

the sports

Raider Grapplers End '99 Unbeaten; Take Second at Geneseo Invitational

Lowville Academy wrestlers will head into the new millennium with continued high aspirations for success. And why not? The Red Raider matmen finished unbeaten in 1999, having added four more dual meet victories to last season's 22-0-1 win skein, and are coming off a tremendous team showing at the recent Genesee Valley Invitational at Geneseo High School last week.

The local grapplers hiked out to Geneseo last Tuesday and Wednesday for the 43-school, two-day, Genesee Valley event and enjoyed an outstanding team effort in finishing runner-up to powerful Fulton. The locals amassed 211.5 points but were outdistanced by their Section III counterparts, who totaled 234 points. For pure bragging rights, Lowville crowned five individual champions to state-ranked Fulton's single champion. The Raiders sent a clear message that their Oswego County namesakes may not want to overlook the local matmen come February.

Copping gold for the locals were Jason Engelhart, voted the event's Most Outstanding Wrestler, along with Josh and Jacob Herzig, Jason Bellinger, and Lucas Munger. Eighth-grader Taylor Malone also made it to the finals but fell to a former New York State champion.

"To get five individual golds in a tournament of this size—with seven or eight state-ranked teams in the field plus a host of State tourney place-winners—was more than I could have hoped for," said Red Raider coach Neal Aubel. "Each of our winners, other than Jason Bellinger and Jake Herzig, were pushed to the limit to get their gold. We left town at 5 a.m. on Tuesday,

wrestled nearly two solid days, and got back to Lowville at 2:30 a.m. Thursday morning. The kids were awesome!"

Engelhart, earning his third tourney title of the season and second MOW award (He won it at Waterloo, too), improved his current record to 17-0. The talented senior tri-captain, who now owns a 134-36 career mark, won his eighth career tourney title with a solid, 7-1 decision over heralded Section V 125-pounder Aaron Hillyard of Sodus. Hillyard was a two-time defending champ.

The Herzig brothers were equally impressive. Josh, a sophomore, improved to 15-1 with his second title of the season, this one by virtue of an 8-2 domination of Rochester McQuaid's Charlie Wu in the finals. He had rallied from a 5-0 deficit to win by pin in a quarterfinal match, then survived a 14-10 shootout with Caledonia-Mumford's Tony D'Ambra in the semis. Brother Jacob, whose only loss of the current season was to a fourth-place state place-winner at the Tri-Valley League Tourney two weeks ago, improved his record to 16-1 this season by pinning Fulton's Joe Vant in 1:26 of their 145-pound final. It was Jake's 11th career tournament title and improved his career won-loss mark to 143-44. His 143 career wins ties the Red Raider school record held by former mat great Mike Aubel ('88).

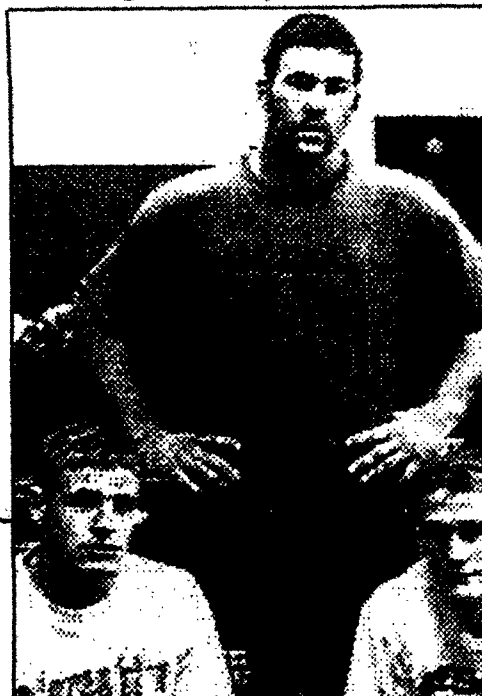
Fellow tri-captain Jason Bellinger also joined select company in Red Raider mat history when he improved his career mark to 103-33 with a five-pin performance en route to the 189-pound championship. He becomes only the 13th Raider matman

to achieve membership in the select Century Club (100 career wins). 12 of his 16 wins this season have come via pins, closing him to within three of another Mike Aubel record (63 career pins).

