

# ANCHORMEN TUNE UP FOR PLAYOFF RUN

By GEORGE RICCIO  
ANCHOR SPORTS WRITER

The Rhode Island College wrestling team ended their regular season last week at home beginning with a 37-6 win over Coast Guard Academy on Tuesday, Feb. 8.

The Anchormen defeated the Bears in eight of the ten weight classes, including pins from sophomore Remington Alves (149 lbs.) and freshman Brandon Regnault (Hvt.). Other highlights on the night included a major decision victory for junior captain Brandon Gauthier (125 lbs.), who bumped up a weight class to compete at 133 lbs. On the same night, senior Brendan Guarino (174 lbs.) bested his second straight NEWA ranked opponent in Coast Guard's Will Stark in a 13-7 decision victory. Guarino competed most of the season at 165 lbs. but recently moved up a weight class and has since dominated his competition.

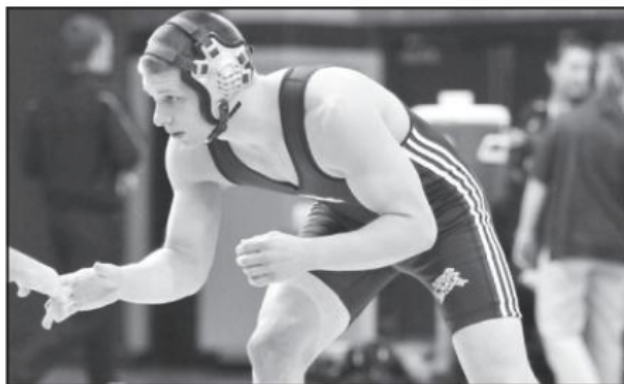
On Sunday, Feb. 13 RIC held their final home regular season competition of the year at the Murray Center in a Trimet with Trinity College and Bridgewater State College. RIC took on Trinity first, and though they fought hard, the Anchormen fell 19-22.

Highlights included another Guarino victory, in which he bested his opponent in the

final seconds to pull out a win. Seniors Travis Drappi (133 lbs.) and Kevin Sutherland (149 lbs.) and sophomore Ryan Rheume (157 lbs.) all earned decision victories for RIC, but it wasn't enough in the end.

The final match of the day pitted the Anchormen against Bridgewater State, which was a rematch from the NEWA Dual Tournament back in January. In a heartbreaking loss, the Anchormen fell 16-15. Though the loss was very difficult to get over, the match wasn't without its highlights. Junior Brandon Gauthier defeated the number one ranked NEWA 125 lbs. wrestler in Bridgewater State junior Ken Francis in a 9-8 decision victory. Regnault beat freshman Ricky Caruso of Bridgewater State in a 3-2 match; Caruso is also ranked in the conference. Sutherland picked up his second win on the day and freshman Josh Baker (141 lbs.) beat his opponent in a 6-5 decision.

Anyone can look at this past weekend in two ways. First, they can say that RIC lost to two teams that "on paper" they should have beat, but wrestling without 141 lbs. junior standout Michael Trasso or their regular 165 lbs. freshman wrestler Dustin Wilcox made the difference. However, they can also say that RIC really battled against the tougher opponents



COURTESY OF RIC ATHLETICS

KEVIN SUTHERLAND GETS IN POSITION FOR A TAKEDOWN.

to get those close victories and the evidence is in the scores. In all five victories against Bridgewater State, the margin of victory was three points or less for RIC.

Leaders like Gauthier, Sutherland, Guarino and Drappi really set the example for what it takes to win those close matches. Gauthier went out against a nationally ranked, conference leading and 2009 NEWA finalist and beat him. Not only did he win, he dominated Francis on his feet, taking him down three times. Guarino and Drappi also got big wins in the closing seconds of their matches and those wins were very important in the scope of the match.

Yes, RIC did have a rough weekend as a team, wrestling without a full lineup, but getting those individual wins is

so important at this point in the season for seeding that it really was a victory for RIC in the grand scheme of things.

Sunday was also a day honoring the RIC wrestling alumni and the 2011 senior class. The seniors this season include Christopher Dean (184 lbs.), Brendan Guarino and captains Travis Drappi and Kevin Sutherland.

Over the past four years, these four wrestlers have meant so much to the wrestling program and all anyone has to do is look at the success of the team since this class's arrival to see it. Their freshman year, RIC placed at the National Duals, was second at the NEWA Duals, won three invitational tournaments and won the NEWA Conference title, finishing the season ranked fourteenth in the country. Sutherland and

Drappi earned All-New England Honors and were full-time freshmen starters. Guarino was the full-time 165 lbs. starting wrestler and Dean shared time at the 184 lbs. and 197 lbs. spots. In their sophomore year, RIC was again second at the NEWA duals and was third in the NEWA Conference. Sutherland captured the Conference Title and earned Outstanding Wrestler honors as well. Last season, RIC was fourth at the NEWA Duals, Sutherland was a National Qualifier yet again and Drappi won three individual tournaments. Both Sutherland and Drappi were All-New England wrestlers once again. In addition to these accolades, this senior class earned scholar-athlete awards, Academic All-American awards and consistently beat the 3.0 GPA team goal.

With this graduating class, RIC loses four full-time starters, two of whom were four year starters and four team leaders. It is truly going to be hard to replace such a hard-working group of young men and they will surely be missed next season.

The post season begins for the Anchormen with the NEWA futures tournament on Sunday, Feb. 20 followed by the NEWA Conference tournament at Trinity College on Feb. 26 and 27.