

Niagara-Orleans League Wrestling Preview

Niagara-Orleans League wrestling action gets underway a week from tonight when Roy-Hart begins its quest for a fourth straight league title.

The league's only coaching change is at Medina where Mike Crandall returns to the Mustangs helm after an absence of five years.

Medina will host Newfane, and Roy-Hart will entertain Albion in the season openers.

Here's a capsule look at how the league's seven mat squads are shaping up.

Medina Mustangs Last Year: 2-4

Depth and inexperience will be the main problems facing Crandall in his return as the Mustangs roster numbers only 19 grapplers, 13 of which are sophomores.

"We're not very deep, but I'm pleased with the quality and the determination of the kids we have," said Crandall, who takes over the varsity coaching reins from Joe

Bujalski. An MHS grad, who was the school's first state wrestling championship meet participant, Crandall previously coached the Mustangs for five years from the 1976-77 through the 1980-81 seasons. Both his 1979-80 and 1980-81 teams captured the N-O title.

"I'm glad to be back," said Crandall. "We don't have large numbers but I think we'll be pretty competitive."

Sophomore Brian Southcott (112-119 lb.), who won the N-O 105 lb. title last season, heads the list of veteran MHS grapplers. Southcott posted a fine 24-5 overall record last season.

Senior Kevin Heideman (177-215), juniors Ron Washak (138-145) and Jeremy McCauley (138-145) along with sophomores Chris Wigley (98) and Henry Banks (167-177) were also all regulars last season. Heideman had an 8-3 record before being sidelined by an injury while Washak posted a 10-8 record in regular

season competition.

Rounding out the squad are senior Scott Blount (167), junior Shannon McPherson (215) and freshman Richard Labarba (132) along with sophomores Charlie Wilson (132), Acide Gally (138), Don Lutz (155), Tom Sanders (145), John Pitts (126), Ed Kiesenger (145), Jason Hilobuk (126), Todd Hansler (250), Craig Gross (119-126) and Tom Dudek (132).

Roy-Hart Rams Last Year: 6-0

Having lost only three seniors to graduation the veteran laden Roy-Hart wrestlers are taking aim at a fourth straight N-O league championship.

Junior Lou Rosselli (112), who last year became the first Roy-Hart and N-O League wrestler to win a state championship, and Nelson Colley (119), also a junior who placed fourth in the state meet, head the Rams' large contingent of veteran grapplers.

The Rams, who are currently riding an unbeaten streak of 19-0-1 in league competition over the past three and a half seasons, also return freshman Todd Fragale (98), juniors Dave Lyndaker (126), Mark Fragale (138) and Brian Hale (145) along with seniors C.G. Hale (155) and Ken Copella (167).

Freshman Todd Sherwood (105), juniors Rob Jaquin (91) and Bill Brunning (215) along with senior Todd Dempsey (177) look to round out the starting lineup while freshman Jim Willie Cunningham and Kevin Lawson also show promise.

"We look pretty solid going down the lineup," said R-H Coach Joe Massaro. "The kids are hungry again and they're looking good. We're looking forward to a real exciting season but we know it will be a tough year," he added noting that Starpoint and Akron figure to be the Rams top challengers for the crown.

Now a two-time defending N-O and Section VI champion, Rosselli sports a career record of 85-7 after posting a perfect 36-0 mark last season.

Enroute to the league and sectional titles, Colley notched a 32-8 record last season to raise his career mark to 51-15.

Copella, the Rams other returning N-O champ, who is currently sidelined for a couple of more weeks due to a football injury, has an outstanding career record of 103-37-1. A three-time defending N-O champion, he was 27-4 last season.

Baehr, who finished second at the All-League meet was 21-11-1. Lyndaker also took a second place at the All-League meet, while Todd Fragale had a good 17-10 season.

Albion Purple Eagles

Last Season: 5-1

A loss to Roy-Hart was the only



Back directing the fortunes of the Medina High varsity wrestling team after an absence of five years is Mustangs Coach Mike Crandall, shown here with three of his charges.

