

# Talented ER could dominate wrestling scene

By LARRY BUMP

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If you thought Don Quinn and his talented East Rochester High School athletes had a good football season, wait until you see what they do in wrestling.

"They'll not only dominate Class A. I think they'll dominate AAA," said Spencerport Coach Walt Teike, the Section 5 wrestling chairman. "They'll be just that tough."

"The premier wrestler in this area is John Zito (ER's 167-pounder). He finished second in the states last year, and I expect him to win the state championship this year."

Zito is one of three Class A individual champs returning for the Bombers, who have won two straight sectional titles. Mike Brien (98 pounds) and Romeo Battazzi (112) also are back.

They're just part of a bumper crop of returnees who could propel Section 5 to its strongest showing in the state tournament.

"In each of the five classes, there are at least nine champions returning," Teike said. "That's about 50 champions returning, so the competition in Section 5 will really be top-notch."

Five Monroe County wrestlers who won wrestle-offs and competed in last year's state tournament are returning. Besides Zito, they are Spencerport sophomore Trevor Graham (91), his senior teammate, Rory Legacy (98); McQuaid's Rob Starkweather (105) and Brockport's Tony Bruno (145).

Other sectional champs coming back include Hilton's Chris Kellman (112) and George Eblicker (145), Gates-Chili's Mike La Rocca (132) and junior Dave Silipini (138), Brighton's Mark Evarts (177) and Fairport's Wally Vaughn (250) in Class AAA; Churchville-Chili's Jeff Bumbarger (98) and Greece Athena's Mike Paternoster (167) in Class AA, and Caledonia-Mumford's Doug Nothnagle (145) in Class B.

Bumbarger and Paternoster will be thrown into the AAA ring this season, for their schools, along with Greece Olympia, are moving up in class.

Aquinas, Cardinal Mooney and Corning East and West are dropping to AA.

"Some people who did not win last year kept active during the summer," Teike pointed out. "I think people like Phil Lanzatella and Vince Biamonte from McQuaid are capable of doing well even at the state level."

McQuaid tied East and Madison for the City-Catholic League Division 1 title last year. All were 4-1 in the league. It was the Knights' fifth straight title, and they're favored to win again, with

Madison and Bishop Kearney pushing them. All four teams in City-Catholic Division 2 were within one match of first place last year, and it should be as close this season.

ER, which tied Hilton for the overall Monroe County League title last year, won't have a cakewalk to a repeat Eastern Division championship. Improving Irondequoit and Brighton, and defending Class AAA champion Fairport, should have something to say about the outcome.

In the Western Division, Hilton looks strongest again. Perennial power Spencerport slipped to 10-4 last year, and Teike said he expected similar success this year. His counterparts warned against counting the Rangers out.

In the sectionals, Hilton could clean up Class AAA and East Rochester is the prohibitive choice in Class A. Brockport will challenge Canandaigua's reign in Class AA, and Cal-Mum will try to unseat Marion in Class B.

The season opens Dec. 9, and the county's balance of power should be apparent by Christmas. Irondequoit wrestles Brighton Dec. 21, then takes on ER two days later. That day, Spencerport and Hilton also will meet.

**COUNTY EAST:** "It will be Irondequoit and Brighton for the championship," said Coach Quinn of ER (12-2-1 last season), downplaying his team's chances. "I think we've got to be in there, along with Fairport."

The Bombers have a couple of legitimate early-season concerns. One is turning thoughts to wrestling from football.

"It's tough for all these kids who are football players," Quinn said. "They don't hop right into wrestling with a lot of enthusiasm."

It shouldn't matter in the opening meet against Pittsford Sutherland (1-12).

"The whole thing is whether the kids fit into the right weight classes."

That's a problem for a lot of coaches, who find last year's 112-pound sophomore is this year's 138-pound junior, but last year's 138-pound junior is still a 138-pounder.

Think of the Bombers' poor Drew McGregor and Kevin Kronenberger, who are listed at 167 pounds. Wrestlers all over the county are trying to escape that weight class to avoid Zito.

And Curtis Doreen at 112 may have to battle two champs—Brien, who has grown, and Battazzi, who hasn't.

Other Bombers to watch are heavyweight Rick Sidor, Dennis Essom (155), Bruce Kier (138 or 145) and Kevin Maynard (177).

Quinn's 19-year wrestling record, by the way, is 234-18-2.

**Irondequoit** (12-2) has returned to the prominence it had as recently as the early 1970s, when the Whipple brothers were squeezing opponents.

"I've worked clinics summertimes since 1960, and I've heard about genetic cycles, but I never believed in them," said 19-year Coach Art Connon. "I thought coaching and hard work would bring out the talent in youngsters. I was wrong."

"Now our genetic cycle is back on the upswing. And talent draws more talent, so we have more kids out this year than we've had in years."

Sophomores Tony Cotroneo (105) and Tim Lehmann (112) have placed in the sectionals each of the last two years, and both were runners-up last season. They join seniors Tom Lehmann (Tim's brother, 145), Paul Salamone (145 or 155), Jon Campo (167 or 177) and Paul Gibson (177 or heavyweight) as returning regulars. Dave Schneider (138), a starter two years ago, is back after being sidelined last season by an injury.

At **Eastridge** (3-8), Bob Dougherty has been coaxed out of his retirement from coaching, bringing new hope to the Lancers.

**COUNTY WEST:** "From 119, right straight through heavyweight, we have a couple of outstanding individuals and the rest of the kids are above average," Hilton (11-1-1) Coach Al Krotz said.

Kellman, who will move up to 119 or 126, and Eblicker, who may go up to 155, are the obvious outstanding Cadets. Jim Gaden (138 or 145) may be another, if he can recover from knee surgery. He was 15-4-1 when he was injured.

Spencerport may be able to beat opponents before they know what hit them. In addition to Graham and Legacy, the Rangers' lower weights include Carl Tandoi and John San Filippo, both third in last year's sectionals, and Mike Marchese.

Teike put his big men on a weight program. Chris Vigliotti blossomed from 145 pounds to 180. Bobby McMullen and Mark Zielke also should help in the later matches.

Athena (9-4), like East Rochester, may benefit from the winning atmosphere created by its football team.

**CITY-CATHOLIC DIVISION 1:** "We'll be a much better tournament team than we are in dual meets," McQuaid (11-2) Coach John Roselli said. "I would compare it to our team three years ago. We don't really have an excellent kid in each weight class, but we have five or six excellent kids."

The Knights have tournament experience in Starkweather, fifth in the state last year; Biamonte (177 or heavyweight), who beat the world junior freestyle champ in an exhibition against a touring Polish team, and Lanzatella (177), the national junior Greco-Roman champion.

"Considering that we're in the sectionals now, we put more stock in them, and not so much in winning the league championship," Roselli said. "We've won the league every year but three in my 15 years here."