

From A MANN'S Point of View

BY ROBERT MANN

While one tends to think that all there is to a wrestling tournament is the action that takes place on the mat, the seeding meeting that can sometimes happen within hours of the meet itself is where the shape and possibly the fate of the tourney can be determined. So it was with this past weekend's SUNY Wrestling Championships.

The seeding meeting took many shapes and forms. It was boring and lively. It was colorful and dull. It was controversial and lethargic. It was drawn-out and quick. Most of all it was political but not in the sense of typical politics. Everyone was willing to get and take but no one was willing to give.

Even before the matter of the seedings were to come there were important points to be ironed out. The first thing to come up was whether or not there would be points allotted to a team if one of its members forfeited in one way or another. This was settled without too much controversy (except for some strong looks at the rule books) with the agreement that the only way a loss of points could occur was by disqualification in cases of flagrant misconduct.

Weight allowance was the next subject that was discussed and it got quite heavy. One coach wanted a three pound allowance (i.e. if a man is in the 118 pound class he can weigh as much as 121 pounds without being disqualified) and that was quickly counter-proposed to be made two pounds. To go along with this was the topic of the time for the Saturday morning weigh-in. There was concern here as far as the comfort of the wrestlers in relation to the 11 a.m. starting time. Surrounding all this was the business of a scale that was not exact in its weight readings. It had been discovered at the original weigh-ins that a man could maneuver his reading on the scale by tilting one way or another or by standing on a part of the scale other than the center. The issue this involved was whether or not the morning weigh-in was going to go on using one or two scales. The whole kit and kaboodle was settled by the decision to use both scales, have a three pound weight allowance, and weigh-in at the originally set 7 a.m.

Other things of semi-importance were resolved in due time (or is that overdue time) before defending champions and where they should be seeded came before the committee of coaches. The rules say that defending champions **SHOULD** be the first seed if their status holds at the same weight. The coaches were then reminded that they had voted to have it that way at a meeting held last year. This ruling subsequently affected the seedings in two divisions and directly hurt the chances of at least two Lakers: Bob Albrecht, who was the defending 126 pounder, and 142 pound Tim Law. In Albrecht's case it was a situation where a defender shouldn't have been first seed. It put him in the same bracket with Brockport's Abe Lang, who defeated "Bones" in the semi-finals by a referee's decision. In the 142 pound class Potsdam's Tony Peraza was the defender even though four men had better records than him this season. (Please note, though, that won-lost records are not the prime prerequisite for seeding.) While this may not have kept Law from a higher seeding it put him in the same bracket with Brockport's Tom Maddock, who should have been seeded higher than fourth. Maddock and Law met in the first round and Tim was defeated 3-2. Maddock went on to the crown in the division. If he had been seeded differently he would have been in the bracket opposite Law's.

As I mentioned earlier the seedings themselves have a lot of political overtones. The procedure for getting a wrestler is simple: a coach, if he thinks his wrestler is worthy of a seeding, will say something about his man (who he beat, the toughness of his competition, what he did in the past) and get him nominated for a placing. That does not mean in any way that the wrestler has a winning record. The aforementioned Lang in the 126 pound class only had a record of two wins, four losses, and two draws.

One thing that is not consistent is the amount of seeds in each weight class. It evolved that there were as many as six in one class while as little as three in another. The common number of seeds was four. This should have been the constant. The only weight class where the nominated versus the actual seedings didn't hold true was the 190 pound class. Six were mentioned but since there were only eight participants one coach correctly said "If you seed six why don't you seed them all." In the end only four were accepted. And once that was settled, the jockeying for positional seeding went on.

In the crystal ball that is my future I see other seeding meetings. Since I now know what to expect I'll take the same type of notes, anticipate the same type of politicking, and bring a cushion for my rear end.

UCLA AND THE STREAK DEPT.

I hear where the Bruins have lost two in a row. It may mean that a couple of tortoises caught up with a hare. But will they win the race??

I'll be back at this same spot next week. Until then.....