

Youth, injuries; main factors in Grapplers' dismal season

by Tom Nash

Youth and injuries were the prime reasons why the Oswego State wrestling team finished the season with a 4-9-1 record.

"Injuries completely decimated our team," says Coach Jim Howard. It was a common occurrence for the Lakers to have seven freshmen in the lineup at once. Here's a look at the 1986-87 Laker grapplers by weight class:

118 lbs.

Brian Darling (Jordan), a freshman, was one of the most consistent Laker wrestlers. He had a super year. His 16-10-1 record was second best on the team.

He finished fourth in the State University of New York Athletic Conference, which was good enough for him to qualify for the National Collegiate Athletic Association tournament as a wild card.

"Brian is extremely coachable. He has terrific desire, and he'll have a great career here," says Coach Howard.

126 lbs.

Todd Tuccio (Jamestown) filled in for the injured Scott Scherhauser (Binghamton). Later, Tuccio was hurt in the SUNYAC tournament. "Tuccio is young and I expect him to come along," says the coach. Both are freshmen.

134 lbs.

Todd Paglia (Unadilla) was another one of the Laker's injured matmen. He was seeded fourth in the SUNYAC tournament and finished fourth. Paglia will return next year as a more experienced junior.

142 lbs.

Eric D'Arcy (Manburg), a sophomore, finished sixth in the SUNYAC tournament. D'Arcy "needs to get stronger," according to Howard.

150 lbs.

Pat Luba (Amityville), a sophomore, finished fifth in the SUNYAC tournament. "If Pat builds some power over the summer, he'll be fine," says Howard.

158 lbs.

John Richardson (Amherst), a freshman, finished the regular season at 7-5-1. Because of an injury, he couldn't wrestle in the SUNYAC tournament. "John easily could have placed in the tournament," says a dejected Howard.

167 lbs.

Scott Brinley (Liverpool), also a freshman, finished sixth in the SUNYACs. "He's come a long way. He'll be fine with a little seasoning," says Howard.

177 lbs.

John Conti (Endicott) wrestled most of the year with an injury. "Conti also needs to get into a weight-lifting program," adds Howard.

190 lbs.

Brenden Rogers (Pleasantville) is only a sophomore and the Lakers can look for his improved production next year.

Heavyweight

Sophomore John Buhner (Earlville) was the team's best wrestler. He finished the regular season with an outstanding 22-8 record. "He just had a fantastic year. The SUNYAC heavyweights are outstanding, and he'll have a great chance of placing at the NCAAs," says Howard.

Howard and the Lakers will have to be patient and wait for these "kids" to develop. "We also had a really good recruiting year," says Howard.

Next year Buhner, Darling and the rest of the Lakers can look for marked improvement. "We had an extremely young team. Next year we'll be better. I guarantee it," states Howard.

Buhner wins All-American

Jonathon Buhner became Oswego State's 23rd wrestling All-American at the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III wrestling championships March 6 and 7 at the SUNY University of Buffalo.

The sophomore heavyweight was also chosen a 1987 NCAA Division III Coaches Association Academic All-American, to become Oswego's first in this category.

Requirements for the Academic All-American honors included a 3.2 minimum cumulative grade average and letters of recommendation from his department chair, coach and athletic director.

Buhner, who is studying technology education at Oswego, has been on both of the college's academic honor rolls, the Dean's List and President's List.



Jon Buhner, Academic All-American

gains straight A's and one of Laker's bright spots in recent season. (photo by Joe Gleason)

At the NCAAs, Buhner's first match was a 5-21 fall over fourth-seed Rich Kane (Ithaca '86, fourth-place All-American). He then defeated Mike Gilmore of Lycoming College (Pennsylvania) 7-2, lost a controversial 4-2 decision to Russ Sutherland of the University of Buffalo in the semi-finals, defeated Al Nardone of Kean

College (New Jersey); lost 5-1 to Pat Connor of St. Lawrence University; and defeated Buffalo's Sutherland 4-2 to avenge the semi-final bout.

Captain of the Laker wrestling team, Buhner is the son of Fred Buhner of South Main Street in Earlville and Saline Eggleston of Paxville.