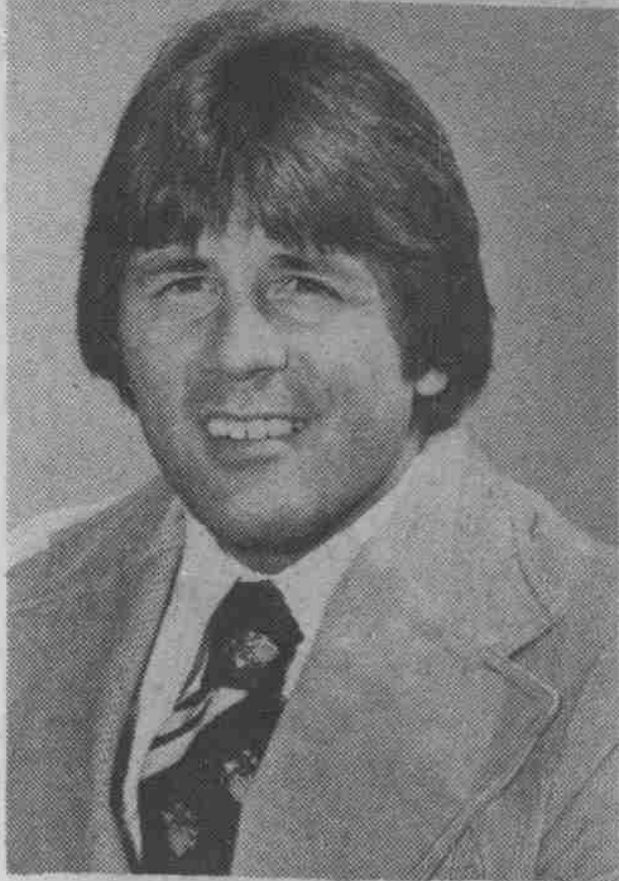


Recruits boost wrestling hopes



UNC Coach Bill Lam

by Lee Pace
Staff Writer

The situation isn't all that uncommon.

A collegiate coach, trying desperately to make his program of national caliber, goes out hoping to convince the best of the nation's high schools have to offer in his sport that attending his school has decided advantages over signing with the competition.

After much effort, he's successful in arranging for a number of highly competent athletes to enroll, and the future looks bright.

The trouble is, it often takes a year or two for freshmen to blossom into adept collegiate performers. And the dilemma isn't helped by the coach's immediate need for their seasoned ability.

UNC Wrestling Coach Bill Lam understand the predicament. He's enduring it right now.

Lam rescued Carolina from its perennial losing wrestling season when he came here in 1973 from Norman (Okla.) High, directing an 11-2 mark his first season. Wrestling a tougher schedule last winter, the Heels dropped to 9-6. But the steady ascent of the Carolina wrestling program, coupled with Lam's tireless recruiting efforts, has lured a number of the nation's finest prep wrestlers to Chapel Hill.

Lam has the talent. It's just a question of how long it takes that talent to jell.

"The recruits we did get have been looking good," Lam says. "But just because a kid was good in high school doesn't mean he'll be great in college. The academic life is different, and being away from home can have something to do with it. Also, the competition is much

stiffer in college."

Thirteen state titles can be divided among the top eight freshmen. Three of those belong to the cream of Lam's recruited crop: three-time Virginia state champion Chris Conkwright.

Conkwright was first team high school All-America last year, and in addition to his three state titles, was an Amateur Athletic Union champion. He will start at the 134-pound weight class for the Tar Heels.

