

Blood, guts and Grapplers 2nd in SUNYACs

by T.W. Bailer

It was the most intense sporting event I have ever witnessed. The grunts of strength, the blood-stained faces, the screaming fans (especially the "moms") all created an extremely intense atmosphere that at times had me squinting and squirming as I taped the matches. At the end of the tournament, both the thrills of victory and agonies of defeat left me drained. It is truly a sport under-rated in excitement and enthusiasm, this S.U.N.Y.A.C. tournament proved it!

When the Oswego Grapplers traveled to Cortland State on Thursday night, Feb. 18, they had intentions of competing with the best efforts they could give out. Aiming for a strong showing as a team, they did just that, but not with ease. Friday morning at 11:00 a.m. was weigh-in time for the wrestlers. All of the wrestlers made weight except 134 lb. Eric D'Arcy. He wrestled a class under his normal weight division, he had to lose nearly 4 1/4 lbs. in a 2 hour time span, not an easy task at 5'11". It was a very quiet warm-up, the focus of attention all on wrestling. Going into the tournament, Oswego was prepared for battle physically and mentally.

Leading off for the Grapplers was 118 lb. senior Domingo Valentin who outlasted Binghamton's Chris Barr in a close 3-1 match for a first round victory. Next came Oswego's 126 lb. Brian "The Dynamite Kid" Darling who defeated Mike Schweigharat of Cortland. An exhausted 134 lb. Eric D'Arcy lost a struggle to Binghamton's Mike Choi. Jim O'Neill staged an impressive 12-2 whipping of Brian Ameigh of Oneonta in the 142 lb. class. Freshman Mike Wade outmuscled Potsdam's Byron Mason in the 150 lb. class. Next came the ugliest battle of all in the 158 lb. class. Pat Luba with a cut, bloody face, several injury timeouts (for each wrestler) triumphed over Bob Frank of Binghamton in a stunning, exciting, over-time match. Freshman Chris Buhner "took it on the chin" in a tough loss to Oneonta's Chris Grevelding in the 167 lb. class. Tom Chiravath, in the 177 lb. class, had

a bye as well as Ted Fleming (190 lb.) and (Heavyweight) Jon Buhner. Oswego ended the first round with 81 points, second only to host Cortland's 89 points, an impressive show for both.

Valentin started the second round with a 2-1 struggle over Cortland's Tim Merritt. Darling followed with a pin of Binghamton's Rob Wilson. Jim O'Neill followed with a tough loss to Brockport's Joe Pisano. Mike Wade struggled with Binghamton's Mark Grumble, losing to the eventual weight class champion. Pat Luba continued his "Rocky"-like style coming from behind to beat Eric Thompson of Oneonta. Chris Buhner lost another tough match to Potsdam's Dave Vinson. Tom Chirayath excelled against Oneonta's Bob Sawyer defeating him for a place in the semi-finals. Ted Fleming's match proved to be very crucial against heavily favored Andre Dunleap. Dunleap on a last-grasp shot took down the Oswego Grappler with 1 second left in over-time, won and took away valuable points from Oswego. Jon Buhner ended the second round with an easy 13-1 shallocking of Cortland's Bob Van Hoesen. Oswego was not as paced in the second round as the first, but still remained in second place with 93 3/4 points behind Cortland's 107 1/2 points. Oswego's opponents seemed to strengthen throughout the third round, halting 3 Lakers from gaining the championship status. Brian Darling and Jon Buhner were champions in their respective weight classes and each of them received an automatic bid to the Nationals in Wheaton, Illinois this weekend. Domingo Valentin received a wild-card birth to the Nationals with a strong 2nd place showing, and with Jim O'Neill receiving a first alternate after a strong 3rd place showing. Eric D'Arcy wrestled back into 5th place after an exhausting tournament. Mike Wade managed to wrestle to 4th place, with a strong 3rd place showings from Pat Luba, Tom Chirayath, and Ted Fleming. After the 3rd round Oswego still remained in 2nd place with 103 1/4 points behind Cortland's 116 3/4 points. Coach Jim Howard commented on the 3rd performance,

"We just didn't fight out there, we wrestled well, but they out fought us in a couple of matches." Oswego proved a worthy contender in this year's S.U.N.Y.A.C.'s with 5 finalists, 2 champions, 3 National finalists, and 1 National alternate.

The final team results listed Cortland in first place with 146 3/4 points, Oswego and Brockport tied for second place with 113 3/4 points apiece. Oneonta followed with 94 1/2 points, Binghamton with 78 points, and Potsdam with 26 1/2 points.

Overall, Oswego State impressed fans and coaches both, finishing in a tie for second place after an 8th place (last) finish the previous year. This feat contributed to the selection of Oswego State Head Coach Jim Howard as the S.U.N.Y.A.C. Coach of the Year.

The tournament was an overall success for Oswego State and should help in recruiting this summer. The season is a credit to Jim Howard and an outstanding staff and squad.

Howard named as SUNYAC Coach of Year

by T.W. Bailer

After a 26 year tenure as Head Coach of the Oswego State Laker Wrestling team, Jim Howard received the dividends of all those years of hard work, late nights, and grey hairs by being selected as the 1988 State University of New York Athletic Conference Wrestling Coach of the Year. This was a first in his job, and well-deserved. After finishing in 8th place last year, Coach Howard turned his team around to end up in 2nd place in the S.U.N.Y.A.C.'s with national rankings along the way.

Coach could only modestly comment. "I think Gene (Cortland State Wrestling Head Coach) did a real fine job this year and also could have easily received the honors." Not having a clue as to this honor, there was a search conducted for Coach Howard, as his name was mentioned, only to find him packing up for the trip home. The team was proud of the Coach. "I think Coach (Howard) deserved to win it, he did such a great

"Coach deserved to win it, he did such a great job with us."

Ted Fleming
on Coach Howard

job with us, and he is such a smart Coach," stated Ted Fleming, 190 lb. senior. This award capped off a great season for the Lakers, and should be a great building block for next season.

Coach Howard is off to Wheaton, Illinois this weekend with 3 of his wrestlers in the Nationals. (Hey Coach, don't forget anyone!) 3 national champions could definitely equal this honor in Coach Howard's eyes, so enough of the award, it's back to sweat and grind for him to prepare his Grapplers.