

No surprise where the strength is in FL wrestling league

The favorite to win the 1980-81 Finger Lakes East Division wrestling title? Say hello to the Canandaigua Braves. So what else is new?

The Braves have become a legend of sorts in FL wrestling circles, winning the league title for the past nine seasons while going undefeated in league matches during that same time period.

"And they'll go undefeated this season too," stated Geneva Coach and league chairman Don Knisely.

Still, the Braves may have a different look when they take to the mats Saturday night against Waterloo. Larry Reynolds takes over the coaching reins, replacing Weldon Cannough. Reynolds admits he doesn't know much about Finger Lakes wrestling, but the new Canandaigua mentor is no stranger to wrestling on the high school level after coaching six years at Southern Tier school Salamanca.

Other coaching changes in the league find Abe Meyers, former Mynderse coach, replacing Mickey Donnelly, who's opted for an assistant's role at Waterloo and Chris Bourne replacing Dawson Raymos at Wayne.

Returning coaches include Knisely at Geneva, Dan Caraher at Mynderse, Jack Fisher at Newark, Fred Ciaburri at Palmyra-Macedon and Bob Menz at Victor.

In addition, two schools, Penn Yan and Marion have joined the FL East for the coming season. Penn Yan rejoins the league after taking a one-year layoff and will be coached by Tom Kneeland, who guided the Mustangs two years ago.

Marion will be attempting to make the move to the FL East after winning the West last season with a 9-0 record. Steve Habecker returns to head the

Black Knights.

Canandaigua

No less than 15 lettermen return to welcome Reynolds to wrestling, Canandaigua style. Best of the returnees are the King brothers, Marty and Matt, who both placed in the State tournament a year ago after winning Section five titles at 98 and 138 pounds, respectively.

Another sectional winner and State representative is Mike Reho, who'll see most of his action at 155.

Other lettermen include Joe Ricciotti (98), Dan Scheele (112), Ken Gobin (126), Jene Burgess (126), Steve Finnick (132), T.J. Mincer (138), Morris White (145), Kurt Cammell (167), Vernon Ayers (167), Steve Heferan (167), Bill Condon (177) and Joe Kuras (215).

Last season the Braves finished at 14-1, with their only loss coming at the hands of State champion Baldwinsville, who will travel to CCFL for a showdown on Feb. 7.

"I really don't know much yet," admitted Reynolds. "I do know I have some tough kids and that we'll be a very tough team. One thing's for sure — every team we face this season will be psyched to knock off Canandaigua."

Reynolds' assistant coaches are Dale Reho and John Perhamus.

Newark

Just as Canandaigua has been the perennial first place finisher in the FL East, Newark has always been on the doormat, holding the number two position.

The Reds return eight lettermen from last year's 14-3 team, and have a fine contingent up from last season's undefeated (8-0) junior varsity.

Strongest of the Reds are heavyweight Bob Button, 36-1 a year

ago, with his only loss coming in the State tournament, and Larry Eberhardt, 24-2 last season.

Button is the all time Newark wrestler in number of wins with 103, while Eberhardt holds the second position with 62. Other lettermen include Mark Krause (91), Tim DeWispelaere (105), Mike Block (119), Norb Schmidlin (126), Bob Neuhard (145) and Bob Freeland (250).

"We'll be strong again if we stay healthy," Fisher said. "We don't have a lot of depth, but we have a good nucleus to work with. Fisher hinted the Reds may be forced to forfeit some early season weight classifications due to injuries, but "we'll be tough when it counts."

Palmyra-Macedon

Pal-Mac Coach Ciaburri attempts to keep the ball rolling and improve on last season's 11-4 record. The Red Raiders have improved every year since Ciaburri took over in 1976, but could be hard pressed to come up with more than 11 wins this season.

Best of the Reds promise to be tri-captains Dennis Blachenberg, Mike Brown and Bob Collie. Blackenberg was 11-3-1 last season, while Collie was 14-1 with his only loss coming to John Cosentino of Geneva. Brown wrestled well last year but looks ready to have a big year in 1980, according to Ciaburri.

Other lettermen include Mickey McCrath (98), Larry Lee (126), Paul Brown (138), Tracy Smith (177) and Bill Benjamin (215).

"We're kind of inexperienced, especially in the middle weights," Ciaburri said. "We'll need a lot of pins to make up for the inexperience."

