

Dal wrestler ranks at junior nationals

Leblanc places fifth in Fredericton

BY GAZETTE STAFF

For the first time ever the Dal Wrestling Club attended the Canadian Junior Championships, held this past weekend in Fredericton, New Brunswick. There were teams from all over Canada, and the Dal wrestlers were attempting to qualify for eight spots on the Canadian Junior team which will compete at the World Junior Championships this fall in Sydney, Australia.

Nova Scotia's wrestlers are truly considered the Jamaican Bobsledding team" of the Canadian wrestling scene — no one from Nova Scotia has ever placed in the top six at the junior nationals.

The Dal Wrestling Club brought up three of its best juniors — Benji Parks at 69kg, Paul Rhyno

at 76kg and Mike Leblanc at heavyweight. Parks and Rhyno were silver medalists at the Atlantic Juniors and Leblanc was an Atlantic Junior Champion.

Dal's best results came from Leblanc. The heavyweight lost his first match, but then rebounded easily, defeating a New Brunswick wrestler. He eventually settled for a commendable fifth place.

The 69kg and 76kg classes were very tough with the most rigorous competitors in years. At 69kg, Parks lost a hard-fought match against a BC wrestler who finished 2nd, then went on to win a great match against a Guelph opponent. Parks lost his third match and was eliminated against a Regina wrestler.

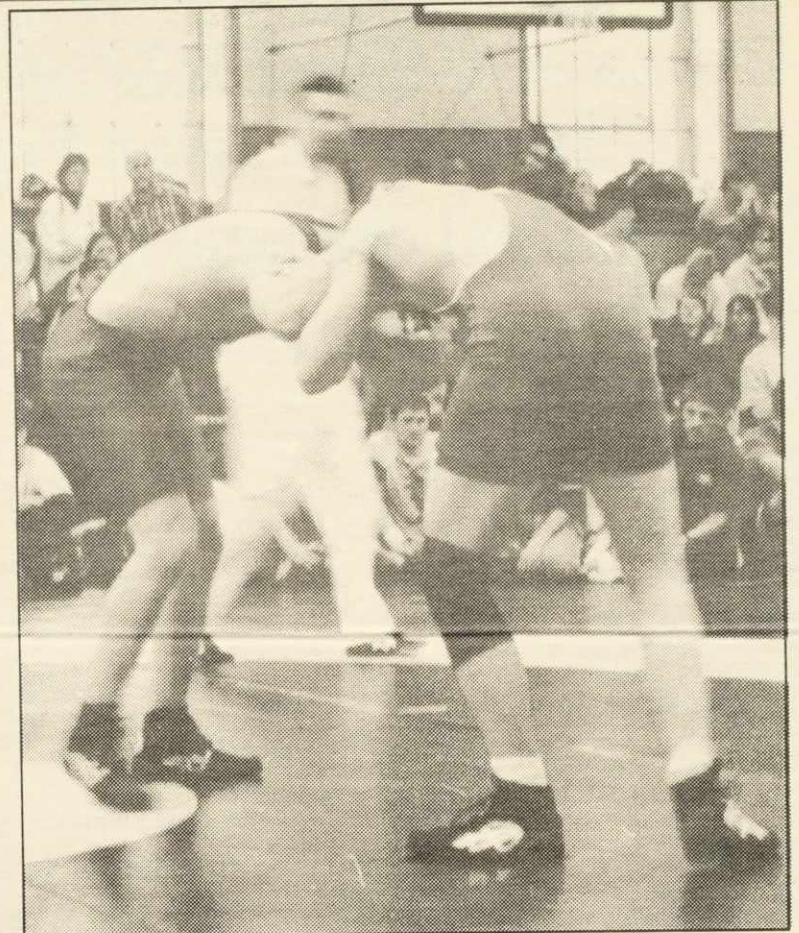
At 76kg Paul Rhyno also wrestled his first match against a

BC wrestler, and lost in a close match. Rhyno then rebounded, 10-pointing a Calgary wrestler. And he won his next match over an Edmonton wrestler by injury default.

Rhyno lost an important last match to a seasoned wrestler from the University of Calgary, just missing a top six placing.

The last event in Dal's long schedule will be the senior nationals this May at McMaster University in Hamilton. The three junior stars will compete in the final junior team ladder, then compete in the senior division.

"The more experience these kids get, the better," said coach Scott Aldrige. "They are getting national experience and bringing national attention to themselves and the university."



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|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|---|---|---|-------|
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