

★ Four wrestlers qualify for NCAA tournament

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In an impressive showing, four Albany State wrestlers qualified for the National Championships this past weekend when each placed in the top three of their respective weight classes at the SUNYACs held at Potsdam.

The Danes, who placed fifth overall out of the 8 SUNY teams present, will be sending 126 pound All-American Dave Averill, 118 pound freshman Shawn Sheldon, 158 pound Jerry Clark, and 177 pound Sandy Adelstein to the National Tournament, held this season at Binghamton Feb. 24 and 25.

For Averill, this marks the third straight year that he has qualified for the Nationals. His second place finish doesn't transcend last year's first place finish, but he wrestled in the lighter 118 pound division in the 1983 SUNYACs.

Freshman Sheldon and sophomores Adelstein and Clark will all be wrestling in their first National Tournament. Sheldon's second place finish was expected, but for Adelstein, who finished third, and Clark, who placed second, their performances were a major surprise to most of the SUNY coaches.

Albany State coach Joe DeMeo was more pleased than surprised concerning the outing of Clark, whose dual-meet record was a dismal 2-7: "He did an outstanding job," said DeMeo. "His maturing got better as the season went on."

A more somber mood hung over Averill's

second place finish. Averill was very disappointed afterwards, as the two-time All-American failed in his attempt for a first place finish as he was defeated again by his nemesis from Oneonta, Desmond Basnight, in the finals.



Dave Averill was one of four wrestlers to qualify for the Nationals.

After sweeping his quarterfinal and semifinal matches handily, the Dane captain met up against Basnight, who was responsible for Averill's only defeat in the dual-meet season. Basnight jumped out to a 4-0 lead in first round, forcing Averill to change his

strategy.

"When I got down 4-0 early, it really messed me up," said Averill. "I was going for the win so I went for broke in trying to get the pin and it cost me points."

When it was over, Averill found himself a 13-4 loser, but his confidence was far from broken.

"Sure, I'm very disappointed," said the junior who graduated from nearby Shenendehowa High School. "I thought I could take him and I still do. I hope I face him in the Nationals."

That rematch could very conceivably take place in two weeks at Binghamton, but Averill feels he will be better prepared then.

Besides the contrast in styles of the two, Averill feels his biggest problem against Basnight is the height factor, which usually has no significance in wrestling. Basnight is a lanky 5'10 while Averill stands at 5'6.

"He's like a spider," said Averill. "He just clings to you. Coach DeMeo is going to work with me all week in devising a new strategy against him."

Meanwhile, DeMeo might just have to work with Sheldon on his ability of escaping from the bottom.

Sheldon had a tougher time of it than Averill in advancing to the finals. But once he was there, Sheldon put up a magnificent struggle before dropping a 5-4 decision to Binghamton's John Leo. The two were tied 4-4 after the final buzzer had sounded, but one point for riding time was tacked to Leo's

score to give the Colonial wrestler the victory.

Sheldon's highest point of the SUNYACs was his upset semifinal triumph over top-seeded Ed Morales of Brockport, 10-9.

117 pound Adelstein had to survive in a nailbiting match for him to qualify for the Nationals.

After winning his quarterfinal match, he met up with Binghamton All-American Tom Pillari who solidly defeated him 10-1 and later captured first place.

However, Adelstein bounced back to defeat Buffalo's Doug Cowry in the semifinal consolation. Then, in the third and fourth consolation match, Adelstein held on for an electrifying 9-8 decision over Tim Slade from Brockport.

The Dane sophomore led throughout the match, taking a 5-1 advantage after one period, and bringing a 7-4 lead into the final period.

But Adelstein was tiring as Slade cut the margin to 9-8 with 30 seconds to play on a two-point takedown. It was at this point that Adelstein bore down as Slade was unsuccessful in his attempt to turn the Long Island native off his stomach. As the last seconds ticked off, Adelstein had survived a 9-8 decision and a berth to the Nationals.

"I wrestled up to my capabilities," he said after the tournament. "I know I had to wrestle well and I did. I'm very proud right now."

The whole Dane squad was proud of the

Danes qualify



◀Back Page

second place finish turned in by Clark, who had a mediocre dual-meet record. Wrestling in a weak 158 pound class, Clark drew a bye in the quarterfinals before edging Oneonta's Ray Dashiell, 7-6 in the semis. In the finals, Clark was soundly beaten by Brockport's Todd Slade, 12-2.

If there was a single disappointment in the tournament for Albany, it was the outing of 134 pound John Balog, a freshman who was expected not only to qualify for the National Tournament, but to earn All-American honors.

Balog, though, has the misfortune of wrestling in a very competitive weight class as was proved in his opening match versus Brockport's Mike Franklin, who pinned the Dane freshman in the final round.

Later, Balog won the consolation match to wind up fifth. Two other fifth place finishes were pleasant surprises for coach DeMeo. Heavyweight Papo Rivera and 150 pound Stu Bradish both finished fifth and were crucial in Albany's fifth place finish overall. Rivera was wrestling instead of Albany's Ivan "The Terrible" Katz, whom he beat out for the starting job last week.

For now, the season is history for all but four Dane wrestlers, who will continue to practice for the next two weeks in preparation for the National Tournament.

TAKE DOWNS:

The order of finish in the SUNYACs went as follows: 1. Brockport, 2. Binghamton, 3. Oswego, 4. Cortland, 5. Albany, 6. Buffalo, 7. Oneonta, 8. Potsdam.

