

Beating Someone More Skilled Than You

By Steve Fraser

January 24, 2012

How do you beat someone who is more skilled than you are?

We all know that it takes many things to become a successful wrestler. It takes learning the many techniques of the sport. It takes conditioning the body to be able to execute the various moves. It takes flexibility. It takes mental toughness and perseverance. It takes a strong will to prepare one's body and mind for the battle.

Some wrestlers excel in certain areas and struggle in other areas. We all develop differently and master certain aspects of the sport more than other aspects of the sport. For example, some athletes become known for their great technique. Some become known for their powerful strength. Some become known for their quickness and great athletic ability. And others become known for their outstanding physical endurance and cardiovascular conditioning.

All of these technical, physical and mental attributes make up a champion wrestler. Most all great wrestlers have degrees of everything mentioned. The key to success is how one uses all of these skills in combination with each other.

For example, if you meet an opponent who is more talented than you are, you might have to focus on a specific area more than you might normally focus on.

Personally, if I met a more technical, stronger and faster opponent (which in my case was often) I would definitely be focused on out-moving them. I would be focused on getting them very tired. I would be sticking, moving, pummeling, pushing and pulling so they could not settle into their powerful quick exploding mode. I would be using my well trained physical endurance and cardiovascular conditioning to the max.

This is why we must train like madmen. We must train in a grueling mode, attacking relentlessly so no matter who we meet, we can access our ability to grind our foe into the dirt, destroying their ability to use their talent, strength and quickness.

Great physical and cardiovascular conditioning will help one's ability to 'even the score' when it comes to wrestling a more talented individual. Give me a well trained, relentless grinder, with a 'never say die' type of attitude any day over a gifted, talented wrestler.

Now don't get me wrong, I think talent, quickness, strength and technique are all very important attributes to master. There is no doubt about this. However, God blessed me in a way where I was stronger in some areas than others. So I had to make up for any lack of natural talent with a grueling non-stop in-your-face, relentless attack.

Getting your opponent tired will make them vulnerable. Making your opponent vulnerable will frustrate

them and force them to operate where they are uncomfortable. Then when you add in the fatigue factor, you will now break their will to fight and their confidence to score and win.

This was my main strategic approach when I came face to face with three time world champion Frank Andersson from Sweden in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Frank was a very talented powerful wrestler that had a great back souplesse. On day one of the competition, he had thrown all of his Olympic rivals with this spectacular move, defeating them by big margins. He was definitely the favorite to win the gold medal.

I was scheduled to meet Frank Andersson on the mat the next morning. As I went back to the Olympic Village, I picked up a copy of the LA Times. Much to my surprise I saw a quote from Frank saying "Now that I beat the Greek wrestler nothing would stand in my way to win the gold medal." He talked about how he was going to hang the gold medal from the rearview mirror of his Porsche when he returned to Sweden.

As I lay in bed the night before the most important match of my life, I thought only about the things that I knew I could control. I wasn't absolutely sure I would be victorious but I knew I could control how physical I would be. I knew I could control the pace of the match. I visualized wrestling my most intense, physical, fast paced match ever. And of course, I visualized defending Andersson's most powerful throw, the back souplesse.

The match went just as I planned it. I scored early on the Swede with my slam headlock and gassed him out with a fast paced, non-stop attack the entire match.

If we want to be the best in the state, country or world then we must be able to grind when we have to. And trust me, you WILL have to.

Enjoy the battle!

Note: The Fraser vs Anderson Olympic match can be found on you tube at 'USA-Fraser vs SWE-Andersson'.