

Newt Copple (Nebraska)

Newt was a four-year letter winner at the University of Nebraska. He was the first All-American in wrestling for the University of Nebraska in 1942, when he placed 4th at 145 lbs. at the NCAA tournament. In 1983 he was also enshrined in the Nebraska Scholastic Wrestling Coaches Association Hall of Fame as a Contributor.

Newt's competition years included some interesting history, including the NCAA tournament in 1948. With the Olympic Games in the near future, and because there had not been NCAA competition during the war years, the NCAA decided to run that year's wrestling tournament under Olympic Rules. Newt reached the round robin in that tournament and ended up placing third, earning All-American status for the second time.

Newt wrestled in and won so many National YMCA and AAU championships that at one time he held more national titles than anyone in American wrestling history. He said he was most proud of the National AAU Freestyle Title that he won at age 39. In 1951 he was a gold medalist at the Pan-American Championships and in 1954 he placed 5th in the FILA World Championships. In 1957 he was a member of the first freestyle wrestling team from America to ever compete internationally in a dual meet with Turkey.

Newt eventually became the first full-time AAU Wrestling Chairman, a position he held for five plus terms (1972- 1979). As chairman Newt began many programs which he hoped would move the United States to the forefront of international wrestling, especially beating the Soviets. At one point wrestling had won more Olympic and World Championships medals than all other Olympic sports except for track & field and swimming. Some of his programs were to originate the AAU Officials' Committee, which became the largest officials group in the world, begin committees for AAU Coaches and Sports Medicine, start cultural exchanges in wrestling where more exchanges took place every year than in all other Olympic sports combined and begin ninety day AAU wrestling camps for all ages.

Some of the awards Newt received during his career include: AAU Wrestling Committee "Person of the Year" in 1973, 1974, and 1975; *Wrestling USA Magazine's* Hall of Fame in 1976; and being named as one of the "Top 50 Contributors of All-Time" to amateur wrestling.

Newt died on March 13, 1991 at 62 years of age. One of his biggest goals, to beat the Soviet Wrestling World Championship Teams, was realized not once, but many times before he died.