



2003 Division III College Preview

By Dan Fickel
National Editor

The 2003 NCAA Division III National Wrestling Tournament will be held on March 7-8 at Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio.

Augsburg College, coached by Jeff Swenson, is the three-time defending team champion. The Auggies won a Division III record eight national championships in the last 12 seasons. Augsburg has finished either first or second in the nation in 13 of the last 14 years. The Auggies are led by NCAA runner-up Ricky Crone (184), All-American Mike Flanagan (285), and former prep state champions Mark Matzek (133), Jamell Tidwell (141), Marcus Levesseur (157), and Joe Moon (174).

Jim Miller's perennially tough Wartburg Knights and Don Murray's traditionally strong SUNY-Brockport Eagles have powerful line-ups that will look to challenge for the much coveted team title. The Knights are headed by All-Americans Heath Ropp (125), Wil Kelly (141), Kevin Bratland (157), Sonny Alvarez (184), Alain Djoumessi (197), and LeRoy Gardner (285). The Eagles return 2001 NCAA champion Lenny Baker (149) and All-Americans Kris Harrington (141) and Don Favro (174).

Other teams to watch include Dave Icenhower's College of New Jersey Lions, Tim Fader's Wisconsin-LaCrosse Eagles, Randy Steward's Loras Duhawks, Steve Strellner's Montclair State Red Hawks, Dave Mitchell's Luther Norse, Heath Grimm's Upper Iowa Peacocks, Ron Beaschler's Ohio Northern Polar Bears, Al Baxter's Buena Vista Beavers, Johnny

Johnson's Wisconsin-Stevens Point Pointers, Kerry Volkmann's John Carroll Blue Streaks, Daryl Arroyo's Springfield Pride, Brandon Totten's Delaware Valley Aggies, Ned McGinley's King's Monarchs, Roger Crebs' Lycoming Warriors, Rich Fleming's Baldwin-Wallace Yellow Jackets, Neil Turner's Messiah Falcons, and Ron Peterson's Simpson Storm.

Here's a look at the ten individual weight classes barring injuries, weight class changes, redshirt decisions, and eligibility problems:

125 POUNDS

Heath Ropp (Wartburg) is the highest returning All-American after his solid fifth-place NCAA finish last season. A former Iowa state placer, Ropp has won two consecutive Dick Walker Invitational titles and is a hard worker who will wrestle a series of steady matches. He offers an impressive mix of strength, intensity, and explosiveness.

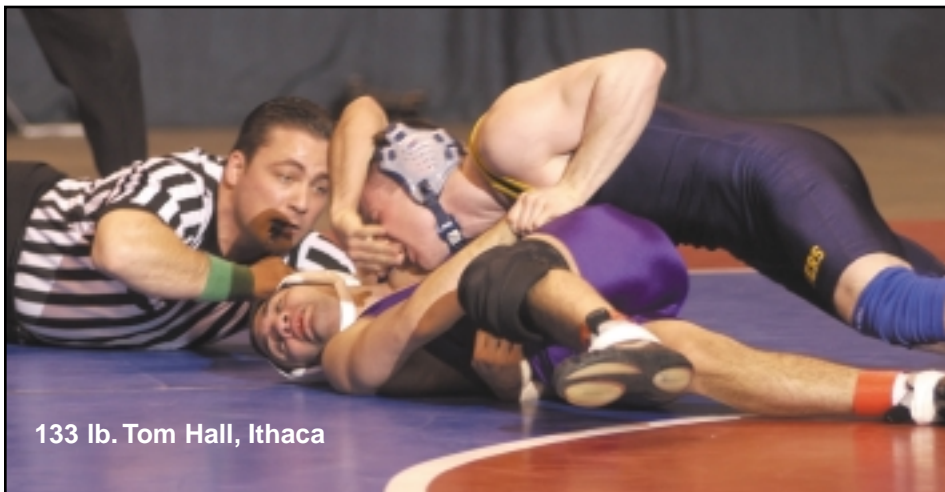
Just behind Ropp are All-Americans Davey Starks (WI-Eau Claire) and Mitch Marcks (King's). Starks has captured three consecutive Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference crowns and is a take-down specialist with the ability to attack the legs or go upper body. He seized top honors at the Auggie-Brute-Adidas Open and was the 1998 Wisconsin state champion for Stoughton High School. Marcks placed second at this year's Messiah Invitational and is the defending Middle Atlantic States Collegiate Athletic Corporation champion. He possesses a

NCAA DIVISION III PREVIEW TEAM RANKINGS

1. Wartburg (IA)
2. Augsburg (MN)
3. SUNY-Brockport (NY)
4. College of New Jersey
5. Wisconsin-LaCrosse
6. Loras (IA)
7. Montclair State (NJ)
8. Ohio Northern
9. Luther (IA)
10. Upper Iowa
11. Buena Vista (IA)
12. Wisconsin-Stevens Point
13. John Carroll (OH)
14. Springfield (MA)
15. Coe (IA)
16. Delaware Valley (PA)
17. Lycoming (PA)
18. Ithaca (NY)
19. King's (PA)
20. Baldwin-Wallace (OH)
21. Messiah (PA)
22. Simpson (IA)
23. Pacific (OR)
24. WI-Eau Claire
25. Mount Union (OH)
26. York (PA)
27. Manchester (IN)
28. Oswego State (NY)
29. St. John's (MN)
30. Wisconsin-Platteville

wide range of skills and seldom gets himself in bad situations.

