

One thing's sure ★ at Spencerport: Suhr's a winner

Polished senior is challenging school's all-time victories mark

By Gary Fallesen

Democrat and Chronicle

John Suhr, Spencerport's college-level wrestler in a high school singlet, often is overshadowed by more aggressive athletes.

However, Suhr, the thinking man's wrestler, is making his move on the Rangers' record book. Literally.

"His arsenal of moves is three or four levels above a high school wrestler," said Spencerport assistant Coach Woody Vandenburg, an NCAA Division III champion at Brockport State in 1981. "He's the caliber of a freshman college wrestler right now.

"He's just a natural athlete and a super intelligent kid."



Ben Brink Democrat and Chronicle

John Suhr from Spencerport always seems to be in control, like he was during this semifinal victory over Huntington's Drew Jackson in Spencerport tourney.

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Suhr a sure winner for Spencerport wrestling team

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Suhr, who in the classroom boasts a National Honor Society average of 4.54 (out of a possible 5.0), is 21 victories shy of becoming Spencerport's all-time winningest wrestler. He is one of Section 5's finest and, perhaps, one of the Greater Rochester area's most underrated individuals.

Last night, he captured his second straight Lions-Bernabi tournament title with his 10th victory of the season and 95th of his career (against 13 losses). Trevor Graham, who won 115 and lost 24 before graduating in 1981, holds the school record for career victories.

Only one other Spencerport wrestler won more than 100 matches — All-American selection and 1975 graduate Frank DeAngelis (102-1). DeAngelis went on to become an NCAA Division I runner-up at Oklahoma.

Wrestlers named DeAngelis have commanded fan attention for several seasons. Most recently, Angelo DeAngelis captured a Section 5 title and the fancy of area spectators.

"They (fans) love to see aggressive kids," VanDenburg said yesterday during a break from the 18th annual Lions-Bernabi tournament. "John's a control wrestler. Angelo would pick them up and throw them down . . . the crowd-pleasing move.

"John doesn't beat up on anybody. He can dominate a whole six minutes and the score might be 8-0, but the kid can't do anything against him."

Bill Jacoutot, the Rangers' head coach, said, "In high school, kids do a lot of moving around. In college, things are slower paced. John controls and positions himself just like a college wrestler. He doesn't waste a lot of movement.

"There are three bouts going on out there," added Jacoutot, "and on one mat someone's throwing someone else around. The crowd says, 'Wow, look at that match.' And there's John with a bar on a guy, flattening him out, riding him into the mat.

"Nobody realizes just how good he is. He's not a high school wrestler . . . he's a college-type wrestler."

Suhr, who has been wrestling since the third grade, shyly admits he isn't flashy. He even admires the more physical style of a Frank DeAngelis.

"When I first came to this school, he was a two-time state champ," Suhr said yesterday after an 8-4 semifinal victory over Drew Jackson of Huntington, a Long Island team ranked No. 1 in the state along with Fulton of Section 3 (Syracuse area). "I thought, 'Jeez, it would be great to do as well as he did.'

"He always kept moving. He went wild. I try to get into my head to go hard and never stop moving. But before the match I sit down and try to relax so I'm not hyper when I go out on the mat."

Suhr had the best record on the team last year — 34-1. He was a sectional champion and state runner-up at 145 pounds.

Last summer, he captured titles at the Empire

State Games and Eastern Freestyle Championships. In the latter, he defeated a New Jersey state champion and a Pennsylvania state champion for the title.

His goals this season include capturing the New York State Public High School Athletic Association title, and surpassing Graham's victory mark.

Graham also was "super on technique," and Suhr spent many afternoons wrestling with his childhood friend.

But it was only when Suhr began to practice against VanDenburg that his skills excelled. "That helps me keep moving," he said, referring to his workouts with the three-time NCAA All-American. "It helps me with my chain wrestling (linking one move after another)."

Suhr was the third sectional champion in his family — following his older brothers, Paul and Harold, who captured Class C titles at Lyndonville. Another brother, sophomore Rick, seemingly is destined to maintain the Suhr tradition.

Rick, who also reached last night's finals at 145 pounds, had a 21-7 record last year. John was 21-8 as a freshman.

"We wrestle a lot in the living room," John said, referring to Rick. "My mother goes nuts. We're always breaking furniture."

John soon may be breaking records. Then it will be on to college — Division I Cornell and Division III Rochester Institute of Technology are among the prospective schools — and an education in engineering.

"He has the potential to be a Division I wrestler," said VanDenburg. "There's a huge difference going from high school to college. The intensity level is greater at the college level. But, right now, inexperience is the only thing that would beat him at the college level."

Huntington dethroned Pioneer of Section 6 (Buffalo area) as team champion with 196½ points. Spencerport, the *Democrat and Chronicle's* fourth-ranked team, finished second with 156½ points. Pioneer finished a distant ninth.

The Rangers had five finalists, but Suhr was their only individual titlist, defeating Rick Miller of Erie (Pa.) Tech in the championship match, 12-0.

Huntington also had five finalists and only one champion (98-pound Gene McNeal).

McQuaid, which finished fifth with 131 points, had three champions. Bob Zoeke (105 pounds) claimed his third straight Lions-Bernabi title, while Dan Pappalardo (112) and Mike Scott (132) each won for the first time.

The Knights placed behind Huntington, Spencerport, Erie Tech (145 points) and Section 6's Niagara-Wheatfield (135).

Le Roy, which had one champion in 91-pound Dave Cecere, finished seventh with 124 points.

Dave Kennedy of sixth-place Athens (Pa.) was named the tournament's outstanding wrestler after claiming the 119-pound weight class. Tom Allen of Erie Tech recorded the most pins — four in a combined time of 7:35.

18th annual Lions-Benabi Tournament at Spencerport

Final team standings

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Huntington-11 196½, Spencerport-5 156
½, Erie (Pa.) Tech 145, Niagara-Wheat-
field-6 135, McQuaid-5 131, Athens (Pa.)
125, Le Roy-5 124, Clarence-6½, Pioneer-6
92, Tappen Zee 72½, Hilton-5 63½ Cardinal
Mooney-5 56, Wayne-5 54, Lancaster-6 40,
Ogden 30, Monroe-5 22½. **Individual finals**

91—Dave Cecere (Le Roy) d. Tom Carino
(Huntington); 98—Gene McNeal (Hunt.) d.
Tom Billone (Spencerport), 9-2; 105—Bob
Zoeke (McQuaid) pinned Bradley Gore
(Hunt.) at 2:47; 112—Dan Pappalardo (McQ.)
d. Ron Gross (Wayne), 8-3; 119—Dave Ken-
nedy (Athens) d. Bill Grayson (Le Roy), 20-
0; 126—Jamie Stockhausen (Erie) d. Paul
Keysaw (Athens), 12-3; 132—Mike Scott
(McQ.) d. Paul Cicio (Hunt.), 7-5; 138—Dan
Benjamin (Pioneer) pinned Joe Zirpolo
(Hunt.) at 5:56; 145—Dave Kreider (Athens)
d. Rick Suhr (S'port), 5-1; 155—John Suhr
(S'port) d. Rick Miller (Erie), 12-0; 167—
Tom Allen (Erie) pinned Greg Sadwick (Hil-
ton) at 1:54; 177—Mike Wayne (Erie) d.
Dom Cianchetti (N-W), 14-7; 215—Jeff Ellie
(Clarence) d. Steve Vigliotti (S'port), 5-2;
250—Fred Clarke (N-W) pinned Steve Over-
ton (S'port) at 3:01.