

300-pounder beats Abrams: 6th loss for blind wrestler

by David Zucchino
Sports Writer

Bob Abrams lost Friday. It doesn't happen often.

Bob wrestles as a heavyweight for Western Carolina's varsity and is competing in this weekend's North Carolina Collegiate Wrestling Championship in Carmichael Auditorium.

He began competitive wrestling as a third-grader in Columbus, Ohio and since that time has compiled an incredible 118-6 record, including his loss Friday.

What makes Abrams' record truly remarkable is the fact that he's never seen any of his opponents. He's been blind since he was eight years old.

Just how does a wrestler combat an opponent he can't even see?

Abrams, a stocky 5-10, 190-pounder, offers a valid explanation.

"The rules state that there must be finger contact between two wrestlers before a match can begin, so I really don't have to see my opponent," he claims. "As long as I keep body contact I can almost always tell which way my opponent is going to move by the way his arms tilt."

Bob, a freshman Education major, was outweighed by more than 100 pounds in his match. His opponent, John Harrison of N.C. Central weighed in at nearly 300, so Abrams, who missed the 190-pound division by only one pound, was placed at a severe physical disadvantage.

"He was like a tree stump," he explains. "He was extremely strong and heavy. I could get under him easily enough, but I simply wasn't able to pick him up or flip him over."

It stands to reason that Bob's opponents may have a natural tendency to let up on him and not wrestle to their full capacity because of his physical handicap, but Abrams feels that this is a relatively rare occurrence.

"They may go easy on me right at the beginning but not for long," he states. "Actually, I've never been aware of any

of my opponents purposely slowing up on me."

Abrams admits that he's usually nervous and tight as the times of his matches approach, but he believes that this merely stems from nervous energy and actually serves to improve his performance once a match gets under way.

"I'm scared almost all of the time before a match and sometimes I can really get a bad case of butterflies. Once I have some physical contact, though, I feel pretty confident that I'm going to come up a winner."

Although wrestling was the only sport that Bob was equipped to play as a third-grader, he now participates in track, competing in the mile and the 600-yard run.

Despite his discouraging loss today, Abrams is optimistic about the upcoming season, although he admits that he needs to guard against becoming too sure of himself.

"Although I didn't show it today, I've been pretty fair on takedowns recently," says Bob. "I was out-classed today, but at least four of my losses have resulted from over-confidence on my part."

"If I can just watch this, I think I'll do pretty well. I'm looking forward to improving myself this season."

Partly because Bob has turned his serious physical handicap into merely a slight disadvantage, he expresses a desire to teach retarded and physically handicapped children.

There's absolutely no doubt that he'll be a success, for Bob Abrams decidedly gives young children, and everyone else for that matter, someone to look up to.

North Carolina wrestling coach and Tournament Director Sam Barnes

Grid club sets 3 meetings

The UNC football club will hold a series of organizational meetings next week to make plans for next season.

The meetings will be held in Room 215 of the Union at 7:30 Tuesday through Thursday nights.

Only one meeting will be sufficient for each interested player. The purpose of the meetings is to orient prospective members and to check the possibilities of a spring season and a 160-pound team in addition to the unlimited team.

The team is also interested in prospective trainers, managers and statisticians as well as players.

The club had a 3-1 conference record to tie for the championship. UNC Charlotte and Duke may join the league next season.

announced that the semi-finals and the finals of the meet, which features the wrestling squads of Carolina, Davidson, Catawba, North Carolina Central, Duke, N.C. State, East Carolina, Western Carolina, UNC-Charlotte, UNC-Wilmington, Elon, Guilford, Elizabeth City State, Appalachian State, Campbell and Pembroke, will begin this afternoon at 3:00 and 5:00, respectively.

The opening and semi-final rounds of the tournament were held yesterday afternoon.



Coach Sam Barnes

USC on the spot

Gamecocks meet Carr, Irish tonight

By Mark Whicker
Sports Writer

Unable to stop one scoring threat in their opener Thursday night, South Carolina's Gamecocks face a greater menace tonight when they travel to Notre Dame to meet Austin Carr, possibly the best backcourt man in the country.

USC beat Auburn in Columbia 86-69, but none of the Cocks could hold down Johnny Mengelt, who fired at will for 26 points. Carr got 38 and Collis Jones scored 30 in Notre Dame's 94-81 win over Michigan Tuesday night.