Doug West (Ohio Northern), Shain Hostetter (Muskingum), Greg Brendemuehl (Augsburg), James Marrero (New Jersey), Jared Selover (Baldwin-Wallace), Ben Ewig (Messiah), Joe Honts (Buena Vista), and Jason Custer (York) are quality wrestlers with hopes of national prominence. West is a transfer from Division I Kent State University. He had a big win at this year's Ohio Northern Invitational and was the 2000 Ohio state champion for Clyde High School. Extremely talented, West is a whirlwind performer capable of big offensive outbursts. Hostetter was honored as the Most Outstanding Wrestler at the 2002 Ohio Athletic Conference Championships. Brendemuehl is an elite incoming freshman with great promise. He finished second at this year's Auggie-



133 lb. Tom Hall, Ithaca

Brute-Adidas Open and third at the St. Cloud Invitational. Brendemuehl will have to rank with 1999 Minnesota state champion Matt Jones to represent the Auggies at this classification. Marrero missed national placement by one match last season and is the returning Metropolitan Conference champion. He will be tested by tough red-shirt freshman Brian Dempsey to keep his spot in the Lion's line-up. Selover placed third at the Ohio Northern Invitational and is a top-notch true freshman with loads of potential. Ewig was voted the Most Outstanding Wrestler at this year's Red Dragon Invitational and is displaying real progress. He will be challenged by 1999 North Carolina state champion Jacob Clackett for the starting position in the Falcons line-up. Honts won an Iowa state title while in high school and is a transfer from Division II South Dakota State University. He excels on his feet and has a successful freestyle background. Custer was triumphant at this year's Spartan Invitational and should not be underestimated.

Some experienced performers with national place-winning aspirations are 2000 Arizona state champion Nick Kehagias (Chicago), Midwest Regional champion Manuel Rodriguez (Millikin), Great Lakes Regional placer Todd Knutson (Pacific), Doug Parker Invitational champion Tom Prarie (Williams), Sal Cruz (SUNY-Brockport), 2000 R.I.T. Invitational champion Dan Dempsey (Oswego State), Jordan Early or Brett Purcell (John Carroll), T.J. Hunsberger (Lycoming), and Jared Esala (WI-Stevens Point).

Others include Ithaca Invitational champion Amir Figueroa (R.I.T.), Concordia Open runner-up Terry Morgan (Loras), Greg Winn (Oneonta State), 2002 Junior National Greco-Roman third-place finisher Corey Kalina (Wartburg), Brian Benson (NYU), three-time Connecticut state champion Luis Murillo (Trinity), Jason Peck (SUNY-Cortland), Darnell Moore (Montclair State), Kevin Vees (Johnson & Wales), 2002 Missouri state runner-up Adam West (Cornell), 2002 Rhode Island state champion Jon Egan (Roger Williams), Aaron Solberg (St. John's), 2001 Minnesota state champion Logan Brincefield (Concordia-MN), Jason Carpellucci (Upper Iowa), 2002 Iowa state placer Nate Evans (Luther), Dan Stanton (Augustana), Desmond Wiggins (Delaware Valley), and Roger Williams Invitational champion Kyle Hunsicker (Bridgewater State).

133 POUNDS

Mike Waldron (Lycoming) and Ralph Acosta (Upper Iowa) finished fourth and fifth respectively at last year's NCAA Championships and start out as the co-

favorites. Waldron is an exciting, thrill-a-minute grappler with a unique style who can pin opponents from seemingly any angle or direction. He won a Pennsylvania state title while in high school and is the defending Middle Atlantic States Collegiate Athletic Corporation champion. Acosta had a big win at this year's Mike McCready Open and is a dominating mat wrestler with a good variety of rides and pinning combinations. He is a never-give-in type performer who possesses extraordinary enthusiasm for the sport.

