

# Pudgy ER heavyweight aiming for a state title

By Walt Slater

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"Don't be fooled. East Rochester's D.J. Williams just looks too pudgy to become a state wrestling champion."

"D.J. still doesn't look like an awesome wrestler," said East Rochester Coach Ron Whitcomb. "He isn't that bulging heavyweight who wins on awesome strength."

"I'm sure other kids think he doesn't look very tough — and he really doesn't look very tough — but he's a very good athlete. He's a really a good tumbler and it's surprising how agile he is for his size."

Williams placed fourth at last year's state championships, took a 14-0 record into a triangular meet at Fulton yesterday and is ranked No. 3 in the state at 250 pounds by one authoritative publication.

Whitcomb got his first look at Williams three years ago after returning to his hometown from Conneaut, Ohio, to serve as an assistant football and wrestling coach under Don Quinn. He became the Bombers' varsity wrestling coach last season and succeeded his old coach again this month when he was named ER's athletic director after Quinn retired.

"D.J. has made about an 80-percent improvement (since his sophomore season)," Whitcomb said. "What throws you back is just his physical appearance."

Williams looks too soft to beat the chiseled types you sometimes see on the mat at 250 and 215 pounds. He wrestles as a heavyweight in tournaments, usually at about 225 pounds, but has little difficulty cutting his weight to 215 for dual meets.

"I'm a lot quicker than most heavyweights," Williams said. "And I use that against them."

*New York Wrestling News* ranks Todd Schaffer of Vestal (Section 4) and Jamie Call of Indian River (Sec. 3) ahead of Williams.

Call scored all of his points on one late move when he defeated Williams, 5-3, in last March's state 250-pound consolation final. Schaffer

## PREMIER PINNER

East Rochester senior D.J. Williams ranks among the state's premier heavyweight (250-pound) wrestlers:

Season	Class	Won	Lost	Tied
1987-88	Freshman	3	3	0
1988-89	Sophomore	21	14	0
1989-90	Junior	27	7	1
1990-91*	Senior	14	0	0
<b>Career totals*</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>

\* Through matches of Jan. 18.

finished third at 215 at last year's state championships.

Only two wrestlers have forced Williams to go three full periods this winter. McQuaid's Alton Turner lost, 6-2, in a 215-pound bout last Wednesday and Jason Spector of Queensbury (Sec. 2) kept Williams on the mat for six minutes last weekend before losing, 14-5, in the 250 final of Canandaigua's Bradshaw Tournament.

Only one Section 5 wrestler is ranked higher than Williams, who had the section's second-best finish at the 1990 state championships. Alfred-Almond's Kenny Porter, the reigning state 138-pound champion, is ranked No. 1 at 145.

"Coming into the season, I figured, 'I placed fourth at the states'" said Williams. "And I just thought, 'I'm going to try to win it all this year.'"

His other major individual goal is to defeat Brighton senior Otha Davidson, the reigning Monroe County and sectional 215-pound champion. Davidson is ranked No. 5 in the state at 215 and took a 15-1 record into this weekend's Barnard Tournament at Hilton.

"Otha beat me three straight years so I just figure this year is mine," Williams said.

All three of their matches have been at 215 pounds. Davidson pinned Williams during the 1988 Monroe County junior varsity championships, won a lopsided, dual-meet decision when they were sophomores and won another dual-meet bout last year, 3-2, after Williams was penalized one stalling point. They'll meet a final time on Feb. 2 at Brighton.



The Associated Press

East Rochester heavyweight D.J. Williams, left, goes against McQuaid's Alton Turner in match this week. Williams won, 6-2.

"I was just happy I to know I could stay right with Otha," Williams said. It was one of a series of steps during a junior season that Williams and Whitcomb termed a confidence-builder.

"I found out that I could actually beat good people," Williams said. "Last year, I kind of felt that I would win (the Class C) sectionals and then I'd probably get tossed out of SuperSectionals. But then I won Supers and I said, 'Gee, I can go to states.'"

"The year before, at our (season-ending) banquet, Mr. Quinn said he expected to see me at states and I was surprised to hear him say that. But then I did it."

Williams arrived at the state championships with the same cautious attitude he took into the SuperSectionals, the Section 5 state qualifying meet.

"When I did well I started to feel like I was up there pretty high," he said. "And I felt like I was well-respected by other wrestlers."

Whitcomb could see his heavyweight's confidence rise last winter.

"When he won the Bradshaw Tournament (last January), that was kind of a turning point," Whitcomb said. "He beat some people he didn't think he could beat."

Williams relies on an underhook series for most of his takedowns but

is working seriously on some new moves with ER assistant coach John Zito.

"Right now everybody knows I'm going use the underhook," Williams said. "I feel comfortable being up close and not back, away from (opponents). I don't like to shoot."

Whitcomb taught Williams the underhook series when he returned to East Rochester from Ohio, where he insisted that his heavyweight wrestlers use it.

He agrees that Williams needs to add a few moves before the major post-season tournaments.

"If you shoot on him, D.J. is a pretty good snap and spin-around guy," Whitcomb said. "We like his style. We like the underhook series for him. But we are working to make him a better shooter."

Williams has attracted some Division I wrestling feelers but his college athletic future may lie with football.

He was a second-team All-Greater Rochester defensive tackle as a senior and played offensive tackle at ER, but his quickness and long-snapping ability could make him a center prospect as high as the Division II level.

"He's a great long snapper and that's a nice little specialty to have," Whitcomb said. "Maybe somebody will notice."