Gary Solomon anchored the middle of a wrestling dynasty

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It's been three decades since Gary Solomon's junior year at Southington High School, but he still remembers the sounds, the sights, and the smells of that legendary wrestling tournament in late December. Even his high school coach remembers the tournament, including Solomon's unlikely run at the title.

This time, he was an unproven grappler that fought his way to the championship bout. He faced a senior champion from a Long Island powerhouse. Solomon steeped gingerly into the spotlight and never returned to the shadows.

He and his coach both remember the moment as if Solomon was flipping a switch.

"That kid just walked through the tournament," Solomon said with a grin. "He just terrorized everybody, and I said, 'I want to go into his office and beg the coach to let me go, but I never did."

One of the greats,

Gary was one of the greats. He had skills, but he also had heart.

When he went out there, there was just no way that he was going to get beat.