



# Too long



By Norm Jollow

Open wrestling tournaments, like open basketball tourneys, may or may not be a good idea, depending on your own point of view. But one thing is certain, both can be awfully long and tiring.

And that became particularly evident in the Section 5 Class AA wrestling event held at Canandaigua, Saturday night. As Geneva Coach Bill Brooks so aptly remarked late in the evening: "We're going to change the name of this thing to the Canandaigua Enduro."

And an enduro it was. It started at 11 a.m. and didn't get over until sometime after midnight. That meant more than 13 hours in the wrestling pits for the young gladiators as well as the aching-backed (and other places) fans, who endured those bleachers for the 13 plus hours.

There is no question that there will be some changes made before they have a second go-round under the new Sectional set-up. Quite probably, it will mean more mid-week matches. Or it could mean the end of wrestle-backs (where an eliminated wrestler has a chance to work his way back into third place).

As the event stands now, there could be up to 78 bouts in each of the two classification qualifying sites for Saturday nights' finals. That's 156 preliminary bouts. But held at two sites and with two mats in operation, you can get those run off between 4 and 10 p.m. without problem.

Then there were 148 bouts on Saturday at Canandaigua. There could have been 156, had there been a full slate of contestants in the unlimited (or 250 pound) weight division. All but the finals are wrestled on two mats.

It takes pretty close to 13 hours to run off that many bouts. Saturday, at Canandaigua, they took about a 10 minute break between the quarterfinals and the wrestle-backs and then broke for 30 minutes before the start of the consolation finals and finals to clear the gym, recharge fans and get going again.

Somehow, those in charge of Section 5 felt that everything up to the consolation finals and finals could be run off between 11 a.m. and sometime before 6:30 p.m. when the consolation finals were to begin.

It was poor planning. Even with virtually no time out from the beginning, it wasn't until 9:27 that the wrestle-back competition was completed along with the championship bracket quarterfinals and semi-finals.

It was about 10 p.m. when the consolation tournament got underway and was about 11 p.m. when the championship finals started. The championship finals were to have begun at 8 p.m.

As if it weren't late enough, the timing of this tournament had to be bad. They picked the night that everyone sets the clock ahead an hour to start daylight savings time. And at Canandaigua, they already had set the clocks ahead that hour so that when the tournament finally ended about

12:15, the clocks on the walls in the gym showed it to be 1:15 a.m. And that only tended to make the whole thing seem more tedious.

The general consensus seemed to be that one more round (the quarterfinals) should have been run on Wednesday night. That would have been four more bouts in each class at each of the two locations. It would have taken about an hour, according to the estimates of coaches, and would have saved a couple of hours at Canandaigua on Saturday.

"It's just too long," declared Geneva Coach Brooks. "The kids are tired. Not from wrestling, but from sitting around."

It might also have made more palatable the idea of paying one admission for the day-long session and another for the night session. One woman was quite irate about having to leave the gym to pay another admission fee to see the consolation and championship finals.

There appears to be another rub in this tournament. Section 5 allows each tournament site to hire only three referees to work those 148 bouts. That put quite a load on Tom Trout, Don Furano and Don Knisley, though on the whole, there was nothing but praise for the work of the three, at least until the evening session when there were a couple of unhappy coaches, wrestlers and fans.

But on the whole one has to give a lot of credit to that trio, who worked almost without stopping from 11 a.m. until after midnight.

Expecting an official to be in top form for close to 50 matches in a 13 hour day would seem to be asking an awful lot.

Plans had been for four officials to work the tournament, but Section 5 nixed the idea. One has to feel that after Saturday, they'll be under a lot of pressure from the officials' group to add at least one more official for these tournaments. And rightly so.

Of all the people, however, who found Saturday a long one, the champ would have to be Canandaigua coach Weldon Canough, who admitted that "I've worked harder this week than I do in a month at school (Canandaigua had last week off for mid-winter vacation)." Canough had been at the Canandaigua gym since 5 a.m. and when I left at 12 a.m. he was still there, seeing to the cleaning up of the place, the removal of the mats, etc.

It is going to be interesting to see just how quickly Section 5 will get through the State qualifier at the Rochester War Memorial this coming weekend with 195 bouts to be contested to see which 13 wrestlers move on to the State tournament in Syracuse. There undoubtedly will be four mats in operation most of the tournament, but even so, it may well take an awful long time.

At least they won't have the clock set an hour ahead of the actual time. That might make it seem a little less interminable.