



JIMMY HAUPTFLEISCH

'Cuddles' Out To Regain Mat Crown

OSWEGO — Jimmy Hauptfleisch, a 258-pound heavyweight who moves as quickly as a lightweight, holds a variety of wins, including a decision against a 610-pound Canadian black bear named Victor. But he wants another victory so much he willingly risks reinjuring a troublesome knee.

Hauptfleisch will be among the Oswego State University College hopefuls in the State University Conference wrestling championship which will open here at 7:30 p.m. Friday at Lake Hall. Action continues at 11 a.m. Saturday with championship finals slated for 3 p.m.

The win Hauptfleisch covets would come in the finals Saturday afternoon. If he gets it, a year of frustration will end. "Big Jim," a senior industrial arts major from Endicott who is called "Cuddles" by patrons of a local pub where he works as a bouncer, was sidelined all last season.

Hauptfleisch had come to Oswego by way of the State University College at Delhi, and had enjoyed immediate success after his first season. In the MIT Holiday Open Tourney, he led a SUCO march to the title by pinning a national YMCA champ who outweighed him by more than 100 pounds.

"Cuddles" followed that victory up with a string of wins in the dual meet season, and then he won the State University Conference heavyweight title. But his luck ran out.

Last season, he lost a bout with mononucleosis and saw other New York State heavyweights win the titles. Brockport State University College's Macke Tyndall, a clever 246-pound heavyweight, State University won the title Jim had held in 1975, and was unable to defend.

Tyndall then scored the biggest upset of the up-state wrestling season. In the finals of the New York State Invitational Tourney at Laker Hall, Tyndall caught St. Lawrence's Ron Pelligra relaxing in the final seconds of their championship bout with a surprise takedown and stunned the crowd with an unexpected come-from-behind victory.

Pelligra eventually recovered his poise, and a week later won the NCAA Division III title, and even made the wire services in a photo showing him in Hollywood exchanging holds with another ex-St. Lawrence wrestler named Kirk Douglas.

Thinking about Tyndall and Pelligra's success makes Jimmy angry, and anxious for another shot.

"I had beaten all those guys," Hauptfleisch said the other night after a workout, shaking the sweat off his head in disgust, and sucking a piece of ice. "I have to have one more chance. Even if it means another injury to my knee."

Earlier this season, his bad luck continued. In the Wilkes College tourney, he aggravated an old knee injury. Now he is working out again, and wearing a knee brace.

"I plan to say hello to Mackie once more in the heavyweight final Saturday afternoon," Hauptfleisch said. "But I probably won't be able to give Victor a rematch this spring."

A year ago, after Hauptfleisch had recovered from mono too late for the postseason wrestling tourneys, he achieved a lifelong ambition. He defeated "Victor the Rasslin' Bear" in the Outdoor Show at the state fairgrounds. While his fraternity brothers from Delta Chi cheered, Jimmy showed speed and piled his bulk on Victor to gain a win with riding time.

About the same time in another arena, Pelligra was winning the nationals.

"The Outdoor Show comes up on the same dates as the nationals," Jim said. "So I don't think I can meet Victor at this time. It's too bad. It's fun to go after an opponent who doesn't stall or run away."