



## JON STEVENS

### PROFILE

Jon Stevens came away from a dozen years of high-level wrestling thinking clearly. Thank goodness for that because it has allowed him to help others do the same.

A state champion wrestler at Castro Valley High in 2002, Stevens' career fell victim to college life, injuries and a general interest in a greater purpose. After two years at Lassen College, Stevens joined the Marine Corps and advanced to Special Ops.

Two decades later and now 41 years old, Jon finds himself shuttling between Ann Arbor, Mich., and Cancun, Mexico, aiding in the search for a cure for PTSD and other brain damage that he's seen torture many of his military colleagues. That and his three children – daughter Ayela and sons Skye and Dax – are now his main focus.

Stevens recalled the day he met Steve Solis, the wrestling coach at Canyon Middle School. "He grabbed me and asked me if I'd ever considered wrestling. I said no. He literally grabbed me. It was the best thing that ever happened to me. I had a lot of energy, a lot of aggression . . . I was a glutton for punishment. It was tough, with all the weight-cutting and everything you had to do to get to that match. But it was worth it."

Stevens also credits Castro Valley coaches Ron and Russ Maes for his success in wrestling . . . and a senior by the name of Dave Ghaderi, who didn't treat the freshman with kid gloves at the varsity workouts.

"He would beat me into the ground," Stevens said. "All season, I don't think I ever got a take-down. He used to haunt my dreams. But we're friends today."

Stevens reached the top of the prep ranks as a senior, winning the state title in the 215-pound division despite wrestling at a weight disadvantage.

"My coaches got me to cut my weight my senior year," he remembered. "Get me moving as fast as I could. I wrestled at 205, sometimes below 200. But I was quicker, faster and had a bunch of muscles on me. Never did I ever think I would make it to the state tournament. My coaches saw it, but I didn't see it. The state-championship run was an accomplishment I never thought was possible."