

NA's Morrow is 'It' for Ithaca's wrestling team

By Steve Stempler
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Four years ago when he was a senior and wrestling at North Allegheny High School, Bart Morrow completed the most difficult part about enrolling at Ithaca College.

Pronouncing it.

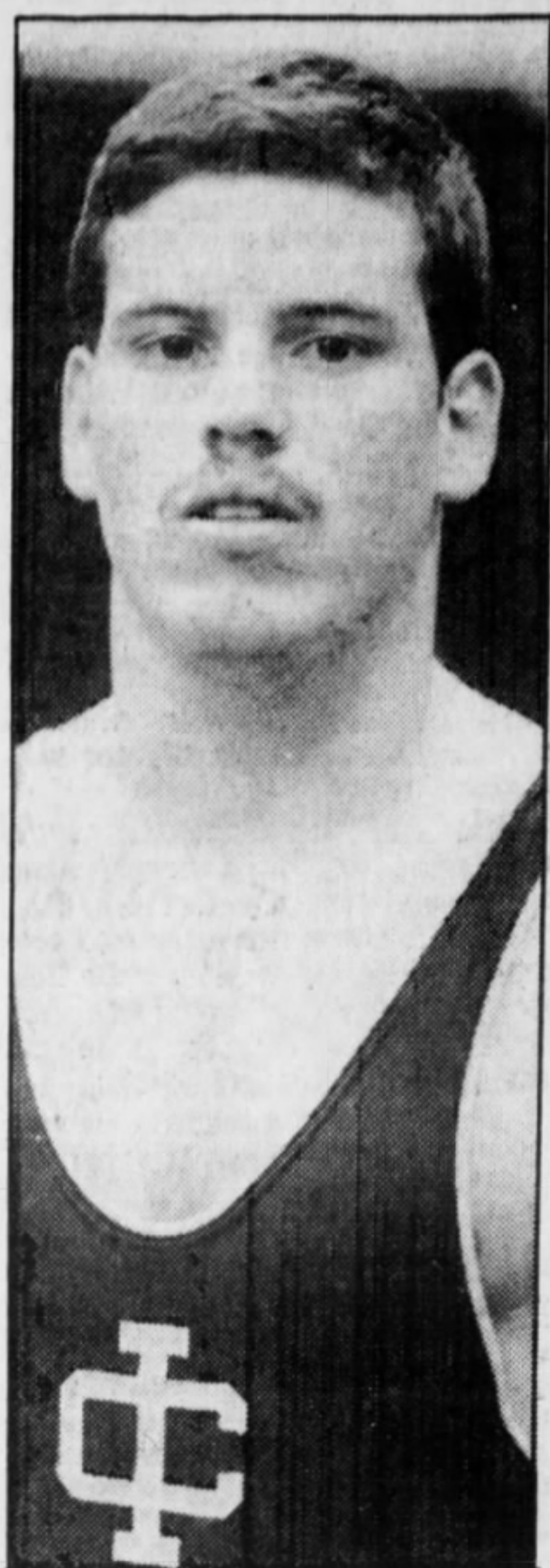
"I thought it was I-thaca [with a long 'I' sound]," said Morrow. "I never heard of the school."

"I yelled at him," said Mrs. Morrow, who laughs about it now. "Bart got this letter and he says, 'Where's Eye-thaca?' I told him it's *Ithaca. Ithaca!*"

Obviously the Ithaca wrestling program was attractive enough to overcome the pronunciation problems for Morrow, who on Jan. 19 won his third straight NCAA Division III New York State 134-pound championship. Last weekend he completed his collegiate regular-season competition with a career dual-meet mark of 49-0, which is a school record, and an overall record of 112-14. He'll compete this weekend in the Division III eastern regionals at Trenton State College, and is serious about a shot at the Division I championships at Oklahoma next month after he completes the Division III championships at Augustana, Ill., March 1 and 2.

During his junior and senior seasons at North Allegheny, Morrow compiled a 68-8-4 record but he always seemed to fizzle at the state championships.

"I couldn't understand why [Ithaca Coach John] Murray wanted



Bart Morrow

Gus DeAugustino. I think we increased his confidence in his ability to score and take people down. He's good at tilting someone."

If Morrow has a weakness, it's pinning an opponent. But Murray doesn't consider that a drawback for Morrow, who has only two pins this year, because this year the NCAA has installed a 'technical fall' rule: a match is halted if a wrestler is ahead by 15 points. Such has been the case for Morrow seven times.

"He's a scorer," said Murray. "He's never been a pinner, not even in high school. By far, he's one of the best takedown artists I've ever seen in college. One of the things he learned here is you don't pin someone with a takedown, you score points. Bart easily has set the school record for points scored, probably permanently."

"I think Bart's a favorite for the national [Division 3] championship. I haven't seen all of the kids but I've seen most of the best. Last year he made it to the [national] finals. He fell behind early before he found out he could tilt the guy. Bart scored seven points in the third period and lost by one. I've never had as much confidence in an athlete as I do him."

His parents are quite proud of him, too.

"He has about 12 pair of wrestling shoes at home," said Mrs. Morrow, ready to make the trip to nationals. "I want to take one pair — the smallest — and bronze them."

Meanwhile, the shoes Morrow brings home from the Division III national championships in Augustana this year — the biggest ones — might have a little gold in them. □

"I think Bart's a favorite for the national [Division 3] championship. I haven't seen all of the kids but I've seen most of the best ... I've never had as much confidence in an athlete as I do him."

— John Murray

him," Mrs. Morrow said. "He bombed out at states. He went there and *poof*, lost in the first round."

"Yeah," agreed Morrow. "I just wrestled badly. For some reason I don't wrestle well in the morning [when the opening round of the state championships were held]."

Morrow has been Division III's No. 1-ranked 134-pounder since the preseason rankings came out, and he already has won the bronze and silver medals, respectively, at the Division III national championships the past two seasons. He was voted Ithaca's Most Outstanding Wrestler as a freshman and sophomore. He's a major reason why Ithaca went from a sub-.500 record in 1981 to the No. 1-ranked Division III team this season.

"I'd like to claim I did a lot to his style," said Murray, "but the basic, good technique was already there because he had an excellent coach in