

# Martin leads grapplers past Syracuse, 34-12

By CHRISTINE BORN  
Collegian Sports Writer

Penn State fans have been seeing orange lately, but last night the Orangemen of Syracuse saw blue when the Lions beat them 34-12 in Rec Hall.

Freshman Jim Martin sparked the Lions to an early lead in the 118-pound match when he defeated Tony Cotroneo, ranked sixth by Amateur Wrestling News, 6-5. Cotroneo charged to a 4-0 advantage in the first period before Martin took the lead for good in the final period at 5-4.

Tri-captain Eric Brugel (167) said Martin's match was a key win for Penn State.

"Obviously we had to win that one, but we would have won regardless of whether he won or not," he said. "But Martin is going to be one of the top guys in the country very soon and for a long time to come."

Martin was also awarded the Ridge Riley Award as Penn State's outstanding wrestler for the match. He said he was doing the best he could to beat Cotroneo, one of the top wrestlers in the country at 118.

"I wanted to give it everything I could," he said. "I figured if I gave him a good match, then it would build my confidence."

The Lions gave themselves a boost of confidence all around tonight. After Martin took the first bout, Penn State never looked back, taking the next three matches, including a pin by Tim Flynn at 126.

Tri-captain Greg Elinsky (158) said wins by Martin and Flynn got the Lions' momentum going against 10th-ranked Syracuse.

"They have a lot of good talent and good coaches," he said of the Orangemen. "They have five freshmen in the lineup and they have a good team, but once we got the momentum going early it made it hard for them to come back."

At 134, Joe Hadge, a transfer from LSU, defeated Mike Catania 10-4. Penn State got its second pin of the night when Glenn Koser pinned Steve O'Neil at 5:19 to give Penn State 18-0.

Head Coach Rich Lorenzo was pleased with Hadge's and Koser's performances.

"Hadge beat a good man," he said. "That was a big win for us. Koser did a nice job too. He has been working real hard and to get a win was very important."

"All and all, I was pleased with our performance. I think we were wrestling pretty well and we wrestled sharper than we did against Oklahoma State (last weekend), because we looked sharper and more relaxed."

The Lions were stalled in the 150-pound bout when Tri-captain Chris Bevilacqua battled to a tie with sixth-ranked Marty Lynch at 5-5.

Bevilacqua fought a scrappy match against Lynch and had the lead at 5-3 in the second period before pulling a groin muscle.

"That was a real close match. Lynch beat Bevi at the Midlands last year and we knew we would have a real scrap," Lorenzo said. "He took Bevi for four points and took a lot out of him. Then he pulled his groin muscle and got a little sore. I think he was thinking more about that than that he was still out there competing against another person."

"I have to give Lynch credit. He was down by four points and he came back and tied the match up and he put the pressure on Bevi."

"All and all, I think it was an excellent match tonight, even though it ended up a draw."

Elinsky got the Lions' momentum back in the next bout when he pinned John Gatreau at 2:19 to give Penn State a decisive 26-2 lead.

"I hip tossed him," Elinsky said. "He's a freshman and he was being conservative plus he was really tight."

At 167, Brugel defeated Jason Morris 10-5. Lorenzo said Elinsky and Brugel both wrestled excellent matches, despite Morris's different wrestling style.

"Morris is a little unorthodox to wrestle because he's real good in judo and he's hard to pick up off the ground. But Brugel wrestled a very smart match against him."

Penn State had no trouble at the 177-pound class as Dan Mayo defeated Mike Narewski 20-7.

But the Lions ran into trouble in the 190-pound and heavyweight classes where the Orangemen put the number one and number two wrestlers in the country up against Penn State. The Lions' preseason starter at 190, Andy Voit, decided to redshirt and heavyweights John Place and Jeff Ellis are injured, so Lorenzo was forced to put in two relatively inexperienced wrestlers in Birch Hall and Greg Haladay.

Despite a severe disadvantage, Lorenzo was pleased with Hall's and Haladay's performance, especially since Birch has been out for almost two years with a broken vertebra.

