

Spencerport, Raines have nothing to lose as the state's top wrestlers

By John Moriello ★
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CANANDAIGUA — Jon Raines once walked on to the wrestling mat feeling as though he was overmatched and had nothing to lose.

He was wrong. There was a match to be lost.

"It was against Mitch Stern (of Brighton) in a dual meet and he beat me by about 10-1," Raines recalled. "so thinking that way didn't work so well."

Nevertheless, Raines and his Spencerport teammates are taking the what-do-we-have-to-lose approach again as they prepare for a match against Fulton.

"We're going to be the underdog and we'll be at home," Raines said. "What have we got to lose?"

The Rangers tuned up for their showdown with the Red Raiders, the newly named co-No. 1 team in the state, with a

38-13 victory last night at Canandaigua before a crowd of 500 fans that included several observers from Fulton.

The triumph left the the Rangers, No. 1 among large schools in the *Democrat and Chronicle* coaches poll, 7-0. Canandaigua, rated sixth, is 5-2 after its second non-league loss.

Raines raised his season record to 17-1 with an impressive 8-2 triumph against Canandaigua's Cory Sinton in the 112-pound match.

Raines has been a two-time sectional semifinalist and last season came within a victory of going to the state meet. Sinton was a sectional champ in 1987 and placed second last February.

"When he's on, like he was tonight, he's dangerous," said Mike LoPresti, the Rangers' 138-pound state champion in 1986. "He beat one of the best in the section tonight."

A number of Fulton wrestlers will have the opportunity to achieve a similar feat a week from tonight, because the Rangers, who are rated No. 9 by the New York State Sportswriters Association, returned Raines and four other competitors they sent to the state qualifier last season.

Jon's sophomore brother Justin pinned his 105-pound opponent in 47 seconds, Chris Bannister won an 8-1 decision at 126 pounds and Joe LoPresti did all his scoring in the third period of a 7-0 decision of the 138-pound match.

The fifth returnee, Tom Foos, did not wrestle against the Braves, who'll be hosting the big Bradshaw tournament this weekend.

The Spencerport wrestlers indicated that having Fulton wrestlers in the crowd didn't affect them in any way. There was no need to show off, nor was there a reason to hold back.

"The truth is we can't be concerned about things like that," Coach Bill Jacoutot said. "We've got to worry about Hilton (the rivals from the county's west side meet Saturday night at Hilton) right now. If Fulton was here to see us tonight we're flattered."

Jon Raines admits to looking forward to the Fulton match. Already the owner of a fine individual record that includes a silver medal last summer at the Empire State Games and a trip to the national Junior Olympics, he's yet to taste team success at the sectional or state level. The Rangers have finished second to Brighton at three straight Section 5 Class A meets.

And when the Rangers do win, he doesn't always get to share in the joy. The Rangers won their own Rotary-Bernabi tournament last month, but he lost to Jim Barbato of Gates-Chili in the quarterfinals.

"I've already got a loss," he said, making it sound like one is his quota for the season. "That makes me want to work harder in practice. It reminds me I'm not perfect."

And it means he doesn't have a perfect record to worry about before each match.

"I've got nothing to lose," he said.

NOTES: Bannister and Joe LoPresti went to the state meet last year but did not place. Canandaigua's **Jon Welch**, their teammate at that meet, continued to roll through his opponents. The All-Greater Rochester football lineman scored a pin at 1:00 of the 177-pound contest to remain undefeated . . . Bloomfield, Brockport, East Rochester, Victor, Wayne and Webster will be among the 13 teams in the Bradshaw field. The tournament begins Friday afternoon. The semifinals are Saturday at 1 p.m. at CCFL, with finals at 8 p.m.