

# STC teams battle to take EFA's wrestling crown

By JOE MIRANDO

Who says everything is changing these days? Just take a look at the 1976-77 Sullivan Trail Conference wrestling race.

For the first time in years, no significant rule changes alters the action on the mats, nor the structure of the league.

Every STC coach also returns.

Many of the wrestlers' faces are different, but the season will still see the same wild race for the championship it saw last year.

The defending champion Elmira Free Academy Blue Devils should find it tough to repeat as Sayre, Waverly and Horseheads return their usual strong clubs. Improved teams at Southside and Hornell could make the race even more competitive.

Each Tuesday and Thursday night for the first three weeks of January will present five STC matches. After another full league card on Friday night, Jan. 28, the teams go at it against league opponents Tuesday, Feb. 1 and Thursday, Feb. 3.



**WRESTLING DRILLS** — Elmira Free Academy coach Dave Messing supervises a practice match between John Burke (center) and Jan Hill. The Blue Devils are defending Sullivan Trail Conference champions.

with only three seniors.

Leading the young Hornets are a group of juniors led by 167-pounder Tim Dean.

Dean made most of the area wrestling headlines this past summer wrestling in the New York State and National Federation championship.

Other talented juniors include Pat Hemingway at 155, Ray Stuart and Brian Kelsey at 177, and Harry McAlinn, Tom Waite and Dave Bennett at 145.

Returnee Ron Bauman completes the lineup at heavyweight.

Colin Bradt (138), Russ King (119) and Marty Eichner (96) compose the small list of seniors on the team. Eichner and Bradt have firm holds on their positions, while Butters battles Tim Cook.

Don Butters (112) and Ron Wood (126) are the only other Hornets with secure holds on their weight classes.

Ninth grader Steve Hughes is competing with Jeff Mann and Steve Blaney for 105, while Bryon Bradt and Bill Hughes are grappling for the 132 berth.

**HORNELL**

Though smarting from the loss of 20-win seasons from Mike Bacon and John Grillo, the Red Raiders could break into the STC's upper division after a season of 4-5 in the league and 9-6 overall a year ago.

The Raiders are led by a solid 1-2-3 punch at 167, 177 and heavyweight in Butch Boltone, Ray Cudabec and Steve Terry. All seniors, Boltone paces the group as he comes off a 14-1 dual meet season.

But aside from Section 5 AA champ Nick Dean at 105, the Raiders must rely on a number of unproven wrestlers.

Freshmen Pete Day and sophomore Terry Robinson are battling for 91 and 98, with the loser taking 91 and the winner 98.

Other unsettled spots include 112 (Greg Bigger or Calvin O'Dell), 119 (Wayne Tobias or Larry Bacon) and 145 (Craig Phair or Jeff Reutz).

Returning seniors Carl Burner at 126 and Joe Milner at 138 hold inside tracks on starting berths, as does junior Mike Gardner at 155.

**CORNING WEST**

Last year the Corning West Vikings battled their way to a 10-2-1 record led by eight seniors who dominated the lineup from 126 to 215.

This year the Vikings will abound in seniors again, only this time these seniors will be the jayvees who were forced to wrestle as juniors behind such stalwarts as Ed and Mark Sutter, Joe Craft, Mark Dale, Don Beer, Don Rynearson, Pat Frost and Mike Hogue.

The only regular performers left from a year ago are Scott Cook, Bob Ely and Buddy Cutler. Cook and Ely are both two-year men and will take the 119 and 126 spots. Cutler moves up from 167 to heavyweight.

The senior contingent coming off the jayvees is paced by Rick Taylor at 155, who saw spot duty on varsity last season. Other seniors coach Greg Swimelar is counting heavily are Mark Gerow at 132, Mark Hibbard at 138, Tim Brown at 145 and Pat Quigley at 167.

Brown is battling Virginia transfer Wally Allen, while Quigley moves up from the middleweights. Jeff Stone at 177 is out for wrestling for the first time.

West's success in the lighter weights will depend on how quick the 98, 105 and 112 pounders can mature. Rick Marshall and Chris Darangelo are fighting for the 98 berth, while Mike Cornell has nailed down 105 and Jeff Fero has secured 112. All four are newcomers.