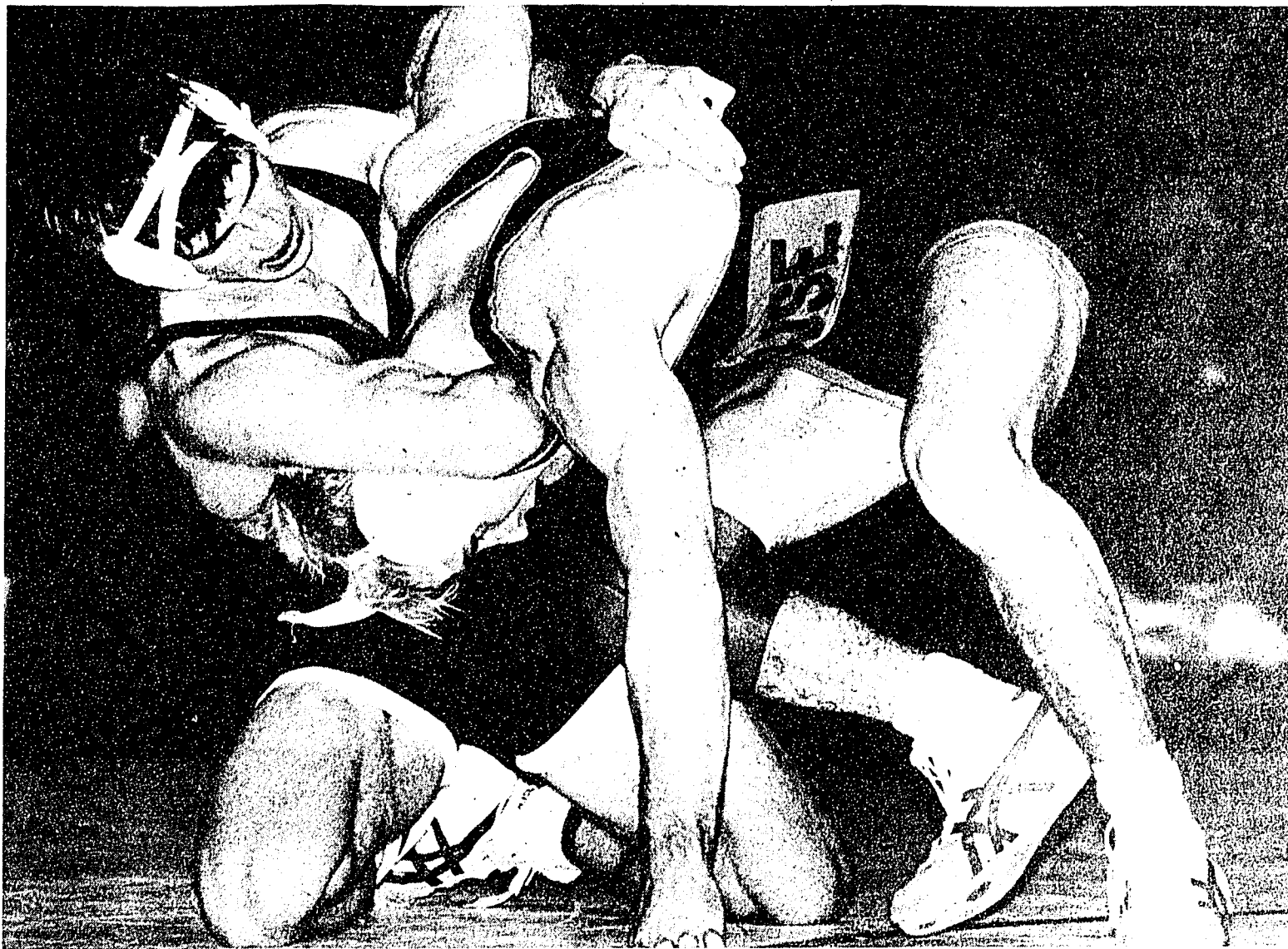
"He went out and gave a good account of himself," Lorenzo said, "even though he got 15 pointed. It wasn't like he was backpeddled or stalling."

"Haladay showed he isn't going to be the kind to go out and get pushed around and beat up. He's young and kind of immature, but he's physically strong and he has a fighter's attitude and that's important."

