

Wrestlers set sights on Syracuse as Section VI Tourney begins today



Salamanca's Victor Arena (left, 96-pound weight class) will be one of eight Warrior wrestlers looking for a chance to compete in the New York State Wrestling Tournament next weekend in Syracuse. Allegany-Limestone's Josh Crisafulli (right) will also be competing in the 96-pound class.

(Press photo by David Edstrom)

by DAVID EDSTROM
Sports Editor

BUFFALO— Eight Salamanca Warrior grapplers will be fighting for their lives for the opportunity to advance to next weekend's New York State Wrestling Tournament at Syracuse University as they start the Section VI tournament today in Buffalo.

The Section VI Tournament held at the University of Buffalo will feature the top 240 wrestlers in Western New York with only 15 grapplers getting the 'golden ticket' to Syracuse.

"You can't sell anybody out in this tournament (Section VI), but then again you can't say that kids will or won't do it (advance to Syracuse)," stated Salamanca Head Coach Rich Morton.

"Over the years I've seen plenty of upsets in the Section VI Tournament. I've seen unseeded kids come out of nowhere and knock off a contender, so you never know."

There are no weak weight classes and all eight of Salamanca's wrestlers will have to dig down deep for some extra stamina.

"It should be an awfully tough weekend, but the kids have been working hard at practice over the past week and they all are looking good. I'd be satisfied if we get a couple of kids to place, but it's always my goal to get somebody to the state tournament," exclaimed Morton.

"The kids worked for this all year long and now they're going to see the best in the area give their best performances. It's all or nothing now...you win and your in."

Salamanca's Victor Arena will have an excellent opportunity in his weight class (96-pound) as he will open up against Lewiston-Porter's David Hockenberry. Should Arena win his first two matches he likely face top seeded Tim Uderitz of Albion in the semi-final round. That is unless ei-

ther of the two get bumped out in the first two rounds.

Arena has faced Uderitz three times this season, winning just one of those at the Niagara Community College Tournament.

"Vic's got a very good shot at reaching the state tourney, but of course he's probably going to meet up with Uderitz along the way," observed the Warriors' coach.

"Vic looked good this week but he's going to need to be aggressive if he wrestles Uderitz again."

Salamanca's Brad Earley (171-pound class) finds himself in a loaded weight class which boasts two undefeated wrestlers. Earley should meet up with one of those in West Seneca West's Ben Keleey (32-0) in the quarterfinal round, provided he gets past Maple Grove's Paul Price in his opener.

"Brad's in a tough spot. If he wins he should meet Keleey, and he's a horse," said Morton.

Salamanca's Josh Gleason (103-pound) will meet Niagara Falls' Chris Coughenour in the first round, while Chad Snyder will square-off against Olean's Eric Chaffee at the 119-pound class.

Warriors' Al Clute will see opening action in the 140-pound bracket as he will challenge Portville's Joe DeBarbiere. Salamanca's Jim Emborsky will face Silver Creek's Cliff Hallett in the 145-pound class' opener, while Andy Arena (152-pound) will meet Portville's Mike Sargent in his first match. Jack Vail rounds out the Warriors slate at the 160-pound weight class, as he will take on Joe Neicci of Lancaster.

"Anyone of our wrestlers could surprise someone up there (Buffalo). I'm very optimistic that some of our kids will place, but you never know," said the Salamanca coach.