Mynderse

Mynderse, which finished a 9-5-1 last season (4-4-1 in league) is expected to be down a bit this season. Graduation took its toll on the Blue Devils, only seven lettermen return.

Steve Siegfried (105) looks like the mainstay on a squad loaded with freshmen and sophomores. Siegfried sports a 25-1-3 record from a year ago, as well as a 79-9-3 career record.

Other lettermen include Bill Budd (112), Jerry Fay (126), Steve Wenderlich (126), Dan Dove (132), Ken Tiaskkun (145) and Gary Lorenz (167).

"We're rebuilding," admitted Caraher. "But we'll get tougher as we gain experience. We'll come on at the end of the year."

Geneva

The Panthers finished with a 7-8 mark a year ago and look to be improved, at least in terms of individual wrestlers. "We'll be strongest in tournaments," admits Knisely, "but in dual meets, we might be hardpressed to improve our record."

Gone from last season's squad are standouts John Cosentino and Tom Moses, who accounted for 54 wins between them. Expected to pick up the slack are junior co-captain Eddie Principio at 105, junior Don Devaney at 112, senior co-captain Tommy Parker at 119 and senior Vaughn Nelson and sophomore Jeff Principio, both currently battling for the 126 and 132 spots.

Victor

Victor Coach Bob Menz is hoping to improve on last season's 1-12 mark and has 10 lettermen back to make that job a bit easier.

"We'll definitely be improved," Menz said. "Last year, at times we had only three wrestlers competing in

a meet. This year, we hope to have a full squad."

Lettermen include Jeff and Dan Annessi (112 and 119 respectively), co-captain Jeff Saunders (126), Mark Flora (126), John Wargo (126), co-captain Dave Bonnalle (138), captain Ken Mortensen (145), Dale Sadler (155), Eric Johnson (167), and Ian Pancoast (177).

"We have some talent and quite a bit of spirit," Menz said. "We're looking forward to it."

Marion

This might not have been the best season for the Black Knights to jump into the FL East. Only seven lettermen return from last year's West champions, and Coach Steve Habecker realizes his squad might take some lumps in the more powerful East.

"We would have been more competitive in the East in past seasons," Habecker said, "but that wasn't our main concern in making the move.

"The kids on the junior varsity level were losing interest," the coach continued. "Many schools in the west didn't have complete JV squads, so our kids were forced to stay inactive."

Leading returnees for the Knights include Rich LeVan (112), who was 26-4-1 a year ago, Ed Dushesneau (119), Kevin DeRidder (138), Tony Titus (155), Gary DeVries (215) and Kevin Loren (167). Others expected to help out are Scott Dudd (105) and Jack Burley (91).

Penn Yan

Coach Kneeland admits, "a lot is still up in the air" concerning the Mustangs return to wrestling this season.

Kneeland has two wrestlers who lettered two years ago, Bob Peacock (112) and Steve Quinn (132). Out of the entire roster, only seven people

have had any sort of wrestling experience.

"I won't say we don't have the talent," Kneeland said. "We just lack the experience. We have a lot of enthusiasm and desire and we're working hard. I'm impressed with the team's willingness to work."

Waterloo

Abe Meyers returns to the coaching wars from Seneca Falls after a six year absence and inherits what he terms a strong team with nine returning lettermen.

Best of the returnees are 91-pounder John VanOstrand, who won 20 matches a year ago Buzzy Lamson (126), who won 24 and Martin Feitz (155), who won 18.

Other lettermen include Keyin DeParde (112), Lou Ellison (119), John Augustine (119), Mike Kemp (132), Andy Fegley (145) and Vern Sessler (215).

"We hope to improve on last year's record (8-4-1)," Meyers said. "We'll just have to wait and see what happens."

Wayne

New coach Chris Bourne was greeted with a small turnout for this coming season, but the "wrestlers we do have can compete with just about anybody around," he said.

Ten lettermen return, led by tri-captains Bill Affranti (126), Steve Azano (145) and Rob Lang (177). Best of the rest include Rob VanAlstyne (105), Joe Friedman (112), Rich Azano (119), Bryan Gross (132), Charlie Jordan (138), Kevin Gilbert (155), Vic McCahen (167) and Rick Jones (215).

"Depth could hurt us," Bourne said. "If we can stay away from injuries and keep everyone out here wrestling, we'll have a good year."