

★ Jim Rickey



D&C photo by Jim Laragy

RIT coach Pete Fuller demonstrates reverse half-Nelson.

Pros Give Colleges Bad Image

College wrestling is beginning to emerge from the "wrong image" presented by its professional counterparts. At the same time, wrestling in Rochester colleges and high schools is growing into a popular athletic event.

"You and I know pro wrestling is a great big act," University of Rochester wrestling coach Frank Olivari said "But how many other people know it is. Pro wrestling should have its title changed to "Pro Tumbling" or "Pro Roughhousing."

"What we teach in college and high school does not include kicking, punching or throwing," Olivari continued. "Pro wrestling is bringing the wrong image to youngsters. The parents figure this is what's going on and won't let their kids come out."

There is no such thing in amateur wrestling as the step-over to hold, the cocobutt, the body slam, the gouging, etc.

"How could any human being withstand all that punishment," Olivari continued. "It's impossible."

Instead, the object is to control ones opponent and put him on his back (with both shoulder blades touching the mat) for three seconds. The idea is not to punish an opponent.

Some coaches are completely disinterested in the pro end of wrestling.

"I just don't watch it," Monroe Community College coach Roscoe Hastings said. "And I won't have anything to do with it."



HASTINGS

Amateur wrestling is a sport where one wrong move will lose a match. It is one of few sports where every muscle in the body must be finely tuned and willing to bend. It takes full-time devotion to the sport and that is why the outstanding wrestler usually does not participate in any other sport during the course of a year.

When a two and a half hour practice session ends in most athletics, other players scurry for the water coolers or to the nearest snack bar for refreshments. But a wrestler must keep his weight near or under the maximum of his class.

On the first night of a practice, it is not unusual to see a wrestler lose anywhere from six to 14 pounds. During the season he may weigh 150 on Monday, but by match time on Friday he is down to his 138 pounds.

"Amateur wrestling is more scientific," Brockport State wrestling coach Don Murray said. "Pro wrestling is a fake."

But Murray doesn't feel pro wrestling is hurting the college image.

"I don't think it hurts amateur wrestling as much as it did 10 or 15 years ago because people are getting more educated. They know that it (Pros) is not for real."

Amateur wrestling is on the rise. All coaches in the area with the exception of Joe Cavallaro at St. John Fisher report more boys out this year than ever before.

At Rochester Institute of Technology, always a wrestling haven, coach Earl Fuller, in his 22nd season, has more boys out this year than in the past 10 seasons. The RIT Tournament, a week from today, boasts teams such as Notre Dame and Akron (Ohio), an indication that Rochester colleges are finally catching up with the top brand of wrestling at midwest schools.

Olivari says UR will field a better team than last year although the majority of his weight classes will be filled by freshmen.

"Last year was the best UR ever had (5-5-1)," Olivari said. "But this year we should be considerably better."