**NOTRE DAME**

Rebuilding from the ruins of a 2-12 season, the Notre Dame Crusaders will present a sophomore-dominated team with five returnees. Senior captain Dan Hughes, out for much of the season because of weight problems a year ago, will lead ND at either 126 or 132.

Hughes is back for his fourth year of varsity competition.

Complementing Hughes are a trio of juniors in Ed Weingart at 112, J.J. Chalk at 138 and Mike Chaffee at 145.

Aside from these four, the Crusaders have little depth and experience. "We're young and enthusiastic," coach Mike Watson said. "In two years look out for us."

Scott Sheehan, the only sophomore with a varsity letter, will wrestle at 98. At 105, Mike Carpenter battles New Jersey transfer Wayne Griffiths for the starting berth.

After Weingart at 112, sophomore Mike Hamilton completes the lightweights at 119.

Fighting for the berth Hughes decides not to take are Vince Johnson and the team's only other senior, Dana Drolieski.

All four heavies for ND will be new. Mark Seaman and Tom Looney, both at 155, were spot varsity performers last season.

Scott Bennett, a transfer from EFA at 167, Chris Smith at 177 and Fran Cleary at heavyweight will compose the final three weights for ND.

Edison had yet to hold a sufficient number of practices and Corning East doesn't wrestle until Dec. 30. Therefore, both teams' coaches were unsure of their prospects.

**SAYRE**

"We're definitely a contender this year," Sayre coach Bill Perry said. According to most coaches around the league, Perry may be too conservative.

He has plenty of reasons to be more optimistic as he returns a veteran team with just two grapplers lost through graduation.

Particularly effective this season should be the Sayre middleweights, which are probably the class of the STC.

Starting at 126, the Redskins present sophomore Eric Childs, who finished 23-21, third in the STC and champion of District 4 and the Northeastern Pennsy region last year. Childs is currently ranked in the Pennsylvania Top 100.

At 132, Perry can pick from Mark Twigg or Mike Fitzgerald, both juniors with varsity records of .500 from last year. The one who doesn't get the nod at 132 can challenge senior Mike Hutchinson for 138.

Senior Walt Fisk, the No. 1 ranked wrestler in the state at 145 in the Pennsylvania Top 100, completes the middles. Fisk's 25-4 record earned him a second place in the state a year ago.

Nine wrestlers, all with varsity letters, are competing for the 91 through 119 spots. The only position secure belongs to sophomore Bill Talada at 91, who suffered a broken wrist last season.

Senior Tim Keenan battles transfer John Vanderpool at 98. Keener was the victim of a broken elbow a year ago.

STC 91-pound champion Henry Croke moves up to 105 to battle sophomore letterman Tracey Keener and Brian Twigg.

Perry also has depth at the next two weights in Jim Osborn and Greg Ward at 112 and Dennis DeCaprio and Mark Havens at 119. All four are varsity veterans.

The position where the Redskins may be weak are the heavyweights, where only Steve Hoyt returns with a strong past record.

Battling for 155 are seniors Ken Pond and Matt Norton, and sophomore Wayne Place.

Seniors Joe Drake at 177 and John Welch at heavyweight are coming "off" subpar seasons, but Perry says these two are the most improved on his team.

"This is the first experienced team we've had here in a while," he said. "We have some depth now. This year we could really put it all together."

**EFA**

Last season was a sparkling one for the Blue Devils. Blasting through all nine STC opponents, Academy took its eighth STC wrestling championship, and won four of seven non-league bouts to finish 13-3, their best in three years.

Topping off the season, EFA's Bob Hilliger and Richie Foster won section 4 crowns, the first STC wrestlers to accomplish this since 1973.

But that was last year. With five lettermen back, coach Dave Messing's crew should be hard-pressed to win its ninth title.

The key to Academy's hopes lie in the lightweights, as only one proven veteran returns—Jan Hill at 119. If the Devils can stay within 10 to 15 points during the first five bouts of each match, they will be in excellent shape as Academy could possibly be the STC's toughest squad from 138 up to heavyweight.

This group starts off with veteran John Burke at 138, followed by tough Mike Wheeler at 145.

At 155 EFA will present either Bobby Lowe, a transfer from Colorado, or senior Steve Mofte, a spot performer last year. Lowe, who wrestled for EFA two years ago, will have to move up to 167 and battle returnee Dana Stermer should he not make the weight at 155.

