

Pascarella predicts-

Grapplers likely to finish with winning season

by PETER DRUMSTA

Record Staff Writer

A winning season from the people who brought you 51-0 losses from Brockport and UB?

Wrestling Coach Frank Pascarella thinks it can be done, predicts that it will happen, and if it does, it will be the Bengals' most successful wrestling season of this decade.

The grappling Bengals are now 2-6, including those seemingly disastrous losses to Brockport and the University of Buffalo in December. But Coach Pascarella sees through the win-loss record towards a strong second half of the season. Nothing spectacular, just the foundation of a strong, improved team, with good prospects for next year.

Nothing spectacular, unless you compare this year's performance to Bengal wrestling records of past years. In 1970, two seasons ago, the Bengals were 8-2 and whatever, under Coach Bert Ernst. Last year, Pascarella coached two wins in his first season, to a 2-7-1 record.

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Four-way meet over Alliance College, Behrend Center, and Allegheny, the Bengals dropped their first meet to SUNYAC Rochester, Brockport State, 51-0. In a triangular meet at Goshop, the Bengals defeated Windsor, 37-18, and lost to Goshop, 26-17. In each meet, the Bengals won by a two weight classes, bringing away twelve points.

Still surrendering forfeit points, the Bengals lost to Goshop and Cazenovia in a triangular at Binghamton, and split in a triangular at Western Ontario, beating Toronto and losing to Western. With those losses, and a clobsitering from U.S. it did not appear to anyone that the wrestling team was going anywhere. . . . Except to Coach Pascarella, that is.

Brushing away the team's occasional doubts about their own abilities, Pascarella looks ahead to five wins, the first against St. John Fisher in Rochester, Saturday. He also figures his wrestlers can defeat Canisius, Geneseo, Waterloo, and Genesee - which would give the

Bengals an astounding 7-7 record going into the SUNYAC championships.

The difference this year has been better, experienced personnel and an extra measure of dedication by the team. Pascarella has filled the two weight class vacancies in the heavyweight and 118 pound classes, and is building towards next year in establishing winning ways for wrestling. Mark Fitzgerald, a transfer from Erie Community College, has been with the squad just over a week and will take over the heavyweight class. Fegzi, who was third last year in the junior college regionals, is quick, stands 6'4" and weighs 235. Not the kind of guy you would want to meet in a dark alley.

Pat McMahon, a freshman, is moving down to the 126 pound class from 134 and is rapidly improving. After a slow start, he has defeated his last four opponents, and has a 5-4 record for the season.

Matt Cullen leads the team in "every statistical category," says Pascarella. A junior, Cullen, "hates to lose" and is one of the team's leaders. With a 6-3 record, Cullen has the most wins, points, takeowns and reversals on the squad.

Don Hoak, in the 190 pound class has the team's quickest win of the year - a 35-second victory over Don Simmons of Oneonta.

Pascarella is also expecting even stronger performances from Jim Dockwiler (142), Tim Dummerger (153), Walt Jaronaki (167) and Rick Little (142). Little is a good freshman prospect from Williamsville North.

"What we really need now," Pascarella says, "is the desire, pride, and self-respect to be a winning team." With a talented, determined group, and an equally determined coach, Bengal wrestling might just shake the loser's blues.



RIDING HARD: The 134 lb. class matman for the Bengals is Jim Dockwiler, who demonstrates the same driving determination that the whole team possesses. It's no wonder that Coach Pascarella is confident that his team will pull the season out of the fire. The grapplers' next home meet will be Saturday, January 29, against Canisius at 2:00 p.m. in the New Gym. They could use your support.

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