Frontiersmen win key mat victory

By DEONE DRAKE
NEWS Correspondent

ALFRED — Coach Eric Knuutila believes his team has arrived at the top, and, with its convincing wrestling triumph over Alfred last night, one can hardly disagree. NCCC defeated the host squad 27-16 in the Region III contest.

Knuutila said after the dual meet, "Of all the teams I've coached, this one is by far the biggest and most important. It feels great to have this win."

The Frontiersmen stand at 4-0, while Alfred slipped to 6-3.

To prove the victory was well worth the coach's remarks, examine the credentials behind Alfred.

It's rated second in the region, yet Knuutila considers them to be the team to beat. Ranked 14th in the nation, Alfred placed four wrestlers on the Region III All-Star Team selected recently. Their two previous losses were recorded while two of their men were winning silver medals at the Pan-American games last December.

Knuutila believes his Frontiersmen have never beaten a team with the caliber Alfred has.

As in Saturday's win over Mohawk Valley, NCCC was forced to forfeit the 118-pound and 126-pound classes. However, they started rolling at 134 with Willie Moore grabbing six points on a pin. Moore had complete control of the match, taking care of foe John Grillo in 3:07.

In the 142 division, Greg Grimmer was to face Dave Rogers of Alfred. However, Rogers pulled out due to a pinched nerve in the arm. NCCC tied it all up with Greg accepting the forfeit win reluctantly. Knuutila said, "We were looking forward to this match all week."

At 158, Russ Koithan (NCCC) won his second straight match while decisioning Bruce Meyers, 9-8. "Russ is finally coming around. He's putting it together like we knew he could."

He's from Niagara-Wheatfield.

It was Chris Ness, however, who stole the show. He decisioned Jim Burns of Alfred, 6-4. Burns placed second in the Pan-Am games for the United States. Knuutila said, "Chris beat him decisively. He wrestled very smartly, making just one mistake. "Kipper" did a number on him. Even if we had lost every other match, this victory would have given us something to smile about."

Tonawanda's Steve Marone dominated Frank Kiff in the 167 class, while NCCC's other top grappler, Willie Moore, pinned John Grilled in 3:07 of his 134-pound battle. Moore, a former Niagara Falls High ace, was ineligible the first semester, but appears to be at the top of his game at the moment. Tom Darnley (177), a co-captain and a former Niagara-Wheatfielder, won his match against Frank Lisner on an 8-3 decision. Heavyweight Dave Sokolofsky, a Starpoint product, decisioned Don Higgins.

Alfred's lone on-the-mat victory was by Dave Stultin (150) who downed NCCC co-captain Ron Grimes, a standout in his high school days at Grand Island.

Niagara County Community College is home Saturday afternoon at 2, as they host Corning in search of their fifth win without a loss.

118 — Mike Fuller (A), won by forfeit. **126** — John Gillen (A), won by forfeit. **134** — Willie Moore (N) pin John Grilled, 3:07. **142** — Greg Grimmer (N), won by forfeit. **150** — Dave Stultin (A), d. Al Grimes, 10-2. **158** — Russ Koithan (N), d. Bruce Meyers, 9-8. **167** — Steve Marone (N) d. Frank Kiff 10-5. **177** — Tom Darnley (N) d. Frank Lisner, 8-3. **190** — Chris Ness (N) dec. Jim Burns 6-4. **Heavyweight** — Dave Sokolofsky (N) d. Don Higgins, 11-6.