

SAINTS SPORTS

Hudson's Winning Attitude, Tradition Key to SLU Wrestling

SUCCESS THE HALLMARK OF SAINTS COACH, WHO TAKES FIVE TO NATIONALS TODAY

By Adam Spence

Dave Hudson is certainly no stranger to success. In his college days, the current Saints wrestling coach was a standout on both the St. Lawrence football and wrestling teams. He qualified for the NCAA Division III wrestling tournament in each of his four seasons, and received All-America honors in two sports; wrestling in 1978, football in 1980.

These days, Hudson still enjoys similar success. This season, two years after taking the reins in 1991, he has coached his alma mater to a fifth-place ranking in the national poll, and recently the Empire Wrestling Conference named him Coach of the Year. This weekend, he is taking five of his understudies to the very place -- the NCAA championships -- that was once his domain.

The five ambassadors from SLU -- Chris Bannister ('93), John Cauty ('93), Mike Thompson ('94), Jason Bovenzi ('94) and John Speigelman ('95) -- are the most from this school since 1988. That year the Saints, coached by John Clarke, won the national team title.

This year, the Saints mentor isn't talking much about national titles, maybe for fear of being a jinx. He does, however, talk very optimistically about the talent he will showcase at the championship meet, held at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut.

"I feel like all five of them have the potential to be All Americans," Hudson says. "They've wrestled good enough competition during the season. They've faced a demanding schedule. They've done the things necessary to be competitive at this point." Given Hudson's experience at the championship level, there are probably precious few who are as knowledgeable in such matters.

In his four years of grappling in the "big show," Hudson's best finish was as a sophomore, when he placed fourth, and earned the aforementioned All America award. Clarke, now SLU's Athletic Director, was his coach.

Following graduation, Hudson stuck around for two years of graduate work, in-

cluding stints as a graduate assistant on the wrestling and football staffs. Andy Talley, who succeeded Ted Stratford as head football coach in Hudson's senior year, was at the helm of the Saints football program back then. Nowadays, Talley is headman of one of the nation's premier Division I-AA football teams at Villanova University.

Hudson then took a job at Exeter Academy, where he taught physical education and health, and coached the school's wrestling team, JV lacrosse team, and was an assistant on the football staff.

In 1991, Hudson returned to St. Lawrence to fill the vacancy left by Clarke, who ended his 22 year tenure as wrestling coach to accept the A.D. job.

Hudson acknowledges that there are vast differences between the high school and college brands of wrestling, but says that some coaching styles and philosophies are universally successful. "Hard work and motivation are a big part of wrestling," he says. "College wrestling I think is much more demanding mentally than high school wrestling is, in that most of the kids that we actively recruit come in here having been undefeated or with one or two losses the year before. They're going to come here and be very challenged every day in the room and in every match."

The mental taxation, he says, takes a toll on wrestlers and can even end careers. Hudson notes that each year he recruits between seven and 15 people, yet only two or three remain active through their senior year. "I think those numbers indicate what a mental and physical challenge wrestling at this level is," Hudson says. "The length of our season and the physical demands of wrestling make it awful tough, and the ones that are left right now are pretty special guys."

As for the Coach of the Year honors, Hudson is quick to share the recognition. "It's a great individual award -- I was surprised and really excited about it. But I think it speaks a lot about what the team has done this year," he says. "That award was based on the fact that we've been able to have some very good

