

Junior wrestler Matt Hamill recently received the tremendous honor of being named NCAA Division III All-American and National Champion in the 190-pound weight class. As if this is not amazing enough, this is the second year that Hamill received these prestigious awards, just two of the hundreds of achievements he has earned for his athletic excellence.

Hamill, upon repeating this prestigious accomplishment, became the first RIT wrestler to reach the rank of national champion twice. This was by no means a product of chance, but is the cumulation of hard work and endurance that dates back to 1996.

It was in the that season that Hamill completed some of his most noteworthy accomplishments. Besides being named NCAA division III All-American and National champion in the 167-pound weight class, he became the first and only wrestler to win gold medals in both Greco-Roman and freestyle wrestling in the Deaf Olympics held in Denmark.

That year, he recorded an outstanding 33-0 record here, the best in RIT history. Ten of these victories were the result of pins, a very impressive number. Other titles he earned included being named New York State Wrestler of the Year, New York State Champion, and Outstanding Wrestler in the New York State Tournament.

In the most recent season, 1997-98, Hamill continued his winning ways, rolling over all but few of his opponents. He finished this year with a 30-3 record. It should be noted that his only three losses came against Division I opponents, and that each of these were lost by two points or less. Hamill led the Tiger wrestlers with 18 pins and finished tenth in the balloting by the U.S. Olympic committee for the Sportsman of the Year award (this honor went to Pete Sampras). On top of that, he was named the American Athletic Association for the Deaf Athlete of the Year.

As for the recent tournaments, Hamill garnered all the awards he possibly could receive. He was named New York State Champion and New York State's Outstanding Wrestler as well as the NCAA's Division III Tournament Wrestler. In that particular set of matches, Hamill broke the record for most pins in the shortest amount of time, defeating all of his opponents in the first period of each match.

Although he has clearly achieved a great deal on a personal level, Hamill is always willing to help fellow teammates and guide others with his skills and enthusiasm. RIT head coach Ron Gross was quoted in "RIT News and Events" as saying that "[Matt] has been the heart and soul of this team and the things he has accomplished have been incredible."

It is this super personality of Hamill's that won over the crowd at this year's national tournament. Upon winning his final match, the audience of 2,000 cheered him on by raising their hands over their heads and shaking them (this is the symbol of applause in sign language). For Hamill, it was a storybook ending to a spectacular season.

Still, nothing is over for Matt. He will soon be wrestling at the U.S. trials in Orlando, Florida. If all goes well there, he hopes to be wrestling in the 2000 Olympics. Judging from the combination of heart, determination and skill that he possesses, one would hardly be surprised to see him there, representing our country amongst the top wrestlers in the world. After all, if anyone deserves to belong at that level, it is certainly Matt Hamill.

by Glenn Bernius

Wrestling Team Reaps

Hard work pays off. The wrestling team learned this in the past year. Not only did they work hard on the mat, but also in the classroom. The team finished in the top ten in the country, both academically and in wrestling. Out of over 100 schools, the team placed eighth at the National Tournament and seventh in the NCAA Division III Scholar Team Awards.

The eighth place finish is the highest in RIT wrestling history. It was fueled by the national champion and our most outstanding wrestler, Matt Hamill. Hamill pinned his way through the national tournament en route to a second national championship in as many years. This is a feat no other wrestler is thought to have done. He did it in outstanding fashion, ending all of his matches in the first period. In four matches he wrestled just over seven minutes, the length of a single match.

Bringing home All-American status was freshman Tony Wallace. Wallace went into the tournament the eighth seed and came out with a seventh place finish. This put an end to a great freshman season that saw Tony win three tournaments and compile a 24-4 record. Also scoring points at the national tournament were Jay Jakubowski and Tom Massaro. Jakubowski made it to the All-American round, but was defeated before he could earn a place. This left Jakubowski 18-11 for his final season. Massaro won a match, putting him one round away from the All-American round. Massaro ended his junior outing with a 19-8 record.

The team put together a stunning 7-3 record. One of the losses went to Brockport, but the team finished ahead of local

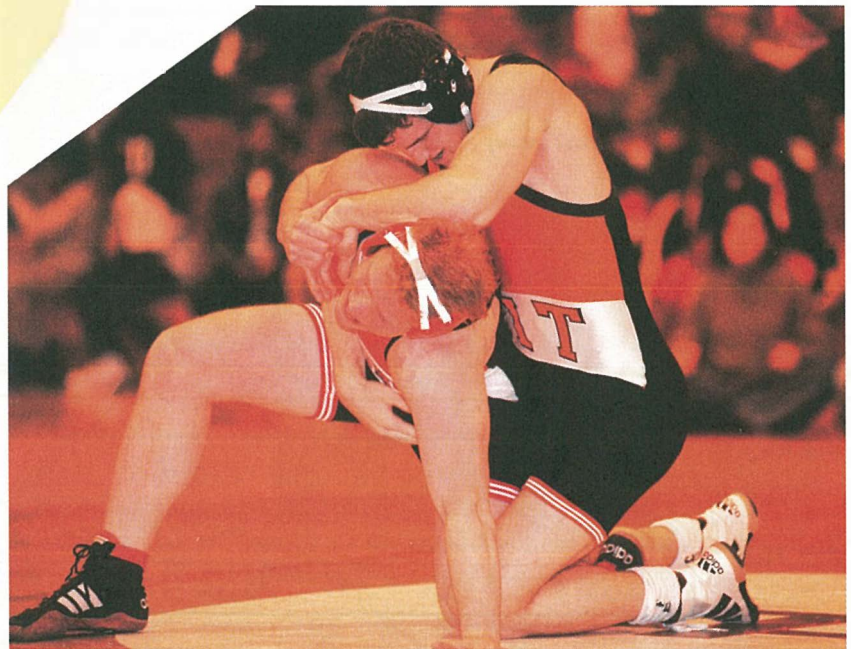


photo by Michael Fagans