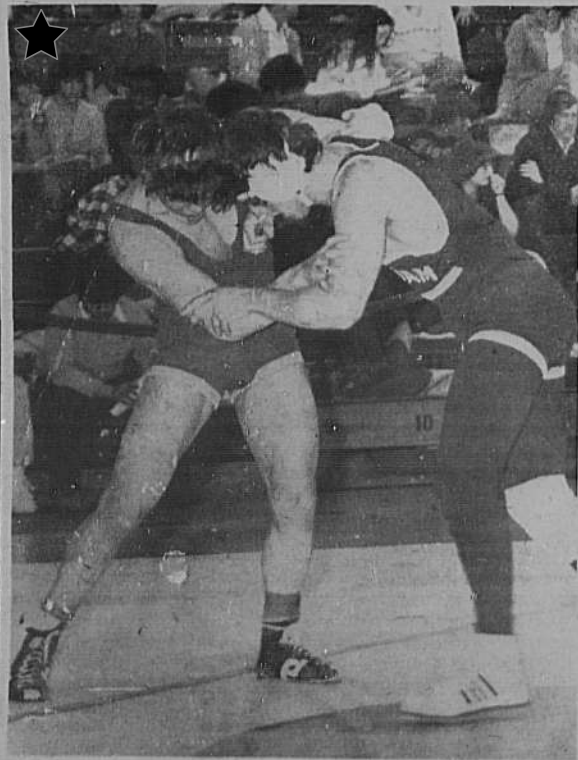


# SUNYAC Meet Sends Two Dane Grapplers To Nationals



Paul Hornbach, left, came in third for the Danes in the 158 pound class in the SUNYAC Wrestling meet. (Photo: Tony Tassarotti)

by David Osborn

Paul Hornbach sat in the top row of the near-empty side of the bleachers in University Gym Saturday afternoon. He watched the action down below on the yellow and white mat with only half-interest and a tinge of disgust. "I know I can beat both of those guys, I just know I can," said the Albany State sophomore after the competition had ended.

Earlier in the day, Hornbach had lost a tough 4-2 decision to Cortland's defending national champ Rick Armstrong in the 158 pound semifinals and he said he had been intimidated by Armstrong's title. The Dane went on to win a pair of consolation bouts and place third to earn a trip to the NCAA Division III championships; but he still wanted the title.

Armstrong, a senior who is tall but slim in the upper portions of his body, increased his seasonal mark to 23-0 by nipping Brockport's Lyn Vandenberg 8-6 in the 158 final which Hornbach viewed with anguish. His victory helped the Red Dragons nip the Golden Eagles 77¼ to 72¼ for the team in the two-day 19th annual SUNYAC Wrestling Championships.

The host Albany squad ran up against a tougher level of competition than they had faced while powering to an 11-9 season; the Danes finished dead last for the second straight year. Buffalo placed

third with 45 points followed by Potsdam, Binghamton, Oswego, Oneonta and Albany lagged behind with 13 points.

The seeding committee had put Hornbach in the fourth slot although he may have been the equal of anybody in his class. On Friday night, when the opening rounds were conducted, Hornbach had little trouble with Scott Slade of Buffalo and posted a 16-7 win. The stocky, sandy-haired Dane knew he would be facing a national champ and may have let it affect him.

"I should have beaten him but I had it fixed in the back of my mind that he was a defending national champ," said Hornbach, who transferred to Albany from Indiana University last January. "He's taller than I am and has a better reach but I know I'm much stronger than he is. In the nationals, I'll just show him no respect."

At the start of his confrontation with Armstrong, Hornbach appeared to have an emotional edge over his surprisingly sedate foe. The Dane trotted around the dirt-stained mat, he slapped his hips, fluttered his palms and arms and confidently snapped on his helmet, anxiously awaiting the start. Armstrong limbered up slightly and calmly strode into position.

But when the official began the match, Hornbach went clear away from his seeming aggressive mood

and took a tentative stance. Usually the one to take the initiative, instead the Dane was content to remain on his feet and barely tussle with Armstrong. After a scoreless first period, Armstrong scored a takedown and Hornbach two escapes for 2-2 going into the last period.

