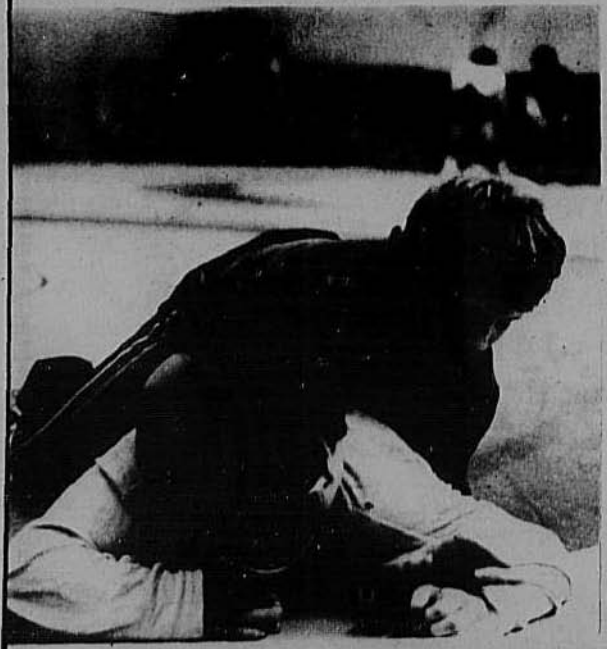
Confident Grapplers Preparing for SUNYACs

By MARC GESNER

The men's varsity wrestling team will compete tonight and tomorrow in the country's most prestigious Division III conference tournament. This year's State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC) championships will have eight schools competing—five of which have received national rankings.

"I am really confident that this is the best team that Albany has sent into the SUNYAC's in my five years here," said coach Joe DeMeo.

Confidence—the attitude expressed again and again by the Dane grapplers. Perhaps their 17-3-1 regular season record is one cause for Albany's certainty, but more important the word "confidence" can mean just about everything in wrestling.



Senior Warren Wray (bottom) and Freshman Dave Averill both have solid chances of placing in the SUNYAC's.

"If you don't have confidence in yourself, you can pack it in," explained senior Eddie Morales. "If I go into a match confident, I'm not giving him (the opponent) any respect. That way I wrestle my kind of match instead of his."

However, the emphasis is on "confidence, not cockiness," stressed All-American Andy Seras. Indeed, the Danes have no right to be too sure of themselves; they will face three schools in the SUNYAC's with higher national rankings. Brockport, Oswego, and Buffalo are ranked one, two and seven, respectively, among the country's 350 Division III schools, while Albany is ranked seveteenth.

"I think that we are a very good dual meet team - but even a better tournament team," claimed junior Vic Herman. The squad captain explained that to do well in a tournament a team has to have wrestlers who can place high enough to score points in the force of heavy competition. Albany boasts up to eight wrestlers who have a solid chance of scoring in the SUNYAC's.

Herman, who has broken two Albany school records, will not receive top seeding in tonight's tourney. Wrestling in the heavyweight class, the 215-pound grappler commented, "My chances of winning have increased because I am working much harder and with more intensity than I have all year."

Sophomore All-American Andy Seras is in training for his second straight SUNYAC championship title.

Seras, a champion in last year's SUNYAC's, will be the favorite at 142 pounds. However, still recovering from injuries to his clavicle and thigh, the sophmore must be careful.

"I'm close enough to 100 percent so I can be confident that I'm going to win it," said Seras. "With two other All-Americans it will be a tough weight class - I don't expect to breeze through it when I am out there, I think of everyone on the mat as an equal."

Perhaps Albany's hottest wrestler has been Spero Theofilatos. The 134-pounder started the season with a 2-3

continued on page nineteen

Grapplers Prepare for SUNYACs

continued from back page

record and finished with a 16-3. In addition, the junior's last five victories were pins.

"I got a sense of winning that I didn't have before," reasoned Theofilatos on his success.

Another Dane threat comes in the shape of 118- pound Dave Averill. Although he achieved an outstanding regular season record of 17-1, the freshman is only hoping for the top three. "I'll think about the finals when I get there," Averill said. "But I have to get there first."

Eight pounds heavier and three years older than Averill is senior Warren Wray. In what could be the "last hurrah" of his wrestling career, the 126-pounder also seeks a place finish in the SUNYAC's.

"During the year I've been progressing—now I am peaking and things are clicking into place," Wray noted. "I have had close matches with all the guys in my weight class (that will be in the SUNYAC's), but that was in the beginning of the year.

Other Albany hopefuls, such as Ed Gleason, Dan Jeron, and Morales, also plan on performing well. Gleason went as far as to say, "if everything goes well I should win the tourney."

Meanwhile, 190-pound Morales merely predicted, "if my health holds up, I think I'll place."

At first glance it appears that the health factor could play a major role in Albany's overall showing in the SUNYAC's at Oneonta this year. Of course, DeMeo points out that every other team has the same problems.

"There is only two times when you (wrestlers) are healthy. The first time is on the day before the first practice, and the second time is two weeks after the last match. The champions always go and handle the pain," said DeMeo.

Although DeMeo claimed that he is "just looking for the team to improve," the coach is also confident. As he stated earlier this week, "Given the proper set of circumstances, we don't have a guy who can't place."

There is great pressure on each wrestler in the SUNYAC's to place in the top four in his weight class. If that plateau is achieved, the grappler wins a berth in the Division III NCAA tournament taking place February 26 and 27 at Cortland.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Intramurals

Center Rich Cardillo scored five goals, including the game winner, in the Awsomes AMIA League 2 Hockey win over the Rorers, 9-3. Cardillo has been a member of the Awsomes for two years and is noted for his excellent stickhandling ability. Cardillo is one of the scoring leaders on this club, a playoff contender for the second straight year.

Varsity

Susan Keilty, a senior on the women's swimming and diving team, broke three varsity record during the past week. She set new marks in the 50-yard freestyle (0:26.8), the 50-yard backstroke (0:36.61) and the 100-yard individual medley (1:09.36). Keilty also holds three other records: the 100-yard backstroke, the 200-yard medley relay and the 200-yard freestyle relay.

Sponsored by Budweiser