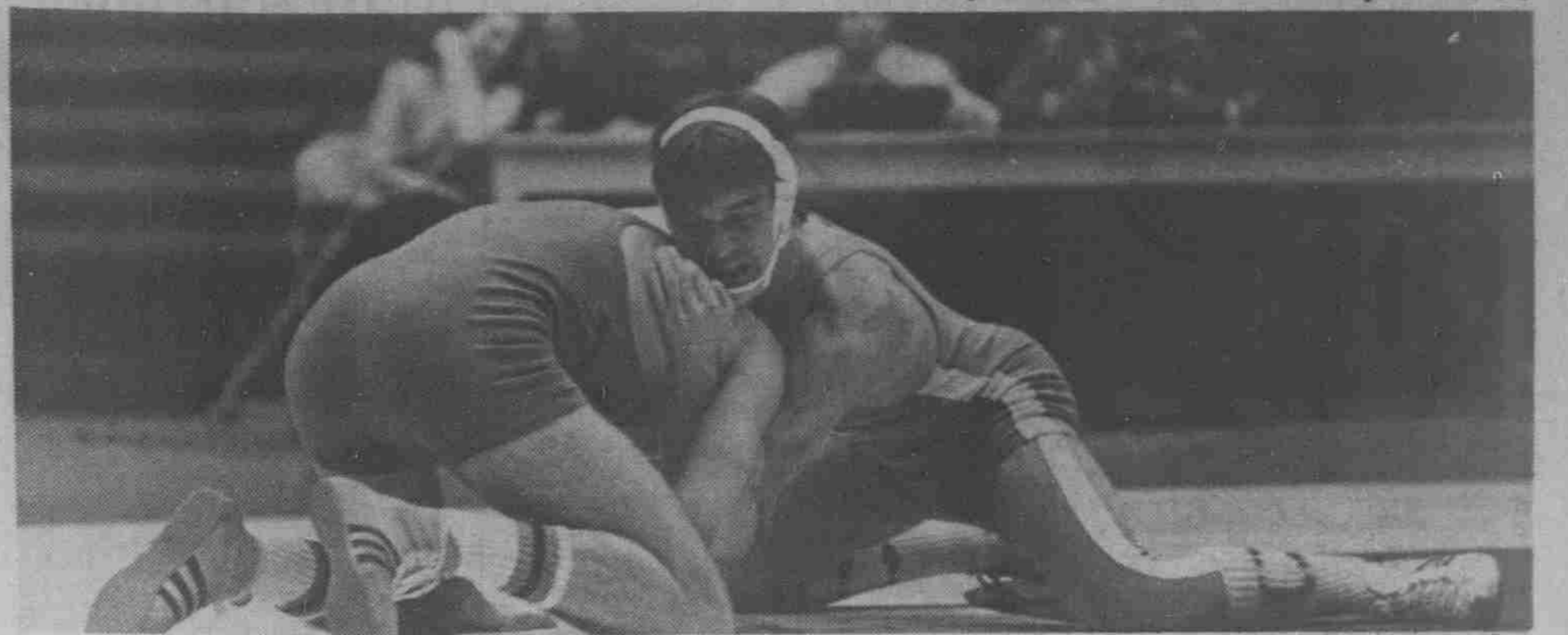
Chris's brother Scott, a junior was undefeated in dual meets last season in the 126-pound class. This year he's dropped to the starting position at 118.

Two more freshmen, Mike Benzel, a Virginia champion at 167, and Joe Ryan, a two-time Michigan 158-pound runner-up are fighting for the starting berth at 158.

Dean Brior, a freshman who won a Pennsylvania 185-pound title, is challenging sophomore Bucky Gaudreau for a start at 167, while Dave Juergens, New York's 145-pound winner last year, is pressing Tim Reaume, who finished second in the Atlantic Coast Conference last year, for the first position at 142.

If freshman Dave Casale, another Pennsylvania state champion, can shake off a knee injury that has plagued him since high school, the 190-pound class is his.

Senior David Breece will start at 126, after moving down from 134, where he finished second in the ACC last winter.



UNC's Tim Reaume battles a Virginia wrestler in a 142-pound match last year.

Sophomore Jeff Ranking, receiving the bulk of competition from brother Bob, a junior, is expected to start at 150.

Carl Hoffman has 177 secured and Lam is looking toward two football players, Dee Hardison and Mark Wright, to wrestle unlimited.

Although much new talent was moved in, the team will definitely feel the loss of some old talent. Steve Breece, last year's ACC champion at 126, has dropped out of school.

"I don't even know why he left," says brother David. "He just up and left a few days ago, without telling anyone why. I'm hoping that he might decide to come back."

"His loss is going to hurt. He was definitely of national champion caliber."

Lam feels he has adequate depth in several classes, but worries about

injuries at other weights.

"We've got to stay healthy. Wrestling is like any other sport in that losing one key player is like turning a winning season into a losing one. We can't afford to lose either of the Conkwrights or Breece. Being healthy is always very important."

And with the schedule Lam has mapped out, staying healthy takes on added significance.

