

Sports Profile

Mike Wade

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Oswego wrestler's progress leads to nationals

by Gary Denmark

When Mike Wade was entering Union Springs High School, he was faced with a decision between joining the basketball team or the wrestling team. He was brought up in an environment which emphasized basketball, yet he still decided to go the other way and joined the wrestling team.

It was a decision that Union Springs was glad he made.

He was a member of the varsity team from 8th grade up until his senior year. Wade enjoyed his finest year during his senior season where he collected an amazing 34 wins in 36 matches including a third place finish in the state qualifying sectional tournament.

He was recruited by several colleges, but decided on Oswego.

This year, as a sophomore, the 150-pound Wade compiled a 19-9-1 record and a second place finish in the SUNYAC tournament, which earned him a birth to the Division III Nationals.

This mathematics major has seen several differences between his high school days and wrestling at the collegiate level.

Wade said, "All the serious high school wrestlers continue their careers in college. The competition in college is a lot tougher and everything is more intense."

Wade has adjusted just fine to the tougher opposition.

Wade also has had to make a transition between his freshman and sophomore seasons. After an injury free rookie season, he has had to endure several nagging injuries, including a pulled tendon in his big toe as well as a lingering neck injury.

These injuries haven't stopped him, as he hasn't missed a single match or tournament all season.

Of these matches, there have been several fine performances worth noting.

In the Lakers' first match of the season, Wade went up against Joe Guardino, of the defending SUNYAC champion



Mike Wade

Great Laker grappler heading to nationals (photo by Rachel A. Crawford)

Cortland State and came up with an impressive 3-2 victory leading Oswego to a 26-15 victory.

In the most important match of Wade's season, he was faced against Nick Zupin of National Champion St. Lawrence, by whom he had been defeated earlier in the season during the New York State Tournament by a 2-1 score. To make matters worse, this was the same St. Lawrence team that the Lakers had tied last year. Wade feels this tie was partially his fault. Late in the match, with the score tied, he momentarily blacked out and his opponent took advantage for the victory.

But things were to go Mike Wade's way on this day. He defeated Zupin 5-4 in a dramatic match, sparking the Lakers to the upset victory.

It was a match Wade "felt good to win. I beat him and

he beat me throughout the season, but I won our last encounter and that put me up on top."

One of Wade's fiercest rivals this year has been University of Buffalo's Marty Wycoff.

In their three matches each has won one and the third match was a 4-4 tie. Once again, Wade was the victor in their final encounter of the season.

Wade does admit though, that he could have won the previous two meetings, as he was "not motivated and just wrestled poorly."

Wade did have all the motivation he needed during the SUNYAC tournament, however. After an intense three weeks of training, Wade came up with a second place finish and the trip to the Nationals.

In a match "that could have gone either way," Wade battled two time All-American Nick Zurickny, but came up on the short end of a 5-4 score.

His second place finish was an improvement from last year's fourth place finish and he looks to be the favorite for next season's tournament as Zurickny is in his final year at Cortland.

Wade attributes much of his success to his practicing partners, Jim O'Neill and freshman Steve Amzot, both of whom will be joining Mike in Canton, Ohio for the Nationals.

Wade says he will stay around 160 pounds during most of the week and will look to be within four to five pounds of the 150 he will have to be for the tournament the day before weigh-ins.

To further stay in shape, Wade works with weights during the off-season as well as during the first weeks of pre-season training.

When he's not out on the mats pinning down opponents, Wade enjoys golf as well as most any other sports.

"My ultimate goal is to become an All-American" and he "has three years to accomplish this."

Expect him to do this, as Wade has come through on all his other challenges.