At 177, the Devils rely on Jim Bottcher, who transferred from Notre Dame. At ND Bottcher finished 15-7 his sophomore year, and took second in the STC tourney last year.

Two-time STC champ George Swan completes the list at heavyweight.

A number of underclassmen are battling for the lighter positions.

Bill Tolbert at 91 and Larry Albee at 98 are the only ones with a firm hold on a starting berth.

Freshmen Gary Baugher and Jay Horton are fighting it out at 105, while Dave Near and John Kratzer battle at 112.

Five candidates are in the running for 119, led by seniors Ron and Ralph Foster. Other competitors include freshmen Richie Barnes, Alva Hill and Jimmy Sandore.

Junior Bob Shope has moved up from the jayvees and appears to have the inside track on the 132 post.

**HORSEHEADS**

With nine lettermen back from last year's 12-3 club, the Horseheads Blue Raiders could reclaim the STC title which they held in 1973-74 and 1974-75. The Raiders are deep at every position, fielding their largest squad ever with 60 wrestlers.

The heavyweights will hold the key to Horseheads' chances, as coach Gene Palmer has 10 veterans fighting for positions from 145 pounds up. Though he expects to juggle his lineup during the season, he assures opponents his team "will be competitive in every weight class."

The grapplers to be juggled are led by Mark Ponzi, who will wrestle at 138 or 145. If Ponzi wrestles 145, former jayvees Dan Morgan or Lee Van Houghten will take 138. If Ponzi goes to 138, Greg Smith

will handle 145.

Dan Palmer at 155 and Bill Game at 177 or 167 make the Horseheads final four weights solid. The other candidates for 167 include junior Art Clark and John Pelchy, who assistant coach Jim Keenan called the best wrestler on his JV team of a year ago.

Three inexperienced wrestlers are battling for heavyweight, with Kevin Bailey holding the edge. Bailey, who weights 195, grappled in ninth grade three years ago. First-year teammates Kevin Alexander and Jeff Coon will appear at superheavyweight.

The Blue Raider lower weights are set with Tim Strawn at 91, Tom White at 98, Mark Franchi and Randy Ring at 105 or 112, John Princiotti or Bill Wrenn at 119, Dan Gugino at 126 and either Bruce Bauman or Scott Walker at 132. White,

Franchi and Princiotti earned varsity letters last year, while Gugino sat out the year with a hernia ailment.

**WAVERLY**

Finishing in either second or third place each year since joining the STC in 1971, Waverly returns its usual characteristic bunch of scrappy lightweights.

Heading the list are the tough Kelly brothers, Tim at 119 and Mike at 126, both three-year varsity veterans going back to their debuts at 91 and 98.

Head coach Jim McCloe has surrounded the Kellys with a list of matmen coming off fine jayvee seasons.

The only ones not falling into this mold are lettermen Tim Northrup at 155 and Wayne Schaffer at 132.

Mike Langdon moves up from 91 to take 98. Others coming off JV seasons are Bill McKuen at 112, John Hogan at

138, John Wells at 145, Mark Jilson at 167 and Andy Sindoni, a 185-pound heavyweight. Hogan, Wells and Jilson have two years of JV preparation while McKuen has three.

Filling out the team are first-year grappler Tom Reeves, a junior at 177, and two freshmen battling for 105, John Palumbo and Doug Courtright.

**SOUTHSIDE**

"Respectability" will be the goal of coach Dave Sherman as the Southside Green Hornets begin the third year of Sherman's rebuilding process. The Hornets have been down below .500 for the last two years, but Sherman has been slowly rebuilding with an excellent junior high program.

Finishing with a 3-6 league record a year ago, the Hornets should reach the .500 level this season with a young team

## Colleges court Ithaca's Iacovelli

By DAVE EDICK

IITHACA—Mark Iacovelli can't throw a football 80 yards and can't pump in 10-of-10 25-footers on the basketball court.

But that doesn't mean the major colleges aren't interested. On the contrary, the 126-pound Ithaca High senior may just be one of the most highly-regarded athletes in the country. Not for his prowess on the field or court, but for his skill on the wrestling mat.