In addition to some steadily improving ACC teams, the Heels will wrestle defending Southern Conference champion East Carolina and Oklahoma, last winter's second finest team nationally.

"This year's schedule is by far the toughest Carolina has ever played," says Lam.

Included on the slate is a six-day trip through the Mid-west in early January, where the Heels will tangle with

Colorado Mines, Northern Colorado, Wyoming and Oklahoma.

"I have no illusions of beating Oklahoma," Lam admits, "but if you don't schedule teams like that you can't recruit the boy who wants this kind of competition."

The season opens Friday when UNC hosts the Carolina Invitational, an eight team tournament featuring Virginia, ECU, Auburn, N.C. State, Duke, Pembroke State and Appalachian State.

Lam looks for the conference race to be tight.

"Virginia won the conference last year, and they have most everybody back. State is improving, and after Maryland dominated the conference so long to let Virginia beat them last year, I'm sure they'll want to get back on top."

"I look for a four-way race between Virginia, State, Maryland and ourselves."

Greenwood all-regional

Vicky Greenwood, a UNC sophomore, landed a spot on the second all-regional team selected at the Southeastern Field Hockey Tournament in Fredericksburg, Va. last weekend.

Greenwood was one of four Carolina players representing the Deep South Section on two all-star teams participating in the tournament. The others were Bashi Buba, Laurie Woodward and Susan McCandless.

Greenwood, who received the same honor last year, will be vying for a position on one of three national teams to be selected at the U.S. Field Hockey Association National Tournament in Harrisonburg, Va. over Thanksgiving.

Healers win Grail final

The top-seeded Dental Healers soundly defeated sixth-seeded Raleigh Rockets 56-37 last Thursday in the Grail Mural Holiday Basketball Festival championship.

The contest was physical, with two game-stopping injuries in the first half and repeated scuffles for the ball.

The Rockets stayed close for the first 15 minutes but the Healers edged to a halftime lead 22-13. The Rockets never recovered and went on to lose by 19 points.

The game's outcome rested with control of the boards. As neither team shot well from the outside, the Rockets' David Aldridge caught fire from outside early in the second half, but the Healers tightened up their defense and shut down the outside threat.

The champion Healers got to the finals by defeating Law Blue 51-36 in a game

characterized by poor ball handling and shot selection.

The Rockets earned a championship berth beating defending Fraternity Blue champions Pi Kappa Phi (49-34), which is traditionally hot-handed.

The Grail final was a matchup of the two tallest teams entered in the tournament. Neither team listed a player under 6-3. The small Woollen Gym courts provided a cramped playing surface and may have led to much physical contact.

The Dental Healers were seeded no. 1 based on their players' varsity experience. Bill Chambers, captain of the Healers, played for UNC from 1970-1973. Other former Tar Heels were Mickey Bell, last year's star walk-on, and John O'Donnell, a forward who graduated in 1974.

-Brad Bauler

Preseason open

Fencing aim falls short

The Carolina fencing team competed in its last pre-season meet Sunday in preparation for the upcoming Penn State Intercollegiate Tournament this weekend and the regular season which begins Dec. 3 for UNC at N. C. State.

The men's epee and sabre opens were held at Duke Sunday with the Carolina, State and Clemson teams joining the host Blue Devil squad. For the UNC fencers, it was their fourth open competition of the year and perhaps their poorest performance.

"I wasn't particularly pleased with the results," UNC Head Coach Ron Miller said. "We had some good efforts from individuals, but I think we were looking forward to the Penn State tournament."

Clemson coach Charlie Potat grabbed first place in the sabre division over UNC's

A. J. Keane and Clemson's Jim Heck. In the epee, former Carolina star Dave Lynn finished first with Alan Knight behind him. Chris Collins, a sophomore fencing for the first year for Carolina finished fourth.

Twelve men and eight to ten women travel to Penn State this weekend for a tournament which features only intercollegiate fencers, with no outside entries allowed. Other opens this year allowed outside entries.



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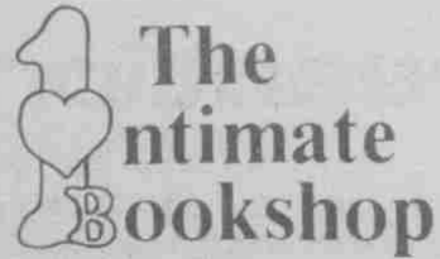
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