

Bear Wrestlers



Photo Tim Kubash

Is there an outbreak of anorexia on campus? No, those are just members of the Golden Bear wrestling team preparing for the Canada West Wrestling Championships.

The hosts of this year's Western wrestling final are the University of Calgary Dinosaurs. U of A wrestlers travelling to Calgary for the competition will be: Tony Bacon (112), Phil Spate (119), Mike Payette (126), Dave Judge (134), Andy Macri (143), Rob Filipchuk (50), Ben Pettit (158), Carl Soderstrom (167), Sean Mager (177), Willie Taylor (190), John McMullen (210), and Brad Chestnut (Hwt.).

Prior to competitions, weight loss is a major factor that wrestlers must contend with. This year's championship is no exception. By the end of the week a majority of the wrestlers will have lost 15 pounds each. By Friday, McMullen will have dropped 35 pounds. He has been dieting since Christmas.

Filipchuk and Chestnut need not concern themselves with calorie counting. Filipchuk has 10 pounds to gain and Chestnut is a heavy-weight.

John Barry, head coach of the Bear wrestlers, feels that a major part of the struggle will be over when his wrestlers qualify for their respective weight classes.

"The toughest battle for certain wrestlers will be making weight as opposed to winning their weight class," said Barry.

Spate, Payette, Judge, Macri, Pettit and Soderstrom are expected to fare well. Payette is a three time Canada West Champion and will be defending his title. Spate will also be looking for his second straight victory. Judge and Macri were western champions in 1977 and 1976 respectively.

Finishing first is important, but placing second or third gives those additional points needed for a team victory.

"Certain wrestlers are expected to win but those who end up second or third are the ones who really help us," explained Barry. "Last year we placed second overall. We lost

by two points; two points we could have had, had someone placed second or third."

The Saskatchewan Huskies will provide the Bears with their most imposing challenge. However, the Bears are prepared to meet their competition and are touting themselves as the "Huskie-Busters."

To date this year the Bears and Huskies have won two Invationals apiece, so it will be a tense and exciting battle for the title. After last year's bitterly disappointing loss to the Huskies by two points, the Bears may just have that added edge.

"I am optimistic. I feel better going into this year's Western final than last year," said Barry. "We have more depth. We are prepared better physically. The whole wrestling

team has given up alcohol since Christmas.

"The biggest plus is that the entire team has made a commitment to winning. I'm hoping that it (the commitment) will pay off.

"What has impressed me is that the U of A team has always had pride and a sense of tradition when it comes to the Canada West Wrestling Championships. They invariably wrestle over their heads.

"If we have six or seven weight class winners, we have a good shot at the National title. We would at least be in the top three," summed up Barry.

The wrestling final is being held this Saturday, Feb. 16. Barry's wrestlers have a week of hard practice to look forward to as he threatens to don his Attila the Hun mask.

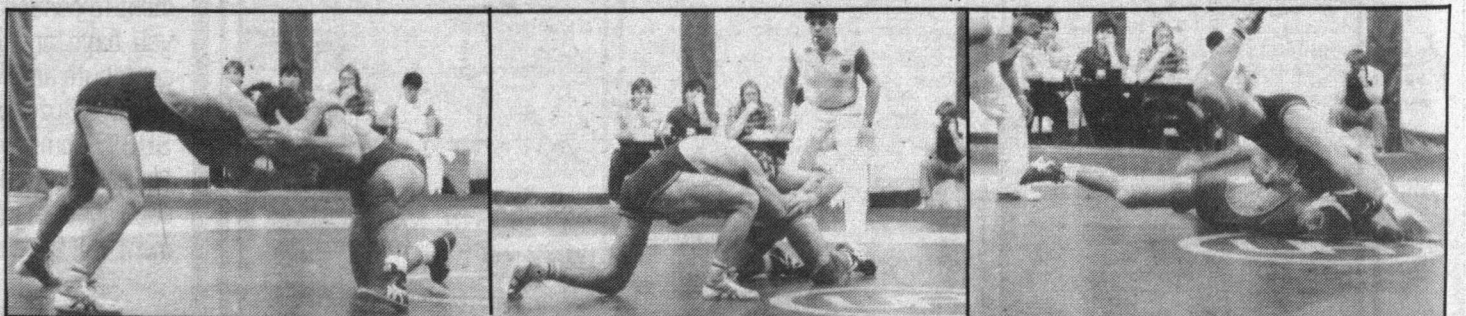


photo Bill St. John