

Kline finds success in wrestling

By JARED PATTERSON
Of The Globe Gazette

MASON CITY — Eddie Kline had aspirations to be a basketball player.

He recalls winning two free-throw contests where he made 48-of-50 in one competition and made 47-of-50 in the second.

But despite being lethal from the free-throw line, he quickly learned that playing on the hardwood wasn't going to be for him.

"The high school basketball coach at the time said I was too small to play and I should just go out for wrestling," Kline said.

It turned out to work just fine for Kline.

After losing his first career varsity match, Kline never lost again as he won three state titles back when there was only one class as he won the final 54 matches in his high school career.

He finished with 34 pins and won the other 20 matches by decisions from 1951-53.

"I was terrible right away," said Kline, who won two titles at 95 pounds and the third at 103. "That's when I decided to turn it around."

From there, Kline never lost. Throughout the 54-match win streak, he was never on his back.

He won his first state title as a sophomore at Teacher's College in Cedar Falls. He won another title there his senior year.

But the state title that may have met the most for Kline came his junior year when he won the state title at Roosevelt School in Mason City.

"The ones that I did win, I did it for Mason City, not for me," Kline said.

Kline, a lifelong resident of River City, spends his days balancing time between the golf course and fishing.

But still, Mason City athletics, and specifically wrestling, is something he follows very closely.

Tim Krieger, who wrestled from 1982-84 is the only other Mohawk ever to win three straight state championships.

Kline, though, did it when there was only one class.

"It's kind of nice knowing that I'm the only wrestler ever at Mason City who won three straight state titles back when they had that classification," Kline said.

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