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Grapplers take third in SUNYACs

By Marc Schwarz
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The Albany State wrestling team completed their finest performance ever in the SUNYAC championships by placing third, crowning three individual champions and qualifying four wrestlers for the NCAA Division III nationals to be held later this month.

Two-time All-American Andy Seras captured his third consecutive SUNYAC title at 142-pounds, senior Vic Herman won his first SUNYAC championship following three years of near misses and sophomore Dave Averill was victorious in the 118-pound weight class, for his first time. Senior Rob Spagnoli was Albany's fourth qualifier for the nationals, placing third at 126-pounds.

"We did really well. The three champions were the most at the SUNYACs in Albany history. They did a real outstanding job," head coach Joe DeMeo said.

Albany finished the two day tournament with 92 points finishing behind Oswego, 100 points, and Brockport with 141.25. Brockport won the team title for the fourth consecutive year and tenth of the last twelfth. The championships which were held in Oswego last Friday and Saturday, had Binghamton finishing fourth only 3.25 points behind the Danes at 88.75.

Albany had seven winning placers overall, to accumulate the most team points in the team's history. John Denn took fourth place at 177-pounds, Ed Gleason was fifth at 150-pounds and Spero Theofilatos closed out his Albany State career by finishing sixth at 134-pounds.

The NCAA reduced the number of wrestlers allowed to go to the nationals, ac-



ALAN CALEM UPS
Dave Averill was one of three Albany wrestlers to be crowned SUNYAC champion last weekend in Oswego. Andy Seras won his third consecutive title and senior Vic Herman captured his first championship.

ording to DeMeo. Under last year's qualification system, both Gleason and Denn would also be making the trip to Wheaton, Illinois the weekend of February 25 and 26 in search of a national title, DeMeo added.

For Seras the SUNYAC title was his third in three tries enabling him to become the first SUNY wrestler to win four titles in

22 years if he continues his winning ways next year. The top-seeded wrestler in his class, Seras had little problems disposing his opponents. He decisoned Mike Letcher of Oswego, 20-6, in the semi-finals and defended his crown by pinning Brockport's Dave Recor.

"I'm looking forward to a national title," the undefeated junior said. "I

wrestled good this weekend. I was seeded first and I came through. I'm working my hardest and training to get myself ready for the nationals."

Seras will compete in the nationals for the third straight year. In his freshman year, he finished second and last year he finished fourth, despite an injury that

Grapplers finish in third place



◀ Back Page

hampered him for most of his sophomore year.

Herman finally captured the title that had eluded him for four years. The heavyweight senior, who owns most of the Albany wrestling records, won the SUNYAC title this year by defeating Mark Glickman of Oswego 12-8 in the semi-finals and pinning Scott Nicholls of Brockport to win the final. Previously, Herman has finished as high as second in the tournament, but the all-time career victory leader in Dane history could never get over the threshold.

"I'm really happy for Vic. I feel him and Dave Averill have excellent shots at winning a national title. Of course, Andy (Seras) will be right up there battling," DeMeo said.

Averill, an All-American last year, won the SUNYAC title by virtue of victories over Binghamton's John Leo, 12-6, and Jeff Grossfeld of Oneonta, 7-5, in the semi-finals and final respectively. Averill will be traveling to the nationals for the second year in a row.

Spagnoli was the final Albany qualifier for the nationals. The senior defeated Desmond Basnigh of Oneonta 13-5 and Potsdam's Grant Griffin 4-0 to capture third place. Earlier, Spagnoli was defeated by Frank Famiano of Brockport, 19-3. Famiano is a defending champion and the most outstanding wrestler in last year's nationals.

"That match (against Famiano) was much closer than the score in-

dicated. You have to be really impressed with Rob. He lost only one match and that was to the defending NCAA champion," DeMeo commented.

Denn's fourth place finish was perhaps one of the more impressive if not surprising developments of the weekend.

"I'm really pleased with his performance. He has really come on lately," DeMeo said about his freshman wrestler.

"Ed Gleason and Spero (Theofilatos) both lost really close matches in the semi-finals. If either of them would have won, we would have placed second," he added.

The four national qualifiers have two weeks to train before traveling to Illinois. □