



Scanning SPORTS

By FRAN FANUCCI, Sports Editor

PENN STATE--EAST'S WRESTLING CAPITOL!

With the exception of the Barnum and Bailey Circus (and may be not even that can afford strong competition) this week's Eastern Intercollegiate Wrestling Tournament at Recreation Hall is generally regarded in these parts as the "Greatest Show on Earth."

There is no doubt in the minds of any Eastern wrestling enthusiast that Penn State is the "Wrestling Capitol" of the East and possibly half the nation. A few arguments from Lehigh and Wilkes attempt to refute that statement but they are hopelessly without fact. For if it were possible to hold the EIWA championships here every year it would be done without the slightest hindrance. The money made and the popularity gained are much too valuable to the Association to ever turn down a bid to hold the tournament here.

Friday and Saturday's session will total well over the 10,000 mark and may reach close to 15,000, depending on the student support. If regular season meets can be indicative of the future then fear that the students will not support this tourney is unfounded for the Lions averaged over 5000 for every home encounter.

The fact that four of the Lion entries stand excellent chances of winning their division title is a natural drawing card. Sid Nodland (123), Johnny Johnston (130), John Pepe (137), and Dave Adams (147) will all be either top-seeded or second-seeded in the pre-tourney selections. Nodland and Johnston are defending champions, while Pepe and Adams are top favorites because of their runnerup finish in last year's EIWA tourney at Lehigh.

If all four, or even two or three, enter the semi-finals on Saturday a packed house in the afternoon and evening is almost assured.

MANY REASONS TO ITS POPULARITY

The unexplainable popularity that wrestling boasts here is baffling to many outsiders, but to the insiders here there are many reasons.

Gymnastics Coach Gene Wettstone said that gym fans here are the most educated fans in the country. The same holds true with wrestling. Top wrestling here is as common as the Nittany Lion statue and, because of this, fans tend to follow the sport more closely, thus educating themselves about a sport that in most cases was never offered in high school.

Another reason lending support to its popularity is the fact that there is no place to go on weekends at Penn State, as contrasted with such cities as Pittsburgh or Philadelphia. Naturally the main course of travel is to the gym, when sports events are being held.

It has been a habit passed on from one student to the other. Freshman are orientated by upperclassmen, who a few years previous were being orientated themselves.

But in every sport there's some attraction that fans like and want to watch and which will cause them to become more interested in the sport. Charley Speidel is that attraction.

In his 31 years as head coach of Lion wrestling teams, the tiny and witty Speidel has built his teams up to be the powerhouses of the East. He has instilled in the student body a love for the game that is unparalleled anywhere in the East, and he has promoted wrestling in almost all parts of the State.

Students and townspeople don't have to be told about Speidel's accomplishments. They all know them. And to show their respect they always give him at every wrestling meet the largest ovation of anyone introduced.

Wettstone Looking for Fourth NCAA Gymnast Championship

Coach Has High Hopes

"I'm not going out to the Nationals to take second place," Lion gymnastics coach Gene Wettstone said yesterday.

This year's National Collegiate Athletic Association Gymnastic Championships will be held at the Naval Academy, March 22-23.

The bespectacled coach has been pointing to a win in the 1957 National competition since the 1956 tournament ended.

He began concentrated practice with an eye on the Nationals after the team won the Eastern team title in the Army meet three weeks ago.

Gymnast Armando Vega was even working on his all-around routine before the Army meet. This led to weaker performances in his three dual-meet events—horizontal bar, parallel bars, and flying rings.

Wettstone will be after the fourth NCAA championship of his highly successful 18-year career. Wettstone-trained squads won the collegiate team title in 1948, 1953 and 1954.

The 1948 team was probably the



Gene Wettstone Looking for his fourth

most rewarding one for the Lion mentor. He was chosen Olympic gym coach that year and had three proteges—Ray Sorenson, Bill Bonsall and Louis Bordo—travel to London with him.

This year Wettstone brought his won-lost record up to an amazing 67-26. Beside taking the Eastern team trophy, a Wettstone-trained athlete, Vega, took the Eastern all-around and parallel bar crowns for the sixth consecutive year.

The athlete who started the all-

Lion Squad Working Hard

around and p-bar skein was Jean Cronstedt, who led the Lions to their last two National crowns.

Cronstedt took the Eastern all-around and parallel-bar titles for three straight years 1952-54, won the parallels and all-around in the Nationals in 1953, and won the free exercise, horizontal bar, parallel bar and all-around in the 1954 National tournament.

An interesting parallel is being developed this year in that Vega, Wettstone's number one ace, also missed winning the National title in his first eligible year, 1956.

But following Cronstedt's record, Vega could win his first all-around title in his second year and lead the Lions to the team laurels.

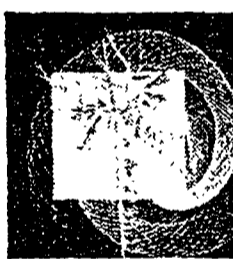
And then again like Cronstedt, Vega would have another year of eligibility with hopes of making it two National wins.

But Wettstone has been doing more than hoping these days. Between 4 and 6:30 p.m. the main floor of Rec Hall has been crowded with a hard-working gym coach and his willing team—Wettstone and company.

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