It began early this year. Some of the major universities — including Oklahoma, Penn State and Missouri — made some of the initial contacts and the inquiries haven't stopped. Iacovelli's coach, Orlando Turco, says he was getting at least one call every night. The rate has slowed somewhat now, according to Turco, but the recruiting offers are close to 50.

"Every major wrestling school in the country has been in touch," Turco said. "And I mean all of them. Mark is the most outstanding all-around wrestler I've ever coached. His record is fantastic."

Looking at the numbers, it's not hard to see just why Iacovelli is so highly thought-of.

In addition to being a three-timeregional champion, he has been a three-time crown-winner in both Class AA schools and Section 4 and a two-time state champ. He has also topped the rest of the competition in his weight class in the National Junior Olympics and was a runnerup in the National Junior Federation Tournament. Heading into his senior campaign, he has an incredible 66-match winning streak going and carries a spectacular three-year record of 98-1-1. He was 30-0 two years ago and 36-0 last year.

With his 98 victories, Iacovelli is closing in on the all-time New York State record of 121 total wins, set by Jeff Thomas of Huntington High on Long Island last year. Thomas, incidentally, was also responsible for Iacovelli's sole loss, that coming in his freshman year.

"He'll break that record easily this year," said Turco. "His biggest problem will be getting to opponents. Last year, there was quite a bit of running away from him and stalling just so he couldn't get the pin. I have an idea opponents will be doing the same thing this year."

"But if he doesn't win by pins, he wins by big decisions. The biggest thing with Mark is his dedication to the sport. That, together with his flexibility and balance on the mat makes him the tremendous wrestler he is. He moves like a cat."

Turco is concerned about the pressures facing Iacovelli this year. Turco and Mark's father, Lawrence (himself a former accomplished wrestler), are fielding most of the college contacts to remove some of that pressure.

"His father and I are certainly not going to tell him what his actual choice of a school should be," says Turco. "We're just trying to separate the schools we'd think Mark will be interested in from the ones that he probably wouldn't. So right now, we're taking all the calls."

"Don't get me wrong. I'm not trying to run his life or anything. It just saves him a lot of problems if the college coaches and representatives come to see me first. We don't want a lot of unnecessary pressure put on him. He doesn't need that."

"Hey, that's part of my job. If I can make things easier for him, I'll do it. I just don't want to see him upset. I'm not trying to play God. I am trying to protect him. He's an amateur and right now he's trying to wrestle. He doesn't need the hassle."

Iacovelli says he has complete confidence in his father and coach handling the calls, preferring to concentrate on his wrestling. He has already visited the Missouri campus.

"I'll have to make a decision sometime, of course, but right now I really don't have any idea," he said. "The big schools, like Oklahoma and Pittsburgh, won't necessarily sway me,



Mark Iacovelli...a wanted man

though. Mainly, I want to go to a good school and be on a decent team. It doesn't have to be one of the best in the nation.

"The bigger schools, too, create an awful lot of intensity on their teams and I'm not really looking for that. I mean, there's some places where you have to involve yourself completely in wrestling and that's it. I want to compete and improve but not so that it takes away from the school end of it."

Iacovelli's interests are in astubism major and a national championship on the mat. Turco went one step further, saying Iacovelli is an excellent candidate for a future Olympic medal. Iacovelli's uncle, Orlando, was the coach of the Canadian team at the 1976 Montreal Olympics.

"As far as college goes, I think there's three things Mark is looking for—a super education, a high level of competition and an environment he'll feel comfortable in.

"The big influence will be what kind of education he can get, though. He's told me when he finishes school, he wants to have something — not just wrestling memories."

For his last year as a member of the Little Red mat team Iacovelli is starting in the 126-pound weight group, but plans to drop down to 119 later. He said he has been spending quite a bit of practice time bettering his ability to go both ways (taking an opponent from either the left or right side). His already-enormous success extends a tradition of wrestling prowess in the family that's produced 12 sectional champs. Two younger brothers, Jeff, a junior, and Larry, a freshman, are on the Ithaca wrestling team to extend that tradition.

Now Mark is looking forward to one more successful year with the Little Red while his coach and father handle the recruiters. And Turco will tell them, as he tells anyone; "I've coached several state champions before, seven in fact, along with 46 sectional champs, but Mark is probably the finest wrestler I've ever had. And certainly one of the finest I've ever seen."

And the calls keep coming