

GOLDEN EAGLES

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Grappler crowned national champion

by DAVID WINTERS
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Sophomore Eric Vaughn became the 24th individual national champion in SUNY Brockport history as the Golden Eagles wrestling team qualified six grapplers in the National Collegiate Division III wrestling championships at Upper Iowa University, March 7-8.

Brockport finished 12th out of 59 teams in the team standings as they compiled 29.5 points.

Augsburg College captured the title by scoring 132 points, Wartburg College placed second with 90 points, the University of Wisconsin at LaCrosse finished third

with 61 points and John Carroll University totaled 52.5 points to place fourth.

Vaughn won the individual national champion at 177 pounds. He defeated Nik Lewandowski of Augsburg in the finals, 3-1.

Vaughn entered the tournament unseeded. In his first match, he faced the number five seed from St. John's University (MN), Andy Lein. Vaughn narrowly defeated Lein, 3-2 to advance to the quarterfinals where he battled the number four seed from Wabash College (IN), Dan Emerson. Emerson overpowered Vaughn to capture the victory, 10-8.

Vaughn's biggest test in the championships came in the semifinals when he faced the number one seed in his

weight class from Wartburg, Chris Ortner. Vaughn overwhelmed Ortner with a 6-3 win.

"As the competition got tougher, I wrestled better. My confidence seemed to rise after each match," Vaughn said. "I was shocked when I won the title but I was glad it was over."

"I was very pleased with Eric's performance," Head Coach Don Murray said. "Even though he was injured, he still had the determination to wrestle and came out a national champion."

Vaughn finished the season with a 19-3 record. He went undefeated in his last 10 matches.

Senior Jeremy Reynolds,

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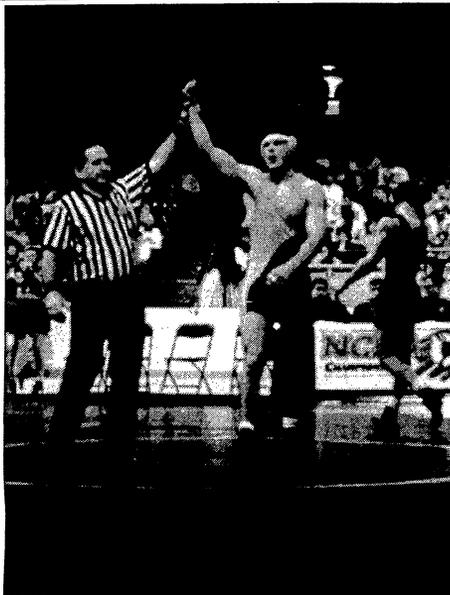


Photo provided by Loras Sports Information Department
The referee raises the arm of Eric Vaughn after he won a national wrestling title at 177 pounds.

who was seeded fifth at 134 pounds, lost his first round match to Bryan Klass of Delaware Valley, 8-5. But Reynolds rebounded by winning his next two matches over Shawn Nicholas 6-3, and Brian Wallis of Buena Vista, 6-3.

He lost his second match of the tournament to Nick Mitchell of Wartburg, 3-2. He led the team with a 27-8 record and lost his first match to a Division III wrestler at nationals.

At 142 pounds, sophomore grappler Michael Ferris lost his first round match to Springfield College's Craig Vedrani in a high scoring match, 13-9.

Ferris got back on his feet after he pinned Matt Young of Simpson College in 2:48 to advance to the next round. He had an easy time with Drew Achenbach of Coe College as he defeated him soundly, 19-2.

Ferris ran into some problems in the next round where

he met Chris Hubbard of John Carroll. He lost the match by default in 58 seconds. He went 13-5 on the season and has a career record of 25-17 with nine pins.

Senior Andy Corbett, who wrestled at 118 pounds, earned a berth into nationals via a wild card. Corbett was defeated in the first round by default to the number three seed from West New England, Abdul Shabazz, in 4:46. Bill VanWinkle from

Elizabethtown University was downed by Corbett in the next round, 12-3. Corbett was unable to advance after Britt Marolf of Simpson beat him in a tough match, 14-9. Corbett finished the year at 11-12.

With a 24-11 record this season, sophomore grappler Roberto Padilla lost his first round match to Jeremy Kulbartz of Coe, 12-0 in the 158 pound weight class. Padilla rebounded by knocking off Jason Gordon of

Dubuque, 8-2. He lost his second match in a close decision to the seventh seed, Mike Alesch of Wartburg, 3-2.

In the 167-pound weight class, freshman Ben Cooper lost both of his matches. He was defeated in his first round match by Justin Kerr of John Carroll, 4-1 and lost his second match of the day to Chris Roggie of Messiah, 9-0.

"All of the my teammates and coaches did very well at the championships," Vaughn said.