

Grapplers Take Three Firsts



Cortland's Varsity Wrestling coach, Vince Gonino, is entering ten of his matmen in today's New York State College Wrestling Championships at St. Lawrence. Included are three champions and five place winners from last weekend's SUNY Conference Championships.

Junior Bob Menz (190), Sophomores Pete Rossi (134), and Rick Armstrong (158) are the SUNYAC Champions from Cortland. Menzie finished the season at 19-1, Rossi at 18-1, and Armstrong has an 18-2 record.

Unfortunately, their performances in last weekend's Conference Championships were not enough to offset the Golden Eagles of Brockport, who had five champions and captured the tournament crown with 94 points. The Red Dragons with five additional places accumulated 66.25 points, enough to make them runner-up for the Conference title.

Coach Gonino felt that all his wrestlers did well and was not disappointed by the team's second-place finish. "We met Brockport seven times and beat them four of the seven," said Gonino. "The problem was we didn't get much help from other teams."

Gonino noted that Brockport is ranked third in Division III, according to the latest NCAA wrestling news, and Cortland is number 14. "But that ranking should improve," he concluded, "seeing that this is the second time we've beaten Oswego and they are ranked twelfth."

Host Oswego was third followed by Binghamton, Albany, Oneonta, Potsdam and Geneseo.

Freshmen Bob Eddy (188) and Wade Cummings (126) took second and third place honors, respectively. Sophomores Chris Bourne (142) and Cliff Moore (167) and senior Bill Hedges (177) were fourth place winners for Cortland. These five plus Menz, Rossi and Armstrong are headed for the states today along with Joe Pennacchio (142) and heavyweight Walt Keida.

The Dragon wrestlers are 11 and 4 in dual meets this season and were second in the SUNYAC Championships. "Considering all the injuries we had early in the season, and to finish as well as we did, I'm very pleased," the coach commented.

Thirty-six wrestlers remain on Gonino's squad, which includes just three seniors: Don Cooper, Pennacchio and Hedges. Hedges is the only regular.

Gonino indicated his team had set three goals prior to December's competition. They were to finish first or second in the Conference, finish in the top five in the state, and finish in the top 15 in Division III.

"We have accomplished our first goal," he said, "and we have a good hold on the other two."