Dave Ilaria (New Jersey) and Daniel Roberts (SUNY-Brockport) are immensely talented individuals with national championship intentions. Ilaria is a transfer from Division I Seton Hall University. He was an impressive winner at this year's Ithaca Invitational and qualified for the 1999 NCAA Division I Championships with a first-place performance at the East Coast Wrestling Association Championships. A tremendous scorer right from the neutral position, Ilaria is an aggressive attacker and his constant pursuit of the pin makes him a real crowd favorite. Roberts possesses great athleticism and is the defending Empire Wrestling Conference champion. He incorporates a nice blend of speed and power and was the 2001 New York state champion for Bellport High School.

Gary Mikolay (Montclair State), Mark

Matzek (Augsburg), Tank Agyeman (Oswego State), Kevin DeJulius (Washington & Jefferson), Tyler Hubbard (Wartburg), Mike Troast (York), Cliff Medina (Hunter), Nathan Shearer (Ohio Northern), Rocky Laughlin (Mount Union), and Joel Jeannite (Springfield), are formidable grapplers with the ability to do very well at this classification. Mikolay missed NCAA placement by one match last season after a runner-up performance at the Metropolitan Conference. He is a tough defensive wrestler who knows how to maintain position. Matzek has been impressive this season with a championship performance at the Auggie-Brute-Adidas Open and a runner-up finish at the St. Cloud Invitational. He won a pair of Wisconsin state titles while in high school and is a tenacious individual who is always looking to improve. Agyeman was honored as the Most Outstanding Wrestler at the 13th Annual Doug Parker Invitational. He is an entertaining wrestler with a volatile style that enables him to score a lot of points in a short amount of time. DeJulius earned All-American status with a seventh-place finish at the 2002 NCAA Championships. He is a dedicated performer with superior leadership capabilities. Hubbard seized top honors at the Dick Walker Invitational and is a transfer from Division I Northern Iowa University.

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He had a prolific prep career at Blue Springs High School, claiming three Missouri state titles and compiling an overall win-loss record of 169-13. Exceptional on his feet, Hubbard was a seventh-place finisher at the prestigious Junior National Freestyle Championships in 1999. Troast thrives in scramble situations on the mat and is exceedingly physical. This year he won the Spartan Invitational in convincing fashion. Medina is a funky, unorthodox wrestler with the expertise to frustrate his opposition and capitalize on their mistakes. Shearer adjusts well to the many different strategies that his opponents attempt and is the defending Ohio Athletic Conference champion. Laughlin is a transfer from Division I Duquesne University. He was a two-time Ohio state placer for Canton South High School and shines on his feet with a wide-open, attacking style. Jeannite had a sterling prep career that included a Massachusetts state title, a New England Championships crown, and an overall win-loss record of 80-5 with 61 falls.

Other top-8 hopefuls are Centennial Conference champion Dan Patterson (McDaniel), Minnesota Intercollegiate

Athletic Conference runner-up Chuck Griffith (St. John's), New England College Wrestling Association champion Deshawn Fentress (WPI), Roger Williams Invitational champion Mike Riley (Rhode Island), 1999 Iowa state placer Mike Vagher (Buena Vista), Ohio Northern Invitational champion Nathan Hills (Manchester), 2000 NCAA qualifier Brady Holtz (WI-Stevens Point), Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference placer Quent Christensen (Simpson), and Middle Atlantic States Collegiate Athletic Corporation runner-up B.J. Wise (Delaware Valley).

Darkhorse challengers include Ohio Northern Invitational runner-up Jimmy Wright (Muskingum), 2000 Centennial Conference champion Steve Kareha (Gettysburg), Dick Walker Invitational runner-up Marcus Cobbs (Loras), Jeff Varney (Baldwin-Wallace), two-time Pennsylvania state placer Eric Frick (Delaware Valley), Jason Chase (SUNY-Cortland), Nick Mophew (Lawrence), Derek Konrad (Central), Ohio Athletic Conference placer Tim Lennox (John Carroll), Harold Diedrick (Cornell), Tyler Alexander (Messiah), Wisconsin Open champion

Mike Jankowski (WI-Whitewater), Roger Williams Invitational runner-up Lance Dolson (Ithaca), Josh Timm or Justin Lessard (Concordia-MN), Larry Amedio (Augustana), and 2002 Wisconsin state champion Zach Chambers (WI-Platteville).

141 POUNDS

This classification is highlighted by five outstanding All-Americans, each with the ability and dedication to win this year's national title.

All-Americans Wil Kelly (Wartburg), Keith Poloskey (Springfield), and Taylor Wood (Buena Vista) finished third, fifth, and sixth respectively at this weight class last season. Kelly is an experienced performer with great basics and competitiveness. He had a sensational prep career that included three Iowa state titles, a 92-match winning streak, a runner-up finish at the Cadet Nationals, and an overall win-loss record of 118-3. Poloskey has captured two New England College Wrestling Association Championships and is incredibly strong and muscular. He competes with an aggressive and dominating style

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and is a two-time All-American. Wood is an exciting mat wrestler who thrives for the fall. He was the 2000 Iowa state champion for Chariton High School.