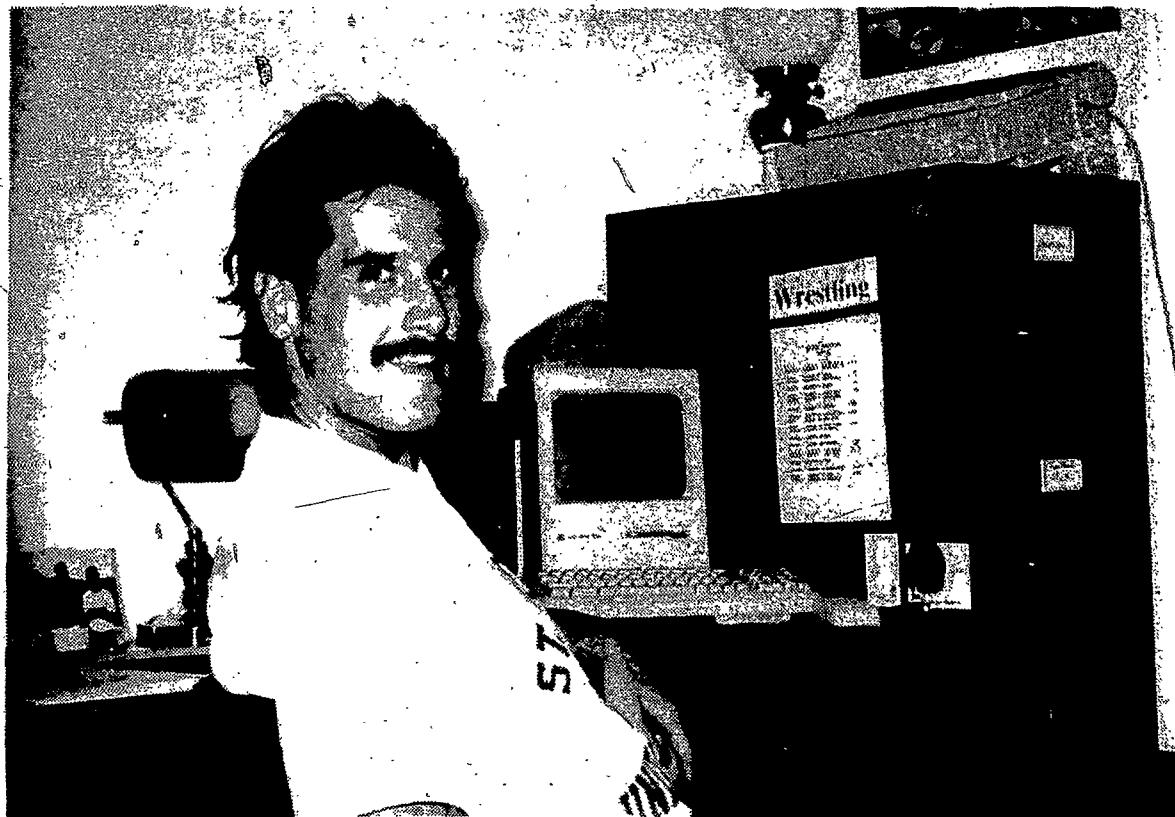
wins as a team and that our individuals wrestled so well at the end of the year. It's not so much what I've done...it's more of a team award than an individual one."

When one achieves such consistent and exceptional success, however, sometimes

the credit need not be shared. And probably somewhere beneath his constant praise of others around him, behind that modest, friendly grin, Dave Hudson knows that. If nothing else, Dave Hudson knows how to win. He's

proven that in the past, and he continues to prove it each day.

He mentioned to me what a special place St. Lawrence is to him; indeed, St. Lawrence ought to be thankful for that.



Saints wrestling coach Dave Hudson relaxes in his office in Augsburg

File photo

Long Season Finally Ends For Saints Cagers

By Pete Costello

The St. Lawrence men's basketball team closed out the season last weekend with two losses on the road at Union and Hamilton, finishing with a 3-22 mark on the year.

The Saints were outmanned by the hosts, and as a result, dropped both contests by wide margins. Injuries, lack of height, and lack of depth all combined to make it tough on St. Lawrence.

Non-league power Union was first up for the Saints, and they had their way with the visitors, leading by 24 at the half. Union was also strong on the defensive end, holding Saints leading scorer, senior co-captain Brett Mirliani, scoreless from the field. The result: a 112-63 blowout for the Dutchmen.

Tommy DiNapoli ('93) was the high man for the Saints with a 13 point effort. Mirliani added 12 points and 6 boards, while freshman John Bardeschewski hit for nine points and pulled down seven rebounds.

The contest turned into a

fiasco as the Saints were victimized by Union "tradition". Union's head coach called a time out with three minutes remaining to allow fraternity pledges to streak across the court.

An evening tarnished by "tradition" was followed by a record setting afternoon. Unfortunately, the all-time home scoring mark set by Hamilton College last Saturday afternoon came at the expense of the Saints.

The two teams wasted no time in getting up and down the court, lighting up the scoreboard for 118 total points by halftime. The Continentals who boasted a 20-4 record coming in, used their impressive inside height to effectively overpower the Saints. Hamilton scored on a final jumper with two seconds remaining to set a school home scoring record, rolling over St. Lawrence 134-98.

The Saints, however, were not without their own set of impressive statistics. Mirliani closed out his 1000 point plus St. Lawrence career, finishing with 30 points and nine

rebounds for the day. DiNapoli also bowed out in fine fashion, hitting for 21 points, while Senior co-captain Brian Phillips dropped in 14 points on the Continentals to mark his last appearance in a Saint uniform.

Phillips looked back fondly on his St. Lawrence career. "In a way, it was good to finally get through this long season," Phillips said. "But coming to grips with the end of my career will be difficult."

"I think this year was good for the program, in a way, as a rebuilding year," Phillips continued. "With all the experience that the freshmen got, it makes the outlook for next year that much better. One of the biggest obstacles that we faced this year was a lack of height, but hopefully Coach Davis can go out and attract some big men to the program."

Congratulations to Brett Mirliani, who was named to the Empire Athletic Association's All Conference second team earlier this week.