

Wrestling team seeks national qualifiers

BY BRENT FOSTER
Staff Reporter

As the wrestling team prepares for another season, the young Bulldogs will look to their three seniors for experience and leadership.

The Bulldog roster will have 16 freshmen and sophomores opening the season. Head coach Dave Schutter said that even though the team is young, that its goal does change.

"Win — that's our goal, to win," Schutter said. "Any team that has any other goal besides winning has the wrong goals. We are going on our sixth year of wanting to keep having an All-American. That's definitely one of our goals this year. We want to keep that level that we've gotten up to."

Schutter said senior Dan Keller and junior All-American Blake Peterson's performance will be huge for the team's success.

"Keller is a returning national qualifier from two years ago, and Blake is a returning All-American from last year and a returning national qualifier from two years ago," Schutter said. "I expect a lot of leadership out of both of those guys. We expect Blake and Keller to contend for a national title this year. [Peterson is] ranked third in the country this year and could easily

move up or move down. It depends on the type of season he has this year."

The Bulldogs will look to improve their record in duals. Last season Truman was just 5-10 in duals. Schutter said no team or dual can be taken lightly.

"All of them are important, from the first one on Friday until the last one in February," Schutter said. "Every weekend is important. We want to take it one weekend at a time and not look down the road."

The Bulldogs will receive a visit this year from defending national champion Central Oklahoma University on Feb. 9. They defeated the Bulldogs 44-0 last season.

The Bulldogs are riding a streak of six consecutive seasons with at least one All-American — a streak they are hoping continues this season.

Besides Peterson and Keller, others expected to be big contributors this year include returning heavyweight national qualifier Loyde Braidlowe. The junior had a 24-18 record last season and was fourth at the NCAA Midwest Regional.

Also potentially making a big impact for the Bulldogs this season will be seniors John Horman (197) and Robert Nahlik (125).

With Peterson and Keller acting as catalysts for the team, Peterson said the Bulldogs have high expectations for the upcoming season.

"I think we have a very strong team," Peterson said. "Coach said we have a drive to get five national qualifiers. I think that would be the low end of the goal for us. March is a long ways away, but we could potentially qualify someone at every weight class. It will be interesting to see how it all ends up. I think that any less than two or three All-Americans and four or five national qualifiers would be a disappointment for our team."

Peterson said that being a returning All-American means that other wrestlers will be looking to beat him.

"When anybody knows anything about you, it can be a disadvantage," Peterson said. "I use that as fuel for my motivation. ... It's fair to say the top five ranked nationally are even. Any of them could win the national title. Knowing that it's my last year and knowing that people are gunning for me is all the more motivation to not get lost in the pack."

Sophomore Cameron Mitchell said the Bulldogs will be defined primarily by youth.

"We have a younger team this year," Mitchell said. "I would say that as a team we are definitely strong, but we are young. We have a lot of young talent on the team. Next year we will be good, but in two years, we should be really stacked."

Something that Schutter prides his

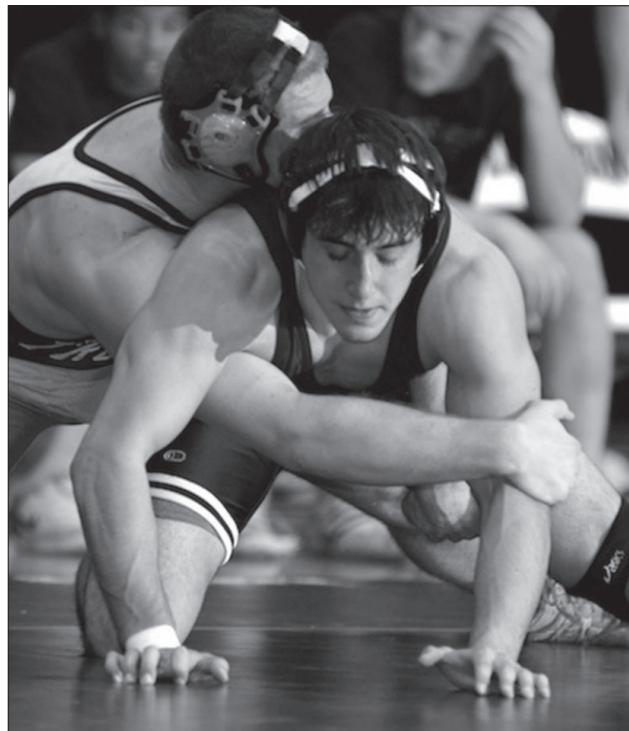


Photo Submitted
Sophomore Bryan Isbell is wrapped up by freshman Chad Kurovski during the wrestling team's preseason intra-squad meet. The team, which opens the season Saturday against Central College, is 20th in the first Div. II poll.

team on is its strong work in the classroom, which he hopes to continue this season. Last season the team had the highest GPA of any wrestling team in Div. II. Peterson received first-team honors, and sophomore Dean Schultz earned second-team honors.

