

THE WELKERS OF SHAMOKIN

It was a blistery winter Saturday that March of 1938. Harold Welker, a senior for Shamokin High School, was warming-up for his finals match against Angelo Carmella of Dubois. As he looked around the facility, Harold realized that he had never before been in such a huge gymnasium.

It was Penn State's "Rec Hall" and Harold Welker was competing in the first high school state wrestling tournament ever held in Pennsylvania. He was nervous, but not scared. He knew nothing of his opponent except where he was from.

Coach Ken Horner walked over to Harold and said, "It's your turn to win the second individual state championship for Shamokin today. Roland Scandle won at 115, and you can do it at 145. This is important, Harold. You guys will be the first state champions in wrestling. I can sense that this is the beginning of something big. Are you ready to make history, Harold?"

"Yes sir."

"Then let's go. You're up."

The match was not an easy one for Harold. Neither wrestler scored a point in the regular match, so the bout would now go into overtime.

During the minute's rest (which was required back then), Harold, breathing heavily, said to Coach Horner, "Give him the freakin' match; I'm too damn tired!"

"That's not going to happen, Harold. Don't quit on me now. This is too damn important. Now get your butt out there and win the match!"

Harold did both.

Thus began the Welker family legacy in Pennsylvania Wrestling.

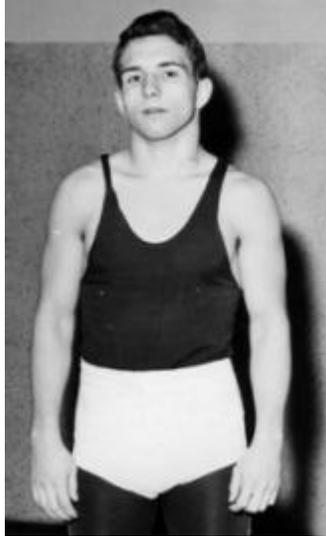


1938 PIAA State Wrestling Champion: Harold Welker

The next two Welkers to reach the finals were brothers Floyd and Bill. Floyd won his state title in 1959 at the 120-pound weight class as a junior. His opponent that year was Ron Maunder of Lewistown. The final score of the match was 3-1. Floyd became the ninth Shamokin "Greyhound" to be crowned a PIAA State Champion.

The following year Floyd Welker again reached the state finals at 120 pounds. His opponent was Jerry Twoey from Philipsburg-Osceola. Floyd was winning the match at the end of the first period, but made a fatal mistake and was pinned by a double grapevine, shocking everyone in attendance.

Floyd Welker went on to become a civil engineer, earning both a BS (Penn State) and MS (Purdue) degree. Floyd retired as a computer analyst for the Zerox Corporation in 2004, having worked there for over 30 years.



1959 PIAA State Wrestling Champion: Floyd Welker

Bill Welker was the third member of the Welker family to win a PIAA State Championship in 1963 as a sophomore. Wrestling at 95 pounds, Bill's opponent in the state finals was Sherm Hostler of Newport. He decisively won 4-2 to become Shamokin's tenth and youngest state champion ever. Sherm Hostler went on to win states at 103 pounds the following year.

Bill again returned to the state finals his senior year at the 112-pound weight class. His finals opponent was West York's Dana Luckenbaugh. At the start of the third period, the score was tied 3-3. Welker was in the bottom position the third period. An escape would win him his second title. But it was not to be. Bill hesitated on the whistle and Luckenbaugh rode him out to win by a riding time point 4-3. Thus, Dana Luckenbaugh became West York's first state champion.

Bill Welker later earned both a BS and Master degree from the University of Pittsburgh and a doctorate in education from West Virginia University. Bill retired as a 40-year veteran k-12 classroom teacher in 2009.



1963 PIAA State Wrestling Champion: Bill Welker

Cousin Harold Welker started it all in 1938, but unfortunately passed away at a very young age. Floyd and Bill Welker became the first “brother-team” to win states in District Four.

The trio of “Shamokin Greyhound” Welkers won their state titles during a time when there was only one division of schools, and you couldn’t lose at any level of the elimination process. As trailblazers, they have often been dubbed:

“The First Family of District Four Wrestling”

The Welker Brothers Wrestling Statistics

Floyd R. Welker

Three-Year Varsity Performer

Record: 58-10-1

**Two-Time Sectional Champion
(1959-1960)**

**Two-Time District Champion
(1959-1960)**

**Two-Time Regional Champion
(1959-1960)**

1959 PIAA State Champion

1960 PIAA State Runner-up

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William A. “Bill” Welker

Four-Year Varsity Performer

Record: 83-10-2

**Three-Time Sectional Champion
(1962-1963-1965)**

**Three-Time District Champion
(1962-1963 -1965)**

**Two-Time Regional Champion
(1963-1965)**

1963 PIAA State Champion

1965 PIAA State Runner-up

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