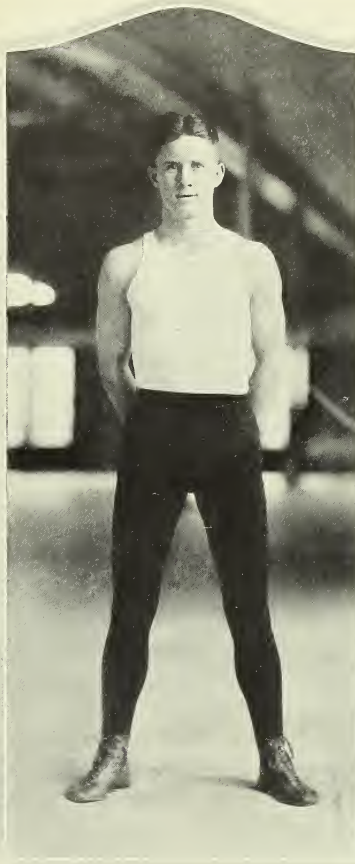


# MINOR SPORTS



KENNEY  
*Captain of Conference Championship  
Wrestling Team*

## Varsity Wrestling

IT takes a champion to make a champion, and class will always tell.

Consequently, Illinois' wrestling team, conquering mighty handicaps of inexperience and injury, surprised the entire conference and somersaulted to a championship during the past season, and the man who showed the way after many setbacks proved his right to the title of the world's greatest intercollegiate wrestling coach—Paul Prehn.

The Illini won four of their five dual meets, beating Ohio State's team of six veterans in the championship match when not conceded a chance, winning their fifth championship for Prehn during his seven years here, while rolling up a total of 30 victories in 34 dual meets. It was his third undisputed title, the Illini having had sole claim to the flag in 1920 and 1922 and tying for the honor in 1924 and 1925 with Indiana. Inability to meet the Hoosiers was the only real disappointment of the season. Prehn's record is unparalleled in college wrestling, especially considering the fast competition of the Big Ten.

Illinois had ended the 1925 season with seven "I" men available for 1926, but only two of these men, ex-Captain Kenney and Captain Geis were at all available this past year.

Consequently, after harboring the prospect of a veteran team, Prehn was forced to start from



PAUL PREHN  
Coach

the ground, building a mid-season team around one "I" man, "Hek" Kenney, who had been re-elected captain when Geis left school.

The new-built Illini machine ground its way to an 18 to 2 victory over Minnesota in its first dual meet, Kenney and Geis winning by falls. Shively, heavyweight; Thacker, bantamweight; Humphrey, light heavyweight; and Law, featherweight, won their bouts by decisions, Sams losing the only match in the welterweight class. The con-

### CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS



	Sams	Straub	Shively	Webster	Humphreys	
Prehn (Coach)	Soga	Soga	Shultz	Ritz	Sewell	Phillips (Manager)
Stangle	Law	Kenney (Captain)	Gunlock	Bussey	Thacker	Tossetti



*Captain Kenney—Prehn's best bet*

ference, expecting to see Illinois dazed by losses and injuries, sat up and took notice.

Prehn next took his men on Illinois' longest trip in history, a jaunt to meet West Virginia's powerful team. The Illini suffered their first dual meet loss in three years by a 19 to 6 score. Kenney and Geis took decisions, which count three points in the East, for Illinois' only scores. Inexperience lost the meet, for Ritz pinned himself by carelessly rolling over on his back and lying there while maintaining a hold on his opponent and Thacker grew careless and leaned, while leading in time advantage, too far forward while completing a figure four scissors.

The thrills of an entire season were crowded into the last match in the Iowa meet, and nothing short of one of "Red" Grange's famous runs ever produced as much excitement as swayed the large crowd when Illinois won the meet from the Hawk-eyes' powerful team in the last 11 seconds. Rejuvenating from their loss to West Virginia, Prehn's men came through to a 9 to 8 victory, spoiling Iowa's record with its only blot of the season for the fifth time in many years.

Ralph Webster, sophomore heavyweight, was the hero of the meet. Soga, wrestling his first meet in the featherweight class, and Thacker in the bantamweight division had taken Illinois' four points by decisions, Captain Kenney had been beat for the first time in three years, and Iowa had rolled up an 8 to 4 advantage when the last bout was called. Prehn won the meet when he selected Webster instead of Shively as the man most likely to go out and get a fall, for five points were needed for a victory.

Webster pursued Hobart for 11 minutes, his opponent playing a safe game while the crowd begged for a fall. Securing a farther bar-arm and half-nelson as the seconds waned, Webster forced his man to the mat with a grip like grim death which left his forearms paralyzed and himself almost unconscious for five minutes after the match, but the Hawkeye's shoulders touched the mat with 11 seconds to go. Then bedlam broke out.

Three days later Illinois took two falls and two decisions from Chicago for a 14 to 6 victory, earning the right to meet Ohio State for the conference title. Stangle and Gunlock, wrestling their first bouts of the year, won by falls, while Shively and Law won on time advantage.

#### FIRST LOSS IN THREE YEARS

The Illini lost their first conference dual meet in three years to Wisconsin, 13 to 11, in a miserably wrestled meet. Stangle took his second fall of the week and Kenney won a decision, Soga and Ritz earning draws in their bouts.

With the conference title hanging in the balance, and the "dope" all against them, the Illini went to Columbus for the year's final meet between the two division champions. Thacker won the first bout with a decision, Soga sprang the surprise of the meet by beating ex-Captain Snyder, hitherto undefeated, and Kenney then took a decision. Gunlock lost by bare time advantage of 1:03, but Ritz gave Captain Watkins his first defeat by winning a decision, piling up an 8 to 2 lead. Humphrey and Shively, instructed by Coach Prehn to take no chances, took none whatsoever, and the meet was won 8 to 6. Each man wrestled his best bout of the year.

The Illini failed to win a conference individual championship the following week, Thacker reaching the finals but lost to Weir of Iowa. Shively lost his first bout by failing to call a coin's toss after he had secured 24½ seconds advantage, 5½ seconds too few, over Fisher of Indiana in their overtime bout. Ritz lost his first bout in the overtime period, while Kenney reached the semi-finals.

Bernie Shively was elected to lead the 1927 team. Humphrey, Ritz, Gunlock, Soga, Thacker, and Webster of last season's "I" men will be available for next year while the only losses are Bussey, Law, Stangle, Tossetti and Captain Kenney—the greatest loss of all. It looks like another good year in 1927 for Prehn and Illinois.