From left are Jeremy McCauley, Brian Southcott and Craig Gross.

(J-R Photos by Mike Wertman)

blemish last year on the league record of the Purple Eagles who face a bit of a rebuilding job this season.

"We've got a hard working group but few proven varsity wrestlers," said Albion Coach Keith Piccirilli, who nonetheless looks for his Purple Eagles to "be a force in the league."

Sophomore Will Moss (138), who took a third at the All-League meet, junior Chuck Nesbitt (215) and senior Dave Pahuta (132) who placed fourth at the All-League, head the Purple Eagles' list of returning regulars. Also back are seniors Pat Boland (155) and Mike Salvatore (119) along with junior Mark Farone (112) and sophomore Paul Bakeman (112).

Looking to break into the lineup are freshman Aaron Conn (105), sophomores Guy VanDeGenachte (126), Bill Mitchell (145), Marc Coville (145) along with juniors Earl McCray (167), Mike Harrison (167), Toja Riley (250) and senior Pat Christopher (177).

Starpoint Spartans

Last Year: 3-2-1

Four returning league champions key the fortunes of the Starpoint grapplers this season as the Spartans look to challenge Roy-Hart for league honors.

That senior quartet of returning league champions includes Joe Finley (138), Kevin Gfroerer (145), Frank Silvernail (215) and Mark Lubs (215).

Senior Dave Marshall (119) and sophomore Bob Baerfield (112-119) also return as the Spartans are also counting on sophomore Pat Nye (155) for points.

"We've got four returning league champs but how well we do will all depend on how fast the rookies learn," said Coach Jim Gately who looks for R-H again to be the team to beat.

Akron Tigers

Last Year: 3-2-1

Good numbers (32 wrestlers) but not much experience is the situation at Akron.

Senior Seth Darling, the defending N-O 155 lb. champ heads the Tigers' group of veteran grapplers. Also back are senior Brian Cummings (138-145) and junior Kevin Regan (105-112), who both placed second at the All-League meet. The return of senior Phil Attea (126-132), who was a league champ two years ago, also gives the squad a boost.

"We've really got a mixture this season," said Coach Jerry Drayer. "We've got those few returnees but the rest of the kids are green as grass, so I really don't know how we'll do."

Drayer also looks for Roy-Hart and Starpoint to be the top contenders for the league title.

Newfane Panthers

Last Year: 0-6

A small sized roster is also a problem at Newfane where Coach Doug Ames' Panthers are looking to rebound from a winless N-O campaign.

Seniors Kirk Kingsbury (167), Darren Ethridge (105), James Knott (132) and Steve Schroeder (177) along with juniors Reed Murphy (132) and Dan Winchell (126) and eighth grader Matt Dawson (91) provide an experienced nucleus for the Panthers.

Junior Mark Volt (132), senior Shawn O'Connor (250) and senior Sean BerHague (145), a transfer student from North Tonawanda, also look to break into the lineup.

Wilson Lakemen

Last Year: 1-5

Eight returning lettermen give Coach Roger Hutchison's Lakemen good promise of improving on last season's 1-5 record.

Those returnees include seniors Dave Branch (145), Brian Grocki (126), Jim Letsch along with juniors Laurie Budde (132), Carl Wollaber (112), Robert Zauner (119) and sophomore Bill Faery (167). Wollaber placed third in the league last season at 105 lbs.



Anchoring the defending champion Roy-Hart wrestling squad are these four grapplers who all topped the 20 victory mark last season. Kneeling is Ken Copella while standing from left are Mark Baehr, Nelson Colley and Lou Rosselli.



Veteran members of the Albion High wrestling team are shown here at a recent practice. In front are Willie Moss, left, and Mark Farone.

Kneeling are Dave Pahuta, left, and Paul Bakeman. Standing from left are Pat Boland, Chuck Nesbitt and Mike Salvatore.

Is it the flu or your flue?

