



Interview Amateur Sumo Heavyweight: Kelly Gneiting

by Chris Gould

Born in Idaho in 1970, Kelly Gneiting has become a major force in American Amateur sumo, winning the US Nationals for three consecutive years. A truly iron man who has competed in marathons despite tipping the scales at 400 pounds, it is obvious why he makes for a great SFM interview.

CG: How did you start getting interested in sumo?

KG: I played football for two years and wrestled for two years in college. The wrestling was on full scholarship and was at Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho. The football was at Ricks and the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho. It took four years before I medalled at the Sumo Nationals. Then I took third. Then, for the next three years I took first (2005-2007). I've also represented the U.S. for the last 7 years at the

World Sumo Championships.

CG: What kind of training do you do for sumo?

KG: I currently work-out 4-5 days per week for 1.5-2 hours per day. I have a wife and 5 kids, and do not get any kind of financial support to train, so my time is limited and focused on my family. I rather don't mind the aspect of no financial gain because what I do



and what I accomplish comes from my heart, and is not motivated by extrinsic rewards.

CG: What was it like to face Japanese legend Koichi Kato? (1996 World Champion. The background to this question is that SFM's Editor saw the two face off at the 2006 US Sumo Open).

KG: Kato is great, obviously. It was an honor to compete against him. I go into every match, however, with the truth that no-one's "Superman". Kato can be beat. I would like to train with him for a month.

CG: What has been your finest sumo achievement to date?

KG: My "finest sumo achievement" has been directing sumo-related charity events that have helped bring in close to \$600,000 for various charities around the U.S., including the

Ronald McDonald House Charities and the Generations Cancer Foundation (see www.usasumorevolution.com/index_files/Page459.htm, which may be an incomplete list).

Also, in 2006 I was in the semi-finals at the World Championship, but then lost to Byambajav Ulambayar (Mongolia), then Robert Paczkow (Poland), both prior World Champions. Wrestling for 3rd place, though losing, was an honor. I also was in the quarterfinals at the World Games (OPEN), with about 50 competitors.

I've also represented my country for the last seven years at the World Sumo Championships/ Games.

CG: Which professional rikishi do you admire and why?

KG: Harumafuji, clearly. I

consider Harumafuji the greatest warrior in the world, in every way you could define "warrior". If I was to go out onto the field of battle, there's nobody I'd rather fight alongside with (outside my very closest circle of friends, of course).

CG: What are your future sumo ambitions?

KG: On November 12th is the 9th annual Snake River Sumo Classic in Idaho Falls, ID. I'm proud of my club, and we're proud of our event, which this year is an international competition, which likely will be filmed by the Discovery Channel. For more information, please email me at sumosource@msn.com. Previous competitors include Emanuel Yarbrough and Byambajav Ulambayar.

I also may run an Ultra-Triathlon in New Zealand in January.