The Bulldogs have their first dual of the season at 7 p.m. Friday against Central College (Iowa). The match will be at Kirksville High School because the MIAA volleyball semifinals will be in Pershing. The Bulldogs defeated Central last year 38-9.

Olympic hopeful returns for Double Deuce

BY BEN YARNELL
Staff reporter

The red-and-yellow shield on the powder-blue shirt was faded, made that way. But you still could read the "S" etched on it.

The shirt covered a massive chest, much broader than the average man's.

The man wearing the shirt was huge. At 6-foot-3, he towered over everyone in the room.

In a room full of Iron Dogs, alumni Zach Schluender truly appeared to be a Man of Steel.

Last Saturday, the Iron Dogs put on their annual Double Deuce weightlifting competition. This year, however, was different. The team had an honored guest in its midst.

If nothing more, Schluender's presence at the tournament

meant the return of an Iron Dog legend. In 2001, Schluender, along with former classmates Russ Smith and Zac Cooper, started the weightlifting club.

"I loved all four years I was here," the 2005 graduate said. "The club ... has just exploded. It has been a really big part of my life, and I just wanted to give something back and have some fun here."

This 25-year-old, however, is more than just a founding member. He now carries the Iron Dog name as an international competitor in Olympic-style weightlifting.

For junior Ambrose Serrano, president of Iron Dogs, Schluender's presence and advice at the Double Deuce was a big deal.

"Even though he tries to come every year, it is more special for the club and for Truman — those who are aware of it — that he is

here because it is almost like having a celebrity within the sport," Serrano said.

Currently, Schluender lives in Colorado Springs, Colo., at the Olympic Training Center. Other than the time he spends working toward a master's degree, he said his current schedule is fairly simple.

"It's just eating, breathing and sleeping weightlifting," Schluender said. "I love it. It's hard some days. It is rough. Your body hurts. Your joints hurt, but it's still great."

He said he has been able to enjoy this focus because weightlifting essentially is his job now. He receives a stipend that goes to the top eight male lifters in the country.

"It's nothing close to the real world," Schluender said. "I come back and visit home and go out at

night and hang out with friends. They want to go to bed by midnight or earlier because they have jobs. I'm like, "What do you mean? A job? What is that?""

When Schluender does get to work, however, he is all business. In September, he competed in his first international competition at the Royal World Championships in Chiang Mai, Thailand, as a super-heavyweight (105+ kgs.). The former Iron Dog took 19th in his weight class. With that finish, he is now second in the nation in his weight class. Still, Schluender was quick to downplay this fact.

"I don't like to come off as super-cocky," he said. "I know that there are a lot of people out there who are really good lifters. I don't want to go saying I am better than them because I know for a fact that some of them are

ranked higher with different ranking systems. I'm just doing what I can."

What Schluender can and will do is take a shot in Atlanta next May at a spot on the U.S. Olympic team that will compete in Beijing, China, in August 2008.

For this competitor, though, the idea of wearing the red, white and blue isn't something he is focused on.

"You don't want to think about lifting all the time, but when it is your life, it just kind of happens," he said. "You try to keep it out of your head and try to relax, otherwise you get too stressed out. You've just got to realize that you have to take it one day at a time."

Last Saturday, Schluender's focus was on cheering for his friends and giving pointers for

better performance, though he was literally hidden away behind a curtain.

Senior Lesley Lovesee was one of the lifters who benefited from Schluender's expert advice. For Lovesee, taking advice from the heavyweight was old hat.

"He was my coach freshman year," she said. "It was nice to have him come back, the big, bad weightlifter coming back to his roots."

Not that the Superman-sized former Iron Dog was reduced to just to the sidelines. He also competed in the tournament but didn't treat the crowd to a new personal record.

"I've got to compete in Samoa in about four weeks," Schluender said. "I'm just going to see what I can do, not hurt myself and just have some fun."

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<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(1E) Truman*, 3 [31-5, 12-1 MIAA]</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(30-23, 30-27, 30-26)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(4W) Missouri Southern, 0 [15-16, 2-11 MIAA]</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(3E) Northwest Mo. State, 0 [17-16, 6-7 MIAA]</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(30-19, 30-25, 30-15)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(2W) Emporia State*, 3 [25-7, 10-3 MIAA]</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(2E) Central Missouri*, 0 [30-5, 9-4 MIAA]</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(30-24, 30-23, 30-28)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(3W) Pittsburg State, 3 [26-7, 8-5 MIAA]</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(4E) Missouri Western, 0 [10-21, 2-11 MIAA]</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(30-19, 30-20, 30-22)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(1W) Washburn*, 3 [33-2, 12-1 MIAA]</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(1E) Truman*</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(2W) Emporia State</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(3W) Pittsburg State</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">(1W) Washburn</div>
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7:30 p.m. • Nov. 9

7 p.m. • Nov. 10

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To be continued ...