

# No-show foes MCC's problem

★ By RUDY MARTZKE  
D&C Sportswriter

There were no crowds at Monroe Community College yesterday, no one to cheer a wrestling match.

Instead, coach Mike Cronmiller was practicing holds on co-captain Bob Menz at the same time the undefeated Tribunes should have been competing in a scheduled match against Erie Community College of Buffalo.

It was the seventh cancellation for the nationally eighth-ranked Tribunes (15-0) this year, and Cronmiller is beginning to take the hint.

"Erie dropped the sport because there was no interest," he says, "but some of these others, I'm not sure. Cobleskill was just plain chicken to wrestle us. And others say they have too many injured players to compete as a team or they're just starting their program and they're not ready to compete against us."

"We weren't afraid to meet them," Cobleskill Ag and Tech coach Stan Nevins said. "We just couldn't agree upon a date for a makeup. Maybe we'll play them after the season's over if it means something in the standings. Otherwise next year."

Fulton-Montgomery Community College coach Chris Johnson said, "We won't wrestle them in a dual meet. This is our first year and Monroe is just too powerful for us."

Cronmiller, 33 years old, who is in his third year at MCC after coaching at St. John Fisher for a year, says,

"When our first cancellation occurred, I really got down, because I was up for the meet. So did my player. So now we don't even talk about it. We're wrestling people, not records."

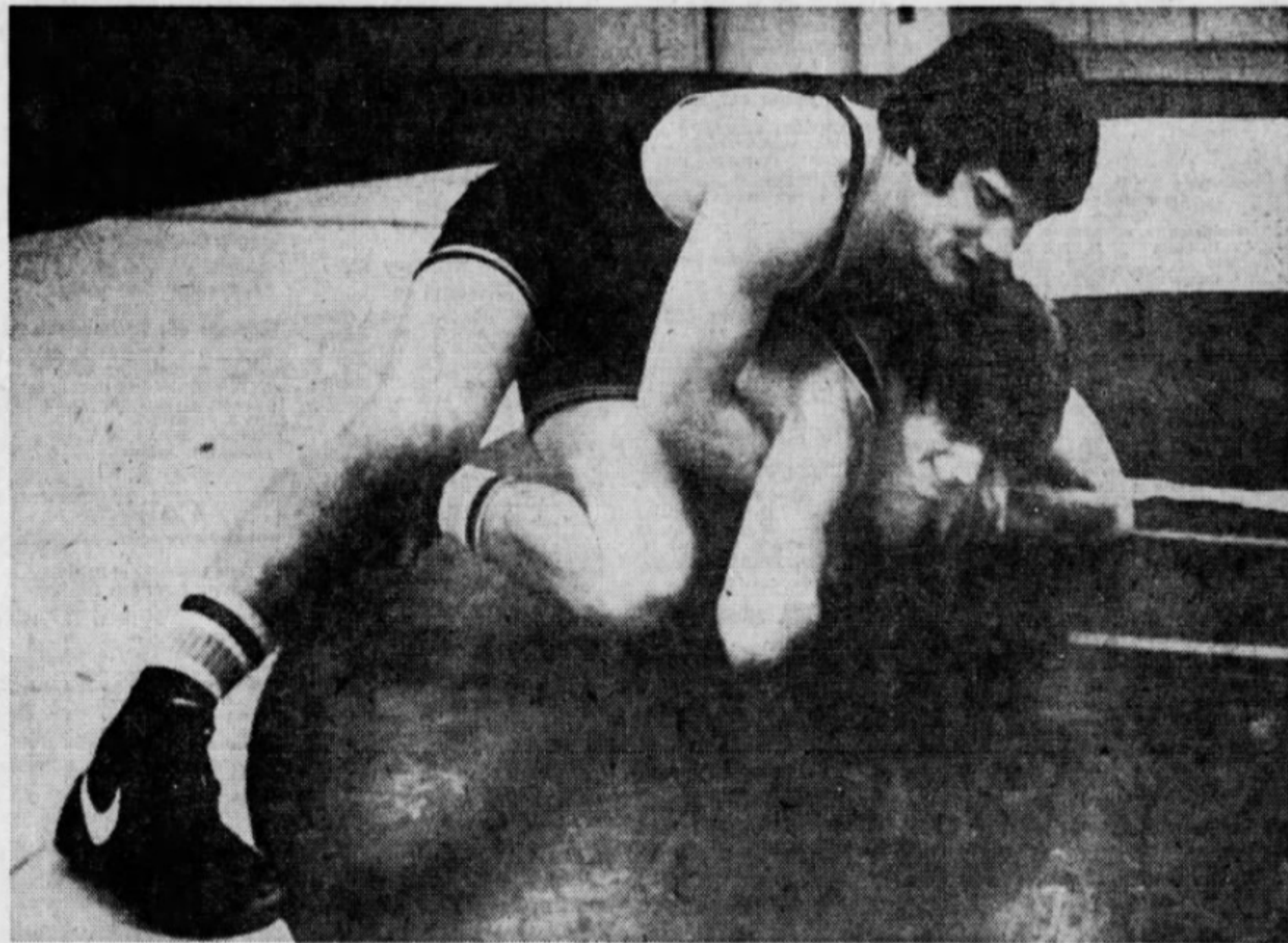
Cronmiller's success at MCC — his teams were 18-1 and 24-1 his first two years) is not taken out of proportion at the 5,000-student, two-year school on East Henrietta Road. The wrestlers have only reached the level of success of other Tribune sports.

"I think we're the only junior college in the nation that has schools ranked nationally in four sports in one year— baseball, soccer, basketball and wrestling," says athletic director George Monagan.

"To have a successful program, first you've got to have leadership, Monagan says. "I pick fellas as coaches who sell the school first and our program second."

Cronmiller himself has an unusually unique story. He's the head of the biology department at MCC, and only took the school's wrestling post upon Monagan's request after Roscoe Hastings resigned three years ago.

He's gone on to lose only two dual meets in three seasons and he boasts six undefeated wrestlers at present — Tim Celso of Newark (118 pounds), Jim Polsinelli (126) of Eastridge, John Gringer (134) of Spencerport, Jim Battoglia (134) of Penfield, Craig Cody (187) of Churchville-Chili and Menz (190) of Webster — but they've all got to take a lesson in winning from Cronmiller's college career.



With no opponents, Monroe Community College's Dave Mitchell (top), Ron Grubaugh work out.

A 138 pounder at Marshall High ("I took a second in the city"), he went undefeated in 94 college matches at Olivet College in central Michigan,, counting wrestlers from Wake Forest, Valparaiso and Northern Michigan among his victims.

What's Cronmiller's secret as a coach? "I don't recruit," he says. "I recruited three times and only got one of the kids, and even he's been beaten out for the team."

"It's taken a lot out of me emotionally, but it's been worth it," Cronmiller says. "I believe if a coach is not willing to give 100 per cent to a boy who is willing to give 100 per cent himself, then he shouldn't be there."

Cronmiller also credits Monagan for his success as a coach. "The athletic director allows me a great amount of freedom to coach, just as he does with the other coaches," he

says. "He's got faith in us to do our jobs. That's good. A lot of AD's would be on your back all the time."

The Tribunes have placed fourth and third in the last two 18-school regional meets. "I want to skip second this year," Cronmiller says. "I think we can even compete with any four-year school in the state. I won't be satisfied with less than a first place."