

Wrestling team finishes seventh

BY BRENT FOSTER
Staff Reporter

This year's Simpson Invite was similar to last year's for the Bulldogs.

A year after placing three wrestlers and finishing in sixth place, the wrestling team finished seventh out of 17 teams and again placed three wrestlers at the Simpson College Invitational this past weekend.

Junior Blake Peterson (165) led the charge for the Bulldogs and reached the semifinals, before falling to Bulla Tuzon of Dana College 18-7. Tuzon went on to win the weight class. Peterson followed the loss with a strong showing in wrestlebacks and finished fifth. Peterson did not participate in last year's Simpson Invitational.

Despite the similarities in results, Peterson said the Bulldogs were not as strong as they usually are at the Simpson Invitational.

"Our performance this weekend wasn't as dominating as it has been at the Simpson Invite in prior years," Peterson said. "The tournament has become much tougher and the mentality of the team has changed. In prior years we have won the team aspect of this tournament."

Senior Rob Nahlik (125) also reached the semifinals before falling out 6-3 to top seed Tyler Mumbulo of Upper Iowa. Nahlik made it to the finals of wrestlebacks, where he lost 6-4 to Rob-

ert Struthers of Wartburg College (Iowa). Nahlik finished the day in fourth place.

Junior heavyweight Matt Craig also placed for the Bulldogs. Craig reached the quarterfinals before dropping the match. He battled his way through wrestlebacks before bowing out with a medical forfeit in the fifth-place match for a sixth-place finish.

Craig has placed in back-to-back invitationals, also placing at the Coe College Invitational earlier this season. Craig wrestled in only five matches last season. He will see a lot more action this season with the decision to red-shirt returning junior national qualifier Loyde Braidlow. Braidlow was a force for the Bulldogs last season when he compiled a 24-18 record and was one of the team's two national qualifiers.

Head coach Dave Schutter said that Braidlow redshirting would give Truman a solid heavyweight for the next three seasons because Braidlow is going to be around for a fifth year.

Schutter said the Simpson Invitational has become a tough tournament the last few years.

"It was a way tougher tournament than Simpson has ever been before," Schutter said. "It was probably comparable to Div. II nationals. But we still didn't wrestle well. If we wrestle better we have a lot of people placing. There are a lot of things that factor into that."

Wartburg ran away with the overall



Photo submitted

Sophomore Bryan Isbell positions himself to pin Central College's Anthony Rollins in a match Nov. 9. The wrestling team finished in seventh place out of 17 teams at last weekend's Simpson Invitational.

team title and had seven wrestlers take home individual titles while eclipsing the rest of the field by 30 points.

There were several of the top wrestlers in the country present at the invitational, including Tee Barber (149) of Upper Iowa who is ranked sixth nationally in Div. II, and Wartburg's Jacob Naig (157), who is ranked second nationally in Div. III.

Nahlik said the level of competition the Bulldogs saw might have taken the team by surprise.

"We were a little out of shape," Nah-

lik said. "We hadn't really had that level of competition yet this year. Most of us were surprised and not prepared for it."

Nahlik also said that although the competition is going to pick up as the season goes on, it won't get much tougher than the team saw this weekend.

The Bulldogs currently have 16 freshmen and sophomores on the roster, which can lead to ups and downs for a team. Peterson said this gives the team the opportunity for improvement each week.

"We have a lot of experience in our lineup built in with some newcomers,"

Peterson said. "Each person on the team is able to bring a little bit something different to the table. We all have a particular aspect that we may need to get a little bit better in. This gives us the opportunity to improve not only ourselves, but also to help our teammates improve more quickly."

The Bulldogs will return to the mats twice more before Christmas. They take on the University of Central Missouri in the Cliff Keen Wrestling Classic Dec. 14 in Kansas City. On Dec. 16, the "Dogs will head north to take on the Upper Iowa University Peacocks in dual action.

Men expand national roster to five at Miami Invite

BY RYAN TURNER
Staff Reporter

Hidden in the box score of the Miami University (Ohio) Invitational was the fact that the Bulldogs had a beneficial meet.

The Bulldogs might have finished in eighth place out of 13 schools that competed in Ohio this past weekend, but they accomplished mostly everything that they wanted to.

"We got all of the cuts that we needed and we got people to nationals, so we were really positive about the result," junior Jason Stokes said.

Head coach Mark Gole had the team tapering for this event for about a month, and it paid off. Gole said all of the men's swimmers that competed came away with season-best times in

every event that they swam.

Leading off the 800-yard freestyle relay, in which the team finished fourth, senior Alex Totura broke his own school record in the 200-yard freestyle with a time of 1:24.34.

"I wasn't really surprised because he's worked hard all year," senior Kyle Ruiz said. "It was his record before, so it was his to break. It was impressive, but it wasn't shocking."

The Bulldogs currently have five swimmers qualified for the national meet, including Stokes, Totura, sopho-

more Peter McCall, sophomore Andrew McCall and senior Adam Pruess.

"We have people going that didn't go last year, and we already have more people qualified now than we did go last year," Stokes said. "Putting all of their B cuts in there too really helps."

"We got all of the cuts that we needed, and we got people to nationals, so we were really positive about the results."

Jason Stokes
Junior

Stokes also said that the team had trouble at nationals last year because there wasn't a breaststroker that qualified for nationals. This year the team will have Pruess, who finished ninth in the 100-yard breaststroke with a time of 58.85 seconds and had an even

better time of 58.53 seconds in the preliminaries.

The Bulldogs also will have the McCall brothers, who Stokes said both excel at the butterfly stroke.

The men also qualified in the 200-yard freestyle and medley relays. Stokes had an individual A cut in the 50-yard freestyle, placing eighth and breaking 21 seconds for the first time.

"Our relays were probably our best event because we qualified two of them for the national tournament," Ruiz said.

The Bulldogs now have 13 total cuts, including relays which would allow the team to compete in 13 events at the national meet.

"We would like to make a few more [cuts] by the time the season's over," Gole said. "So many of the guys in the relays

only have one individual B cut, so we'll have to try and get them more individual B cuts at our conference championship."

Gole also expressed a desire to get at least one more relay qualified for nationals and will attempt to do that at the conference meet in February.

"We won't taper again until the conference championship," Gole said. "That will only be for the men that didn't qualify for nationals yet. All the other guys we're going to rest for the national meet."

Gole said the team executed the plan that he had set forth at the beginning of the season.

"It was our goal to swim fast at this meet from day one," Gole said. "Every single guy improved their times, and that is really what we look for. Season

bests out of everybody, the majority of the team walked away with a few lifetime bests. For us to swim this fast at this stage of the season — I'm very happy."

With five swimmers already qualified and the possibility of more on the horizon, Gole's strategy appears to be putting the team in prime position for the national meet.

"We just have to get back to work and train as hard as we can in the next six or seven weeks so that we can rest for our conference meet and swim faster," Gole said.

The Bulldogs won't have another meet until after Winter Break. They will head to Florida for the Tampa Relays on Jan. 5. They will next host a meet when Missouri State University comes to Kirksville on Jan. 18.

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