Brugel said it was important for Penn State's confidence to beat the No. 10 Orangemen.

"We pretty much controlled them by the score," he said. "We scored big in a lot of places where we needed to and our concentration was very good."

The Lions need to keep that concentration going throughout the weekend when they compete in a field of 21 teams at the Penn State Invitational. Right now, Brugel and Lorenzo think Penn State will be the team to beat in the tournament.



Collegian Photo / Ara Malkhasian

Penn State's Glenn Koser (left) struggles to hold Syracuse's Steve O'Neil in the 142-pound bout. Koser's pin helped spur the Lions to a 34-12 win.

## Grapplers take aim at NCAA crown

By CHRIS LINDSLEY  
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From day one, Penn State Wrestling Coach Rich Lorenzo has talked about national championships. But unlike his early years, the seven-year Lion mentor now has a squad capable of leading him to the promised land.

With seventh-, third- and seventh-place finishes in the National Collegiate Athletic Association finals in the last three seasons, Penn State has been on the brink of breaking through.

This season, however, after defeating No. 4 Oklahoma State 23-19 on Nov. 29 and No. 10 Syracuse 34-12 last night in Rec Hall, the No. 3 Lions should give eight-time defending NCAA champion Iowa a serious run for its money.

With All-Americans Chris Bevilacqua (150), Greg Elinsky (158) and Eric Brugel (167) leading the way, Lorenzo said Penn State has the leadership and experience it needs to be a national contender.

"Last year we had six or seven new kids in the lineup," Lorenzo said, "so you don't have that air of confidence and that guy walking around telling them to relax, or walking around a little arrogant, which you do need. But I think when you have three All-Americans in your lineup, it really is a good example for the younger kids."

And one of those younger kids who has made an immediate impact is freshman 118-pounder Jim Martin.

Martin, 11-0 on the season, defeated Syracuse's Tony Cotroneo, No. 6 at 118 by the Amateur Wrestling News, 6-5 to get the Lions off to a quick 3-0 lead.

In addition to Martin, 134-pounder Joe Hadge, a transfer from Louisiana State University, has come through in the early going, and stands at 8-2 after his 10-4 win over Syracuse's Mike Catina.

Sandwiched in between is junior 126-pounder Tim Flynn, 30-7-1 a year ago. Flynn said the combination of talented freshmen and quality experience has been the difference.

"We have a lot more talent this year," Flynn said, "and also more belief in ourselves. Everyone knows we have the ability, now we just have to go out and do it."

And to be national champions, the Lions will have to do it against the likes of Iowa, Oklahoma, and Iowa State. But once again, it's the Hawkeyes who are the team to beat, and Elinsky said this season Penn State actually feels it could beat Olympian Dan Gable's squad.

"I think last year you could have gotten a comment like, 'Yea, we're going to beat Iowa,'" Elinsky said, "but wrestling is the type of sport where you've really got to believe what you're doing and what you're saying."

"And I think this year we really believe inside that we can, and you can do anything once you believe you can, so we've got the first step, I think. We're on our way."

The first step this season was a gigantic one for

the Lions, as they defeated Oklahoma State for the first time in three attempts.

Lorenzo said the way his squad went about it showed him just what kind of team he has.

"I think a lot of them said, 'Hey, we haven't beat Oklahoma State as long as I've been on the team, and we want to beat them,'" Lorenzo said. "And I think they feel the same way about the other teams . . . All in all I think the attitude this year is a little more confident, they're a little more arrogant. They're hard workers and they're more determined."

Lorenzo said confidence will help the Lions when they come up against teams they've lost to in the past.

"They feel they can be national champs," Lorenzo said, "they want to be national champs, and I think the other years they thought they might be able to be a national champ. You've just got to take that might out of there, and I think that's the difference this year. There's a little air of confidence, and you need that confidence."

Flynn said in the past when a team the caliber of Iowa came up on the schedule, the Lions went into the match trying to turn in a good showing.

But he said the team doesn't feel that that's good enough any more.

"Before it was like 'We can hang with them,'" Flynn said, "but we're not looking to do that this year. We're looking to beat them."