

THE STAR-HERALD

(SPS 519 080) PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT PRESQUE ISLE, ME 04769

PRINTED USING RECYCLED PAPER
MAKE A DIFFERENCE. PLEASE RECYCLE.

Eastern Maine's Fastest Growing Newspaper

Aroostook County's

5

PRESQUE ISLE, MAINE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2006

THIRTY-FOUR PAGES

Hernandez earns Pioneer recognition

By Sara Gray

Staff Writer

RAHWAY, N.J. – Washburn's most famous wrestler, James 'Chico' Hernandez added another award to his belt recently when he received an honorable mention as part of the annual Pioneers of American Sambo awards at the 2006 North American Freestyle Sambo Championships.

The Maine Criminal Justice Academy self-defense instructor at the Maine State Prison has won several championships in his years on the mat and holds a first-degree black belt in sambo wrestling with the British Sambo Federation and the Bulgarian Sports Ministry, a first-degree black belt in hybrid wrestling in

California, a second-degree black belt in submission fighting with the Metro Fight Club in Detroit, Mich., a third-degree black belt in military combat sambo, a ninth degree black belt in wrestling with the Martial Arts Academy of America and a 10th degree black belt in sport sambo in Spain, but it's not his fighting that garnered him the recognition this time.

The award recognizes individuals, who have made great strides supporting sambo wrestling in the U.S. Criteria include competition history, promotion of sambo in the U.S., literature contributions, popularization of sambo in the U.S., character attributes and other notable achievements in the sport.

Hernandez certainly has no shortage of accomplishments on his resume including being featured on a Wheaties cereal box in 2001 and being inducted in the University of Maine Athletic Hall of Fame, the Illinois Wrestlers Hall of Fame, the Latin American World-Wide Martial Arts Hall of Fame and, most recently, the Maine Sports Hall of Fame. He has won several championships in competitions both nationally and internationally and is currently ranked no. 1 in the sport in Maine, no. 2 in New England and no. 8 in the nation in the executive division.

Winner of the 2006 Pioneers of American Sambo Award was Oleg Taktarov. Other honorable mentions include Scott Anderson, Alex Barakov, Lance Campbell, Pransiskus Egminus, Jason Gabrielson, Greg Gibson, Josh Henson, Vladislav Koulikov, Leonid Polyakov, Shaun Scott and Scott Sonnon.

PRESQUE ISLE REGION SPORTS

SPORTS ARTICLES can be submitted to The Star-Herald, P.O. Box 510, Presque Isle, ME 04769 or e-mailed to starherald@newsstar.com