

WRESTLING:

Yellowjackets Ready for Long Season

By BOB MATTHEWS

University of Rochester may be an excellent place to get an education, but it is also a bad place to plan wrestling dynasties.

Last year UR had a 43-man squad and rolled up an 11-1 record. Coach Frank Oliveri expected similar success this year with 16 seasoned wrestlers due back. But only three returned.

"There is a great deal of academic pressure at UR," said Oliveri. "A lot of our potential wrestlers decided not to compete this year. Studies come first."

Suddenly Oliveri was left with a 12-man team. He has no depth at any weight class and many of his first stringers are inexperienced.

"UR can't pick up high school champions and junior college stars like Brockport State can," Oliveri said. "Our entrance requirements eliminate many wrestling prospects and we can't offer a Physical Education major program. We're left with a lot of boys who never wrestled in high school."

Heavyweight Neal Hammer, currently sidelined with a dislocated kneecap, is a typical case. He began wrestling at

UR three winters ago. He took a lot of lumps when he started, but he's developed into a good wrestler.

"The high point in our season so far was Neal's draw in the final bout of our match with Albany State," Oliveri said. "Neal only weighs around 185, and he was up against a man who weighed over 250. A good wrestler, too. Neal held him to a draw and enabled us to tie the match."

Despite injuries and the mini-sized squad, UR has managed a 4-1-1 record so far this season. Oliveri doesn't have many bodies to work with, but what few he does have are quality stuff.

John Howell, Adrian King and Reggie Wilcox are three of the best.

Howell, nicknamed Lightning for his quick takedowns, has compiled a 34-2 record in four winters at UR.

"John isn't very strong," Oliveri said, "but he's super quick. He's one of the best takedown men in college wrestling."

King, a junior co-captain, is 4-1. His only defeat was to RIT's classy Skip White.

Wilcox, a sophomore, was 13-1 last year. His only loss was in the championship match of the state tournament. It came on a forfeit when a shoulder injury forced Reggie to scratch out of a bout against an opponent he had decisioned 9-0 earlier in the season.

"Reggie still has a bad shoulder," Oliveri said. "He's had to skip a few meets, and there were several others he probably should have missed. He's the only man we have in the 132-pound weight class, and he's going on sheer guts. He'd rather wrestle sore and lose a three-point decision than sit it out and have us give up six points via forfeit."

Other key UR wrestlers include freshmen Jim Barrett (190 pound class) and Dan Merlino (142) and John Stichnoth. Stichnoth weighs around 160, but he's been wrestling in the 177-pound class for lack of anyone else.

"We're 4-1-1 now, but we'll be happy with anything over a .500 season," Oliveri said. "The tough part of our schedule is ahead of us, and if any of our people get hurt, we have no replacements."



ADRIAN KING
... co-captain



REGGIE WILCOX
... injured shoulder



Pain in Defeat

University of Rochester's Vic Barnett is pinned by John Kitts in recent match against

Clarkson. Despite loss, Yellowjackets posted 21-15 victory in meet and are 4-1-1 on

the season. With only 3 returnees, UR faces toughest part of schedule in coming weeks.