



The building of a National Champion

BY DAVE TRUDEAU

As the Brockport State Wrestling team battles to regain the Division III National Championship it surrendered to Trenton State in 1981 this weekend at Cortland chances are very good that the team is better prepared both physically and mentally to do the job.

News Feature

Under the guidance of Head Coach Don Murray the Golden Grapplers have been molded into disciplined and hard working athletes who are truly dedicated to their many times unglamorous sport of wrestling.

For the Eagles, who have finished first or second in every NCAA Championship since 1977 (with the exception of 1978), the practice day begins at about 4 p.m. Led by a group of upperclassmen the squad routinely goes through a sequence of running, stretching, calisthenics, and basic drills in preparation for Coach Murray's arrival.

At 4:30 p.m. on Murray's command the only sign of relaxation in this "padded room", the music coming from a portable stereo is snapped off and the wrestlers are paired up.

The ensuing matchups may send freshman against-freshman or even All American against All American.

As the matches begin the music returns but the relentless commentary of Coach Murray is easily heard over the din of "The Doors" or "Boston." The group of wrestlers rotate in and out almost nonstop as the full tilt one minute matches ramble on.

For the freshman or sophomore these rapid fire matches and their ensuing specialized drills serve not only as physical training to build stamina and quickness but they are equally vital as mental workouts.

For his upperclassman Coach Murray holds a certain deal of respect - they have been here before and the amount of hard work they put in at practice will be apparent in their eventual success or failure.

For the underclassmen things are not so easy, whether it be one freshman going to his first NCAA Tournament or another working for a starting spot on next years team they are almost always under the stern eye of Murray. Mistakes or letdowns are not

overlooked and fatigue is not an accepted excuse. But with encouragement from Murray or the squads veterans (who have been through it all themselves) the hard workers may times blossom into All-American caliber.

One of the most ironic things about a Brockport wrestling practice is when its ultimate goal is compared to goals of other sports.

During the season the Golden Grapplers

will practice two hours or more to be physically ready for a match that will last only eight minutes. Even in a tournament setting where a wrestler may have to go three or four matches in a single day it still looks like a big contrast to a ninety minute soccer game or a forty minute basketball contest.

As funny as it may seem these two sports, with their stop and go action, maybe picnic like for the wrestlers who regularly go 100% their entire match.

The Brockport team doesn't do all of its "road work" in the wrestling room, though. With the conclusion of regular practice the Grapplers spend time doing both windsprints and rope climbing (this is many times also a common practice following a concluded home wrestling match). When Coach Murray notes that an athlete must be driven past the point of fatigue to be really ready to go 100% he really means it.

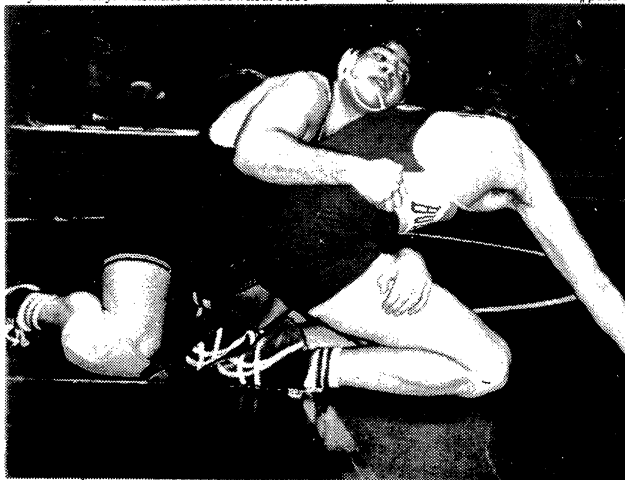
NCAA PREVIEW

If the Golden Eagles of Brockport are to return to their familiar top perch as national champions they will have to fight off the upset attempts of a number of top notch rivals.

Particular caution will be placed on John Carroll College of Ohio - a team Brockport has not faced in a dual meet setting but has seen in an earlier tournament.

Two other challengers, Oswego and Trenton State, have fallen to the Eagles in regular season dual matchup, but nevertheless will be tough in the unpredictable tournament setting.

Coach Murray also added Salisbury State (Md.) as a dark horse in the event. Only time will tell if the Golden Grapplers will cling to their number one ranking.



A third NCAA title will be Brockport's goal this weekend.