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WRESTLING DAYS

Are Here Again

★ Several Oswego wrestlers have chance of making nationals

by Shane Fecteau
Staff Writer

The Oswego State Laker Wrestling Team will be hosting the Fifth annual Empire Collegiate Wrestling Conference Championships at Laker Hall Saturday, February 17th. This tournament is the qualifying tournament for the Division III nationals which will be held in Cortland on March 1st and 2nd. The top two wrestlers at each weight as well as seven wild cards chosen by the coaches will receive the chance to compete at the nationals. Seven teams will vie for the conference for the team title with Brockport State leading the way with a current national ranking of ninth. Cortland (ranked fourteenth) coming off two impressive victories over top five ranked opponents. Trenton and Springfield, looks to challenge the Golden Eagles. The Lakers ranked eighteenth nationally, will make a serious run for team honors. Binghamton University ranked twentieth, should also contend but may lack the depth to capture the Empire title. Also competing in the tourney will be a very solid Ithaca squad, R.I.T. and the Dragons of Oneonta State.

The Empire Conference is regarded as one of the toughest conferences in the country, based on its allotment of qualifiers for the NCAA Division III Championships. When asked about the tournament, Coach Howard states "This is the culmination of a year's work as it all comes down to qualifying and competing in the nationals." Howard feels that "If our athletes place second or better in their respective weights and wrestle to their potential, the team title will take care

of itself. I feel strongly that we could win as many as six weight classes."

Leading the way for the Lakers will be 118 pound All-American Craig Kaper. Kaper with a record of 24-14, has a tough road as 118 has proven to be one of the toughest weights in the conference. At 126, returning All-American and team co-captain Mike Kohl looks to claim his third straight bid to the national tournament. Kohl sports an outstanding record of 26-14 and will be looking for his first Empire Conference title after finishing second last season. At 134, junior Don Spaulding (20-16), will be looking to make his second trip to the nationals. At 150 pounds senior co-captain Mike DeBellis (31-8), is ranked sixth nationally and should have an outstanding tournament. At 167 pounds junior Keith Smith (20-10), is also ranked sixth nationally and will be looking to make his second trip to the nationals. At 177 pounds freshman sensation Drew Place (24-5) is ranked fourth nationally and is chomping at the bit to get back into action after being sidelined with a nagging injury. Also looking to qualify for the national tournament are Pete Klochaney (11-10) at 142, Shawn Akley (22-17) at 158, freshman 190 Matt Soboloski (16-21) and junior Alan Bush (5-10) at heavy weight.

The tournament gets under way at 10:00 A.M., with semifinal action slated to begin at high noon. Consolation finals will begin at 4:30 P.M. and the Championship finals are scheduled for 6:30 P.M.


This Friday and Saturday
check out the Empire Collegiate Wrestling Conference Championship hosted by Oswego State

Schedule of Events

Friday, February 16, 1996:
11 A.M.-3:30 P.M. Mats available
 Official available Registration and Verification of Entries
3:30-5:30 P.M. Medical Check/Weigh ins
7:00 P.M. Coaches Meeting/Seeding Meeting

Saturday, February 16, 1996:
9:00-10:00 A.M. Warm up/ Mats Available
10:00-12:00 A.M. Quarterfinals
12:00-2:00 P.M. Championship Semi-Final. Consolation Round #1
2:00-3:30 P.M. Consolation Semi-Finals
3:30-4:30 P.M. BREAK
4:30-6:30 P.M. Consolation Finals
 3rd/4th & 5th/6th
6:30-8:00 P.M. Championship Finals
8:30 P.M. Awards and Coaches Wild Card Meeting


Alan Bush:
275 lbs. 5-10




Drew Place:
177 lbs. 24-5




Keith Smith:
167 lbs. 20-10




Shawn Akley:
158 lbs. 22-17




Craig Kaper:
118 lbs. 24-14




Mike Kohl:
126 lbs. 26-14



Don Spaulding:
134 lbs. 20-16



Pete Klochaney:
142 lbs. 11-10



Mike DeBellis:
150 lbs. 31-8

