

10 answers with: Stef Sair

Sair tackles two sports and wrestles his way to the top

Marc Fox
Staff Writer

Sophomore Stef Sair, a physical education major from L.I., is a two-sport athlete in football and wrestling. Sair is on the 2004 Football Gazette Division III All-East Region second team and will represent Cortland at the NCAA Division III Wrestling Championships this Friday and Saturday in Northfield, Minn.

"At Huntington High School I was a state champion in wrestling and was first-team all-state in football. I chose to come to Cortland because I knew I'd be able to get playing time in both sports.

"I really like the teaching program at Cortland and I'd like to be a P.E. teacher. I'll probably end up coaching high school football at some point.

"My dad pushed me through-out high school. We'd get up and work out at 5:30 a.m. before school. It was miserable but he saw what I had and after I won states in wrestling, I saw what he was trying to do for me.

"My family is very spiritual and I go to church every week. I have to thank God. I win because

He allows me to.

"Being independent, you have to remember to keep pushing because coaches can only do so much. I appreciate my dad's efforts because I'm coming in with a strong work ethic and if you're going to get that edge, you have to do the extra stuff.

"Eventualented people have to work at creating that edge. That's especially true for wrestling. Football is fun, wrestling isn't; it's more serious. Wrestling is no fun until you win.

"With wrestling, it's all about styles. No one style is enough. You have to go with what works best, but the stuff I've learned comes from incorporating all the different styles I've picked up from other wrestlers along the way.

"I got to have to my Play Station II and Madden. I like Chinese food and I got 'The Game' by G-Unit in the CD player. You need friends to put things in perspective for you and we'll go play some racquetball and basketball to relax.

"I'm a hard worker and I know what I'm after. It's important to have a good head on your shoulders and take direction, but you have to know where you're going. I'm not going to take a back seat to anybody.

"When you're done, you have to know you did what you were supposed to do. You have to know you're going to win and be confident of that outcome. That's where confidence comes from."

Wrestling for national spotlight

Freshman Sganga and sophomore Sair offer up bright futures

SUNY Cortland sophomore Stef Sair and freshman Matt Sganga earned trips to the NCAA Division III Wrestling Championships with their performances at the Empire Collegiate Wrestling Conference national qualifiers at SUNY Brockport.

Sair finished first at 174

pounds to earn an automatic berth to nationals. Sganga placed second at 133 pounds and received one of nine "wild card" berths to nationals, as voted upon by the coaches after the meet.

Cortland finished third in the final team standings. Brockport won the Empire team title with 97 points, followed by Ithaca (87), Cortland (49.5), Oswego (44), Oneonta (42) and RIT (23.5).

Sair won both of his matches to keep his season record perfect

at 17-0. After receiving a bye in the first round, he defeated Gus Mancini of RIT in the semifinals, 8-5, and edged Ithaca's Matthias Keib, 3-2, in the championship match.

Sair finished second in the conference last year and missed a bid, but is now focused on accomplishing some of his goals.

"I want to try to go All-American this year and become a national champion before it's all over," Sair said. "You can't worry about these things, though, it's basically about going out there and wrestling."

Sganga opened with a 13-0 win over Lance Dolson of Ithaca before losing in the semifinals to Brockport's Tony D'Ambra, 7-2. He bounced back to defeat Julian Nicholas of RIT, 3-2, and Dolson, 6-5, then won the "true second-place match" with a 6-4 win over Oswego's Josh Levea. Sganga will bring a 19-12 record into nationals.

Sganga, whose brother, Mike, also a freshman wrestler, came from L.I. where Matt made sectionals in each of his four years at Longwood High School. Matt said that despite his high expectations, his level of success has surprised him.

"The combination of coaching, putting in the time to work hard and the support of my teammates has paid off," Sganga said. "I plan on becoming an All-American and if I don't win a championship this year, then I'll definitely win it the next."

Freshman Treavor LeBlanc finished third at 184 pounds with a 3-2 mark. He opened with an 8-4 win over Oneonta's Ryan Lynch before losing, 7-3, to Robert Stubbs of Ithaca. He defeated Chris Easton of RIT 5-1, and Jonathon Jagatnarian of Oswego, 5-3, in the consolation bracket, but was pinned in the true-second match by Dan Glover of Brockport.

Four Red Dragons finished fourth in their weight classes. Freshman Ryan Gadsby was 2-2 at 125 pounds, junior Jason Chase was 1-2 at 141 pounds, junior John Franchi was 2-2 at 157 pounds and senior Brent Rider, a previous two-time All-American, was 2-2 at 165 pounds, including a 3-2, two-overtime loss in the consolation final.

All-American hopefuls, Sganga and Sair, have known each other since high school where they competed in the same county, different weight classes. Sganga considers Sair one of the best.

"His work ethic is unmatched and everyone looks to him for leadership," Sganga said. "He's undefeated and he has a shot to win it all."

Sair says Sganga is talented as well, and he's looking forward to competing with this squad for the next couple years.

"We've a young team and the coaches have done a good job getting us ready. It's up to us now to continue to develop and execute," Sair said.

Stef Sair and Matt Sganga will be competing for Cortland at the NCAA Division III Wrestling Championships this Friday and Saturday in Northfield, Minn.

Information provided by SID



Sair prepares to lock up his next goal.

photo by Darl Zehr



photo by Marc Fox

A packed house witnesses Mark Wellman's courage.

Wellman speaks to masses

Wellman's message of inclusion says, "Be a doer, not a viewer"

Marc Fox
Staff Writer

The Corey Union Function Room was packed last Thursday to hear Mark Wellman deliver a keynote address in what was the highlight of SUNY Cortland's Disability in Sport Symposium.

The week-long events were themed on "A Dialogue on Diversity, Disability and Sport: Building a New Equity Paradigm Toward Full Participation and Equal Opportunity."

Wellman, a world-renowned author, filmmaker, motivational speaker and two-time Paralympian, was paralyzed in a mountain climbing accident.

His message on this night in front of nearly 300 students, faculty and guests was one of inclusion.

"It's about breaking down bar-

riers and pushing people into the outdoors," Wellman said. "There is a sport revolution going on out there and the disabled community wants to be a part of that."

Wellman said that climbing has always been a lifelong passion for him but that there are many activities available for a wheelchair user. They just need to find a different way to do them.

"Whether it be skiing, climbing, water sports; there comes a time when you have to be a doer instead of a viewer," Wellman said. "It just so happens that I climb mountains; not everyone has to climb Capitan, but you do have to find your own obstacles and conquer those."

The program was a collaborative effort of Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society, the SUNY Cortland Institute for Disability Studies and the Sport Management Program at Cortland.

For more information about Mark Wellman, visit his Web site at www.nolimitstahoe.com

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