Heavyweight Lucas Munger was equally impressive, outpointing Webster's Jason Ellis 9-5 in the 215-pound title bout. Ellis, an all-state football player on New York's top gridiron team this past fall, appeared to have victory in hand, but Munger emerged victorious with a late rally. It was the local matman's second tourney title of the season and left him with a 15-3 mark on the year.

Taylor Malone fell to Wayland-Cohocton's Tim Page via a fall in the championship finals, but his best effort had occurred a round earlier when he bumped off top-seeded Chris Ely of Fulton 6-5 to reach the title shot. The rugged eighth-grader, now 13-4, had surprised the Fulton lightweight with a last-second reversal in the Section III Duals last February and followed the same script this time.

Other place-winners for Lowville were Matt McHugh and Roger Farney.



LEADING BY EXAMPLE - Lowville wrestling captains (from l to r) Jake Herzig, Jason Bellinger, and Jason Engelhart all won individual titles, helping the Raiders finish second at the Genesee Valley Invitational. Mr. Engelhart was named Most Outstanding Wrestler, while Mr. Bellinger joined the 'Century Club' over the weekend. (Virkler)

The SL Falcon Sports Report

with Tressa Campbell



Boys' Cagers Down Poland

Welcome to 2000 everyone!

I hope everyone had a safe and Happy New Year! The Falcons' winter sports season is still going strong. Hopefully this year will be just as predictive and successful as last year (Clue #1: The MA's on their final Falcon season.)

The varsity girls' basketball team competed in the Adirondack Christmas Tournament last week, where they lost to Camden then beat Little Falls in the consolation round to clinch 3rd place. Erin Mazur (who was named to the tournament's All-Star team) finished with 14 points and 11 rebounds in the Camden loss. Brooke Denslow added 5 points, while Jill Goings put in 6 of her own. In the consolation game, Tressa Campbell led with 17 points and 9 rebounds. Erin Mazur had 8 points and 9 rebounds as well. The final scores ended up 63-34 and 40-35 respectively. The team then travelled to Carthage on the 4th, where they came away with a 56-40 loss. UGH! Sarah Thisse led with 17 points and 12 rebounds, while Erin grabbed 12 of her own. The team plays South Jeff on Thursday the 6th. Good luck!

(Clue #2: The MA was spotted on a field this past fall.)

The varsity boys' basketball team beat visiting Poland over the break, 78-56. In the win, Scot Luther led with 22 points while Jacob Widrick added 19 of his own. Bart Paczkowski and Brandon Pitts played well, finishing with double figures each. Nice job, guys! The team then fell to Carthage on the 4th, 80-67. The Falcons take on South Jeff this Friday. Good luck!

(Clue #3: The MA has been a varsity athlete MANY years.)

The wrestling team placed 5th (out of 24 teams) at the Kingston Tournament. Nick Munn now holds the new school record for career wins, recording his 143rd victory (WOOHOOH!). Nick and Ben Morczek each were champions in their respective weight classes. Ben recorded a final round pin in :47 seconds. Nice job! Tony Pickel suffered his first loss of the season, 10-9. Randy Ossont won 5 straight matches before losing in the finals. The Falcons scored 136 1/2 points and are ranked 3rd in the State for small schools. Excellent job, guys!

The varsity volleyball team plays in South Jeff on Friday the 7th (not too much else happening there). The team had the vacation off, and, due to the "new gym" situation, had to bump their Indian River game to a further date. Good luck!

Oh! that reminds me the "new" gym should be up and ready for Monday the 10th. It looks pretty cool.

Well, that just about wraps things up from here. Have a great week and good luck!

Hey there! Kenzie-Kenzie, Mandy, Ashley) and welcome to the "North Country" Kath! - Thanks Erin.

(Final clue: If the Mystery Athlete were a type of food, they would probably be a pretzel.)