

# Cavallaro leads Lakesiders' resurgence



By MICHAEL LEWIS

*D&C Sportswriter*

When Joe Cavallaro became Charlotte wrestling coach two years ago, he had one thing in mind, to bring respectability to the Lakesiders' wrestling program.

As a first-year coach, Cavallaro acknowledged he faced an uphill battle. After all, Charlotte had not won a City-Catholic League match in more than eight years and was considered perennial doormats.

Charlotte has attained honors Cavallaro hadn't even dreamed of. The Lakesiders are not just a respectable unit, they are on the verge of becoming a league power (2-0 league record and 3-1 overall).

"It was a matter of starting from scratch. We've come a long way here," says Cavallaro, whose first Lakesider squad posted a 3-7 mark. Last year Charlotte improved to 5-7, including winning five of its final six matches. Cavallaro, 32, was also named league coach-of-the-year.

In the Section 5 Class A tournament, the Lakesiders finished seventh out of 42 teams (highest City-Catholic finisher) and had one sectional champion, the first city sectional titlist in seven years.

Charlotte has continued its success this season by winning its first two league matches. Although enjoying its current success, Cavallaro and Charlotte did not have an easy upward path.

"In the beginning I had to sell myself," he says. "I had to get my boys to

believe in me and that was a little difficult because we had only a half of a squad. The interest in the sport was waning. One of the problems was that I had to get the kids to like and enjoy wrestling.

"I don't teach a push and shove method. I tend to favor the finesse end of wrestling. If you approach it in an intellectual manner, the kids won't get bored. It's a big thing when a kid knows what it means to hit a move correctly. I still coach that way. We're a finesse team."

The Lakesiders don't have an awesome squad, but Cavallaro thinks four wrestlers have better than average chances for 1975 league titles. He says the four are sophomore Keith Van Vel-

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**Joe Cavallaro**

# CAVALLARO

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son at 98 pounds, senior Dave Marcello at 105 pounds (second in the city and fourth in the sectionals), sophomore Kurk Liester at 112 pounds and sophomore Tim Bour at 138 pounds. Bour is the younger brother of Chuck Bour, a 1974 sectional champion.

"Wrestling is a beautiful sport in that it encompasses all sizes and weights," says Cavallaro. "You don't have to be 6-foot-6 and 200 pounds to be the best. Even the smallest boys can wrestle."

"I dress all my wrestlers. Over the past few years I've averaged 40 boys a year and that's the key. I try to wrestle everybody. Now I get the numbers. The kids have seen us and know I can win. They believe in me and themselves. Wrestling has become a real beautiful thing at Charlotte."

At one time, it was rather difficult to obtain a crowd of any kind for Charlotte

wrestling. Now as many as 350 spectators attend meets.

"The student body has rallied around us," says Cavallaro, a former wrestler and All-City football player at Marshall. "People talk about the team and there's advance notice of meets. At one time the kids didn't even know we had a team."

Cavallaro considers respect an intrinsic part of wrestling. He says being voted coach-of-the-year meant a lot. "When your colleagues vote you it, it is," he says. "I have a lot of respect for them."

He also hopes to get some of that respect in return.

"Our main goal has been to give Charlotte wrestling some respect," he says. "I can't say that we're going to dominate every team we face or even that we'll beat them. I can say this: Any time a team gets on the mat with us better wrestle."