



With their first winning record in six years, the Albany State wrestling team hosts the SUNYAC's this weekend. (Photo: Tony Tassarotti)

Grapplers Host SUNYAC Tourney

by Ken Kurtz

The Albany State Wrestling squad enters tonight's SUNYAC competition at University Gym sporting their first winning record in six years. The Danes were 11-9 in dual meet competition this year, and are the host team for this year's SUNYAC wrestling championships. Opening ceremonies get under way tonight at 7:15, with wrestling action beginning promptly at 7:30 with the quarter-finals, followed by the first round consolation competition.

The Albany lineup begins with soph Steve Zucker (7-6) at 118, a sixth place winner in the New York State championships last year. Zucker beat out freshman Matt Paoni and Seth Zamek in Dane eliminations for the SUNYAC spot. At 126, frosh. Steve Bertrand (13-4) will be representing Albany, beating out novice Lou Silver.

At 134, Nicky Guzman (3-11) will be grappling for Albany, as Howie Berger (3-1) will sit out of the competition with a shoulder injury sustained against FDU. "Howie was a prime candidate for All-American honors, but his injury forces him to wait until next year," said Albany coach Joe Garcia.

At 142, another freshman, Pete Toporowski (5-4) got the nod for

Albany, because Mark Dailey was forced to remove himself from competition due to a rib injury. At 150, senior co-captain Rick Porter (7-4) and fourth place finisher in last year's SUNYACs beat out Mike Greco (7-4-3) for the SUNYAC slot. "Mike is one of our most improved wrestlers," stated Garcia.

At 158, freshman co-captain Paul Hornbach (12-1-1) will be out on the mat for Albany. Dave Straub (3-1), another frosh, had lost in the wrestle-offs to Hornbach. "Dave was our utility man this year, competing at 150, 158, and 167, and is a very much improved wrestler," remarked Garcia.

At 167, freshman Steve Cronin (5-3) will be wrestling for the Danes, and sophomore Jim Morrill (6-4-1), a fourth place winner in the New York State Tourney, will be out on the mat at 177. At 190, frosh Ron Van Antwerp (7-10-1) will compete for Albany, beating out another frosh, Ed Morales (2-2) for the SUNYAC slot. At heavyweight, freshman Bill Bornstein (3-7) rounds out the Albany line-up. Soph John Baldwin is sitting out the rest of the season with a shoulder injury.

"When it comes down to the end of the year, it's unfortunate that

there can only be one representative for each weight class," said Garcia. "Intrasquad competition determines the Albany representatives for the SUNYACs, but those who aren't wrestling in the tournament made a very important contribution to our program. Coaches Joe DeMeo and Brad Hamer have brought our kids a long way."

Albany goes into tonight's competition seeking to improve on last year's SUNYAC performance in which Porter was the only Albany grappler to place. Wrestling will resume Sat. at 11 AM with semi-final action followed by the consolation finals at 12:15.

The two days of wrestling reaches its end with the championship competition which begins at 3:00 PM.

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