Hornbach still looked pumped up before the final period, but he couldn't utilize his superior strength. He had the Dragon in a hold but Armstrong cleverly evaded the clasp and broke away for a point and a 3-2 advantage. A riding point in the end gave Armstrong the 4-2 win. Cortland coach Vince Gonino said of Hornbach that he knew he'd just seen someone seeded too low.

Hornbach's automatic year of forced idleness with his transfer just expired this January so he may not be quite as match sharp as possible. Last summer he won the 158 title in the Mini-Olympics in Colorado and attended a wrestling camp with Dan Gable and other Olympians present as instructors. But a knee operation in September has also hampered him.

At the conclusion of the competition, he showed the signs of combat. Above his eyes were two big red puffy burn marks suffered atop the much-used mat and numerous other scratches. "I usually do better in big tournaments because I'm used

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# Cortland Nabs Wrestling Crown

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to that sort of competition from the summer," Hornbach said, "I know it will be a whole different story at the nationals though."

The nationals for Div. III will be held in California the first week of March. Rick Porter, a senior from Watertown, will be the only other Albany entrant in the meet. He qualified for that honor by finishing fourth in the 150 pound class. The first four finishers in each class advance to California.

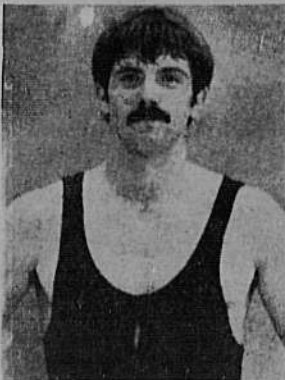
On Friday night, Porter joined Hornbach as the only Dane to get past the first round of competition. He breezed Steve Olesiuk of Potsdam with a 15-5 decision. But Saturday he lost to the eventual champ Joe Giani of Brockport 12-5. His victory over Oneonta's Horace Pettway in the consolation semis insured him of the fourth spot.

"He concentrated on my left side and after a while pulled a muscle in my left shoulder," Porter said of his match with Giani. "He just wrestled smart. I wanted to stay up with him because I knew I could beat him if we stayed on our feet. But he was too tough and he kept forcing me to wrestle on the mat."

All the remaining Albany members were bounced out in the opening round. Steve Zucker was the first Dane to leave when he lost a 15-7 decision to Ray Porteus of Brockport in 118 competition. At 126, Steve Bertrand was pinned after 6:20 had elapsed. All losers moved

down into the consolation bracket and Zucker and Porteus lost there also.

Nick Guzman replaced the injured Howie Berger at 134 for Albany and lost to Cortland's eventual champ John Ciotoli. Frosh Pete Toporowski, at 142, was a quick



**Rick Porter**

Dane departed losing to top seed Peter Rossi of Cortland. Steve Cronin lost his 167 encounter with Prince Greene of Brockport and John Morrill was edged out by Binghamton's John Dukich in overtime at 177.

At 190, Albany's Ron Van Antwerp was shut out by Cortland's Bob Amann and Bill Bornstein, who handled the heavyweight duties for the Danes lost an opening round decision to Rick Grumm. After

completing their first winning season in six years, Albany ran up against what is possibly the toughest Div. III competition in the nation, and they were routed.

Meanwhile, Cortland and Brockport, the defending champ, were staging a dramatic battle for the team crown. Cortland won three classes and Brockport two with the Eagles claiming third three times and the Dragons twice. In the crucial development, all nine Cortland entries came in the top four in their respective classes and all will go to California.

In the 190 pound final, the third case where the two frontrunners went head-to-head, the setting was ripe for the decisive match. Trailing 2-1 with :11 second left, Cortland's Bob Amann recording a stunning takedown for a 3-2 lead that brought the entire red-suited Dragon squad into the air. Amann's win over topseeded Tony Smith insured the crown.

"I knew it was gonna be close but I never thought it would come down to that one match," said a jubilant Gonino after accepting the victory trophy from Albany Director of Athletics Bob Ford. "The way my kids wrestled today they didn't deserve to lose by a quarter of a point or whatever it might have been, they came here and did what they had to."

Oneonta's VanNoy came into the tourney seeded only fourth at the 142 class. But he defeated the top two seeds on his way to taking the title and consequently was voted the meet's outstanding wrestler by coaches and captains.