



COURTESY OF RIC WRESTLING

RIC JUNIOR MIKE TRASSO DEFEATS BLAZE CHATHAM OF SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE

RIC WRESTLERS TAME BEARS

By GEOFF RICCIO
ANCHOR SPORTS WRITER

While everyone was home enjoying the holidays and the winter weather, the Rhode Island College Wrestling Team faced some of its toughest competition over the winter break. The Anchormen began their break by taking on rival New England opponent Western New England College in their first home meet of the season on Dec. 10.

RIC dominated the Golden Bears with a decisive 33-9 victory in which junior captain Brandon Gauthier and senior captain Travis Drappi scored first periods pins for the Anchormen. RIC won eight of the ten weight classes, overwhelming the opponent.

The next test for the Anchormen was in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida at the 2010 Citrus Open Dec. 29-30. Four of the top twenty-five teams in the country attended the tournament including #3 Augsburg, the runners up to eventual champion, #10 Division II Upper-Iowa. Despite

the intense level of competition, RIC wrestled tough and ended up placing eight wrestlers. Senior Kevin Sutherland, junior Michael Trasso and Drappi all placed second in the tournament, while Gauthier battled back after a tough quarter-finals loss to place third. Junior Geoff Riccio and sophomore Ryan Rheume placed fourth and seventh at the 157 lbs. weight class, while junior Jared Rhodes and sophomore Michael Sugermeyer placed eleventh. RIC ended up placing sixth in the tournament, which was the highest finish for an unranked team at the meet.

From there, the Anchormen traveled to Williamsport, Pennsylvania to compete in the Bud Whitehill National Duals at Lycoming College Jan. 14-15. RIC went 2-3 at the duals, defeating Muskingum and Kings College decisively. Though RIC didn't place in the tournament, they did have some impressive performances with Sutherland, Trasso and Gauthier all going undefeated over the course of the two-day tournament.

On Wednesday Jan. 19,

RIC had a dual meet with rival NEWA Conference opponent WPI that was rescheduled due to the weather. The Anchormen handled the Engineers with a 31-12 win, bringing their dual meet record to 4-4. RIC won seven of the ten weight classes including pins by senior Brendan Guarino and freshman Adam Lynch and a Major Decision by Sutherland. The win for the Anchormen gave head coach Jay Jones his 150th career win, and it could not have been a better victory for the Anchormen.

The final competition over the winter break for the wrestlers came on Sunday, Jan. 23, with the New England Conference Dual Meet Tournament. Seeded number eight in the tournament, the Anchormen first took on University of Southern Maine and handed them a 33-15 loss, capped off by a pin by freshman Brandon Regnault. With that victory, RIC moved up in the bracket to take on the number one seeded Springfield College Pride. Though RIC battled hard, they suffered a 22-16 loss, moving them to the lower bracket.

Their next opponent was

long-time in-state rival Johnson and Wales University. The Wildcats had defeated the Anchormen in their last nine meetings, a stretch dating back over five years. The Anchormen would have better luck this time against JWU, winning seven weight classes to dominate the Wildcats 24-12, moving them up in the bracket.

The final match of the day was against Bridgewater State College for fifth and sixth place respectively. Just like the previous match, the Anchormen sailed past the Bears for a 30-13 victory capped off yet again by a Regnault pin, ending the day for RIC with a fifth place finish. Drappi, Trasso, Sutherland, Regnault and freshman Kevin Barrucci all went undefeated in the tournament.

The winter break is always one of the toughest times for the wrestling team, both in the level of competition, and the amount of hard work that has to go into three weeks of two-a-day practices. Every day the team wakes up for an early morning practice, and then come back a few hours later for another prac-

tice, everyday for three weeks. Though this time of the season is considered by many to be the bulk of the season, it is by no means the most important. This break is meant to get the team focused on wrestling, and get prepared for the final month.

However, what was once a young team made up primarily of underclassmen has matured throughout this time into a team with an identity. Freshmen are stepping into starting roles, and seniors are becoming the leaders they need to be. Even though the competition in both Florida and Pennsylvania was at a high level, Assistant Coach Bob Smith said, "You would have been proud of the boys down there, they really brought it every match and didn't care who stepped out there, and they just wrestled very focused."

The last stretch of competition begins this Friday at 7:00 p.m. in the Murray Center, where RIC will battle Johnson and Wales in the second home dual meet of the season.