In other ACC action, Duke goes to Virginia, Carolina travels to William & Mary, State journeys to Auburn, Temple hosts Wake Forest in Philadelphia, Clemson entertains Mercer and Buffalo travels to Maryland.

South Carolina jumped out to an early 22-6 lead over Auburn, but the Tigers came back to close the margin to 41-31 at halftime.

Mengelt was unchecked the whole night and led Auburn within two points with 12 minutes remaining in the game. A three-point play by John Roche and the superior rebounding of Tom Owens and Tom Riker opened the margin up again for the Gamecocks.

Roche put in seven points in the last three minutes to boost his total to 17. Owens and Riker led the scoring with 28 and 23.

Frank McGuire benched two-year starter John Ribock in favor of junior Rick Ayldett and starter Bob Carver at the other guard.

Highly regarded soph Kevin Joyce scored six in a reserve role, hitting his first shot from 20 feet. However, Mengelt had no problems scoring when guarded by Joyce.

Clemson gave new coach Tates Lock

an opening victory, beating Furman 67-54.

Joe Williams, architect of the Jacksonville machine who switched to Furman after last season, saw his Paladins outbounded 38-22 and throttled by a tough Clemson defense.

Dave Thomas picked up 20 points and seven-footer Dave Angel got 15 in his first varsity game.

Virginia has beaten Duke two straight years at Charlottesville's University Hall, and Bill Gibson apparently has his best team this season.

In addition to holdovers Bill Gerry, Tim Rash and Scott McLandish, Gibson has persuaded aggressive forward Mike Wilkes to rejoin the team.

The big scorer may be soph guard Barry Pankhill, who had a 26-point average on the Cav freshman team.

Fencers face Tennessee duo

The Carolina fencing team travels to Knoxville, Tenn. today for a tri-meet with the University of Tennessee and Vanderbilt. The Tar Heel fencers have never met Tennessee, but twice have beaten Vanderbilt.

Head Coach Ron Miller said he was optimistic about his team's first meet of the season. He expects very little difference in the styles of the two Tennessee clubs.

Eleven lettermen will be leading the Heels, and Miller said he hopes to allow as many as possible to get to participate in the meet.

Tar Heels trounce Clemson swimmers

By Howie Carr
Sports Writer

Winning all but two events, the Carolina varsity swimming team crushed Clemson, 81-32, Friday, to record its second consecutive victory of the season.

The Tar Heels never trailed as they won the opening event, the 400-yard medley relay, with a team of Marshall Peck, George Coxhead, Boyd Steward and Gavin Quinn. Their time was 4:05.2. Freshman David Walmer was the Tar

Heels' only entrant in the 1000-yard freestyle, and he easily outdistanced his Tiger opponents with an 11:38.6 mark.

After Jake Southard (1:54) and Karl Preiss had swept the 200-yard freestyle, Glenn Garella (1:22.3) and Bob Ruth followed with a similar showing in the 50-yard freestyle to stake Carolina to a 28-6 lead.

Tar Heel Jim Osborne won the individual medley with a 2:07 time and he was trailed by Buzzy Boehme in second place.

In their first collegiate appearances, freshmen divers Clark Falkenstein and Rod Underwood swept the one-meter competition as they recorded scores of 133.9 and 130.9.

The 200-yard butterfly was won by Pete Barnes, and Mike Rawleigh's :50.2 victory in the 100-yard freestyle clinched the meet for the Tar Heels by giving them an insurmountable 60-10 lead.

Bob Sumner's time of 2:25.5 was good enough to win the 200-yard backstroke, and Peck increased Carolina's lead by taking first in the 500-yard freestyle.

The swimmers host South Carolina today at 2:00 p.m.

Union sponsors tournament

The Carolina Union will sponsor a campus-wide table tennis tournament Thursday night, Dec. 10, at 7:00 p.m. in rooms 207-209 of the Union.

The tournament will consist of two out of three game sets with a single elimination playoff. The pairings will be made at random.

The two finalists will have the first option of representing the University of North Carolina at the Regional Games tournament.

Persons interested should sign up at the Union desk.

A pocket billiards champion will be decided in a straight pool match to 75. One can sign up for this tournament at the pool room at the Carolina Union.

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