

DOUG MOLIN'S PERSONAL PASSION

for wrestling is as entwined with his work ethic as two talented athletes facing off on the mat.

Molin, the manager for tactical operations in the Southeastern United States, is an internationally recognized wrestling official who has officiated at numerous Olympic contents, international and national championships. He was selected as official of the year in 2004 and has the highest international ranking from FILA, the international body that governs wrestling.

Molin officiates a made-for-television event with U.S. Olympic wrestlers.



Molin at the Chicago O'Hare Tower while working for System Operations.



A League of Their Own

Molin now is officiating matches in the inaugural year of RealProWrestling, the first professional wrestling league. This is not the wrestling of eye gouges or flying body slams. These matches pit ex-Olympic and collegiate athletes against each other for victory purses. ESPN is telecasting the contests on Wednesdays and Sundays into May. Molin can be seen officiating many of the contests.

What makes a good wrestling official? “It’s about the purity of calling them as you see them and making decisions rapidly and putting yourself in the position to have the best angle and view to make the call.”

That happens to be pretty good description of his FAA job. Molin has to take in the big picture of

how air traffic is moving in his section of the country, while balancing the needs of en route and terminal facilities, airlines, FAA management and other customers. “I’m connecting multiple facilities with en route, terminal, customers, the Command Center, getting everybody on the same page”. He tries to ascertain the best view of the situation and then make his decisions quickly because time is of the essence.

While Molin takes a team approach to his job, it’s the individuality of wrestling that attracted him to the sport. “The unique thing about wrestling is that it’s not a sport in which you can be lost in a team. It happens on the mat there in front of everybody.”

Molin’s officiating probably comes in handy at home. The household environment can get “pretty crazy, pretty crazy” with a family of eight that includes four boys who wrestle. (The Molins family includes three abandoned siblings who they adopted.)

“[Officiating] made me a better father. When you’re faced with issues beyond your control, you can’t continue to dwell on it. Learn from it and move on.”

That sounds like the ethic of a champion wrestler. →



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