Kris Harrington (SUNY-Brockport) and Jim Morgan (King's) earned All-American status at 149-pounds in 2002 and will compete at this division. Harrington was triumphant at the Empire Wrestling Conference and is a versatile performer with great hips and excellent pin production. He finished eighth at the prestigious Junior National Greco-Roman Championships in 1998 and is a former Empire State Games Gold Medalist. Morgan is difficult to score on and consistently turns in good performances. He placed second at the Middle Atlantic States Collegiate Athletic Corporation and was a fifth-place finisher at the 2000 Pennsylvania State High School Championships.

Jamell Tidwell (Augsburg), Tony Sweeting (Coe), Bobby Romano (John Carroll), P.J. Morreale (New Jersey), Dave Cordoba (Montclair State), Jeff Kuhl (Simpson), Jim Russial (York), and Nate Yeasted (Muhlenberg) are wrestlers to watch in this division. Tidwell is an absolutely brilliant performer destined for stardom. He combines great strength and quickness with a tremendous work ethic. A former two-time Minnesota state cham-

panion, Tidwell has been devastating this year with championship performances at the Auggie-Brute-Adidas Open and St. Cloud Invitational. Sweeting is a dangerous grappler capable of putting any opponent on their back. He won this year's Dick Walker Invitational in impressive fashion and was the 1998 Iowa state champion for Riverside Highland High School. Romano is good on his feet and showcases sound skills on the mat. He was a two-time Ohio state placer for Walsh Jesuit High School and is the defending Ohio Athletic Conference champion. Morreale placed third at this year's Central Jersey Open and uses outstanding reach and leverage to his advantage. Cordoba placed third at the 2000 National High School Seniors Championships and was a two-time New Jersey state champion for Kearny High School. Kuhl seized top honors at this year's Mike McCreedy Open and is capable of scoring points quickly from any position on the mat. Russial won a Delaware state title while in high school and is the reigning Metropolitan Conference champion. Yeasted is a two-time NCAA qualifier who was honored as the Most Outstanding Wrestler at the 2001 Centennial Conference Championships.

Ten other wrestlers with previous collegiate experience will look to make their

presence known. They are Middle Atlantic States Collegiate Athletic Corporation champion Andy Squires (Lycoming), College Conference of Illinois & Wisconsin runner-up Matt Kapraun (Augustana), Wisconsin Open runner-up Nick Karls (WI-Whitewater), Ohio Northern Invitational third-place finisher Sayre Wuhr (Baldwin-Wallace), Spartan Invitational champion Bryan Radik (Coast Guard), Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference runner-up Nate Lefebvre (St. John's), 2000 NCAA qualifier Zack Schroeder (Concordia-MN), former three-time Maryland state champion Davey Blake (McDaniel), Red Dragon Invitational champion Shaun Cleary (Plymouth State), and Adam Anderson (WI-Platteville).

Others who will provide tough competition include Ohio Northern Invitational champion Nick Lain (Manchester), Chris Vincente (Waynesburg), Messiah Petrofes runner-up Matt Kirsopp (Thiel), Ohio state placer Ryan Allen (Ohio Northern), Ron Serrano (SUNY Cortland), Tim Martinez or Jim Lewis (King's), New Jersey state placer Chris Wells (Johnson & Wales), Jon Carey or Mark Anson (Upper Iowa), Jeff Patzke (Luther), Rich White (Ithaca), Dylan Hagen (Cornell), Ryan Campbell (Delaware Valley), Garrett Miyake (Pacific), Ben Zwaschka (WI-LaCrosse), Bryon Johnson (Washington & Jefferson), Mike Dukes (Loras), Kyle Holler (Mount Union), Steve Vaughn (R.I.T.), two-time Ohio state placer Dan Ralph (John Carroll), and 2002 Kansas state champion Nolan Cisper (Norwich).



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149 POUNDS

This is a powerful weight class that features two NCAA champions, two national runner-ups, and two other All-Americans.

Garrett Kurth (Luther) was the 2001 NCAA champion at this division and finished second at the national tournament last season. He was victorious at the prestigious Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference and is a physical competitor with great conditioning who pushes the action from start to finish. A former Iowa state runner-up, Kurth is dominant on his feet and has a flair for the dramatic.

Lenny Baker (SUNY-Brockport) put on a spectacular performance in winning the national championship at 141-pounds in 2001. He has captured two Empire Wrestling Conference Championships and is a clutch performer who thrives in pressure situations. Extremely poised and confident, Baker received a medical redshirt last season and has tremendous leadership capabilities.

Andy Vogel (Messiah) and Rami Ratel (Montclair State) placed second at the