

1958 CASTRO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL BOY'S WRESTLING TEAM



PROFILE

A funny thing happened to the powerful Hayward High wrestling team en route to a likely North Coast Section championship in 1958. An upstart high school in neighboring Castro Valley swooped in and took it away.

That's what happened in Castro Valley's second year of existence, when several of Hayward's would-be wrestling standouts instead helped lead their new hometown team – then known as the Spartans – to the school's first-ever NCS championship.

Sixty-six years later, Castro Valley High has won NCS team championships in seven different girls sports and in six boys sports. Heck, even once in coed badminton. But the first was the 1958 wrestling team, which also earned the distinction of being the first-ever NCS wrestling champ.

When Castro Valley High opened its doors in September of 1956, a total of 1,363 students – pretty much equally split between freshmen and Hayward High transfers – enrolled for classes. It didn't take long to establish a first tradition: this would be a wrestling school. And the man most responsible for that was Vaughn Hitchcock.

A former standout wrestler and football player at Hayward High and Washington State, Hitchcock established the Castro Valley wrestling program before the paint had dried at the new school and had his guys raising an NCS banner into the gymnasium rafters within 18 months of the school's opening.

Even with a great coach, winning the first NCS championship was no easy task. At the time, the section finals drew teams from as far away as Santa Cruz to the west, Gilroy to the south, Pittsburg to the east and Novato to the north. Still, Castro Valley came out on top, with Vincent Weis (112 pounds) and Jerry Campbell (145) winning individual titles, John Thompson (138), John McBeth (154) and Bob Paterson (165) placing second, and Bill Silveira (120) taking third.

When the individual points were totaled, Castro Valley had 65, topping Hayward (48) and third-place Camden of San Jose (39).



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Campbell and Thompson, the Most Valuable Wrestler at the Alameda County Athletic League Championships, were the season-long stars of the team, but McBeth's success under the NCS spotlight was as important as any. By finishing ahead of Hayward's Ben Paz, who took third, it gave the Spartans a nice cushion in the standings.

Among the many others who contributed to the championship were Craig Preisendorf, Harvey Scatena, Jay Opperman, Bob Boring, Ron Cerny, Rick Thomey, Terry Gough, Stan Benson and Larry Wilburn.

One year later, the team was even better. Castro Valley had eight wrestlers finish in the top three at the NCS meet, with McBeth, Paterson and Opperman winning championships. The Spartans were dominant by that point.