17-year-old kid. In 1973, Jimmy won the Junior World Championships in dominant fashion. Yes, I will concede the match. But by a score of 17 to 1? Give me a break! By 1992, FILA was well on its way to successfully destroying the incentive for wrestlers to be aggressive in scoring (Kyle's use of the word "dubious" is too soft in describing their mismanagement of our sport). Only a few years later, they had to pass the ridiculous rule that you must score 3 points to win a match. It's highly doubtful Jones would have racked up 17 points on anyone, let alone the athletic Jimmy Carr. Jimmy had an unbelievably explosive high crotch as well as a duck under that could make his opponents think they were on the Cape Canaveral launch pad before one could say "J Robinson." I say the match would end more like 10-7 in favor of the more experienced Jones.

**Team score: All tied up, 4-4.**

## **125.5: Ricky Sanders vs. Kendall Cross (Klingman: 52-31, Sanders)**

Yes, Kyle is right: 125.5 would be incredible. These were two of the most flexible and unorthodox men to ever grace the mats. I could see them trading spladles and handing each

other their legs, so that they could show off their many single leg counters to the cheering crowd. I too will give it to the World Champion, seasoned veteran Ricky Sanders. However, let's make it a little more realistic! Kendall Cross would come from behind with a tired-out Sanders holding on at the end to win it, 25-23.

**Team score: 7-5 in favor of '72.**

**136.5: Gene Davis vs. John Smith (Klingman: 14-2, Smith)**

One of the most exciting matches of the meet matches up two Oklahoma State Cowboys at 136.5. My brother Ben, thinking it will be boring because of the brain washing that he experienced during his years at ISU, falls asleep and misses arguably the best match of the night. The '92 John Smith, who narrowly made the team and then lost a match on his way to the gold, would not have beaten Gene Davis by such a wide margin, especially with the weigh-in rules. Some of Gene's toughest bouts were with the scales. He takes an early lead with an explosive arm drag to the body that overpowers the more flexible Smith. No one would want to let Gene get a two on one on him. With the weigh-in the night before, Gene is able to fight hard through the entire match. But Smith, with his ever-present ability to find a way to win, gets a low single to a leg lace in the waning moments of the match to pull it out, 9-7.

**Team score: All tied up again, 8-8.**

**149.5: Dan Gable vs. Townsend Saunders (Klingman: Gable by fall at 6:45)**

Kyle's analysis of Gable's match with Saunders is acute, but not his predicted reaction with the pin. That is so out of character for Mr. Gable that it is almost not funny. Yes, he would get excited over wrestling matches. Few people can match his euphoria over a win - but not his own, always someone else's. When Ben and I carried him on our shoulders after his win in Munich he insisted that we put him down, saying, "I just did what I came to do." He showed little or no emotion with his own wins. However, Ben recalls seeing him fight back the tears when he saw how well the two farm boys from Northern Wisconsin did. The match goes the way Kyle described: Gable by a late fall.

**Team score: 12-8 in favor of '72.**

**163:** For the sake of drama, I will leave the Wells vs. Monday match for the end.

**180.5: John Peterson vs. Kevin Jackson (Klingman: 8-6, Jackson)**

As much as I hate to admit it, Kyle is probably right in his reporting of my match with Kevin Jackson. However, I am not sure there would be that many points scored. And Kyle, in the spirit of FILA, should not a ride to the Big 10 championships be worth 2 points? That would have put us into overtime! (I visited the International Wrestling Institute and Museum in Newton, Iowa last March and gave Kyle a ride to the Big 10 meet in Iowa City.) Even with the extra two points, I have to concede the match to the talented Mr. Jackson... we'll say 5-4. I would put up a bigger argument if it were the 1976 team going against 1992!

**Team score: 13-11 in favor of '72.**

**198: Ben Peterson vs. Chris Campbell (Klingman: 10-9, Peterson in OT)**

The only disagreement I have with Kyle at 198 is how Ben would finish. Having had extensive experience wrestling both of these wrestlers myself (in the practice room and in competition), I know that there is no way that Ben would ever take Chris down with a double leg. This match would feature another one of those dramatic finishes that we wrestling fans love to remember. Chris, with his explosive high crotch, would score early and often on the much slower Peterson. However, with the scrambling ability of a chipmunk caught in your garage, Ben comes storming back with takedown counters and back exposures. In a flurry of action, Ben hits a crotch lift counter to Chris's last high crotch that would score the winning points, just as time runs out. Coach Farrell would have to show the officials a videotape of the clock and the action to convince them that it was not too late. The facts speak for themselves. Final score, 14-13 Peterson.

**Team score: 16-12 in favor of '72.**

**220: Henk Schenk vs. Mark Coleman (Klingman: 5-1, Coleman)**

Kyle is right again. Henk would put up a good fight, but in the end he would not be able to deal with the power and quickness of Mark Coleman. Maybe if he had not made Ben and me work out with Chris Taylor all the time that we were in Munich, I would put up a better fight on this one. Actually, I can not blame Henk for not wanting to go with Chris. Ben and I had the experience of training with Chris at ISU and our bodies were young and could handle the risk. Nevertheless, same final: 5-1 for Coleman.

**Team score: 17-15 in favor of '72.**

**UNL: Chris Taylor vs. Bruce Baumgartner (Klingman: 4-3, Baumgartner)**

I wanted so badly to come up with a way for Chris Taylor to pull this one out. It is hard to know how Bruce would handle a 400+-pound giant. If he tried to use his famous single leg finish that worked so well in Atlanta, I am afraid the weight would be too much. However, I will never forget the determination on his face as he sucked the Russian's leg in to get the win he needed to become the all-time record medal-winner that he is. I have to believe that Bruce, just like the great champion Alexander Medved, would find a way to beat the weight, strength, and, yes, quickness of the mighty man Chris Taylor. I will go with Kyle's score, 4-3 for Bruce.

**Team score: 18-18, all tied up and ready for the grand finale.**

**163: Wayne Wells vs. Kenny Monday (Klingman: 4-3, Wells)**

You are perhaps thinking, "Sure, Peterson found a way for his team to win." But wait! I have to be honest about this competition; I'm a wrestler. Kyle had Wells winning. Let's leave it like that!

I wish it were that easy.

However, having watched both of these men wrestle, I know it is not that easy. Wayne Wells is one of the toughest wrestlers to ever step on the mat. Not many people knew just how much pain he had to deal with, due to the rib injury he had. One of my personal regrets in the training camp was not being able to train more with Wayne. He had an arm bar that could cause more pain than a migraine headache!

But Kenny Monday's explosive moves both on his feet and on the mat made him an unbelievable force to be reckoned with. With both of these great champions fighting injuries, the match would end in a 4-4 tie after regulation. In overtime, there are several flurries that leave the crowd on their feet, with cheers of wild excitement and pure love for the great competitors. Both men are close to scoring more than once as the clock ticks on. Who can pull it out for his team in this contest for the ages?

3...2...1... The overtime period ends deadlocked! As mandated under the Klingman Rules, Chris Taylor sits on the two gladiators as they drip with sweat. At the same instant the two both cry, "Uncle!" in surrender. The dual meet ends in a draw.

The head of FILA is so upset with this result that he resigns in protest, and the organization is totally cleaned up by the new management. Both teams agree that this is even better than winning, and the wrestling community lives happily ever after!

**Final team score: 20-20**