

Penn State wrestlers excel during Nittany Lion Open

By Brandt Gelman COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

For many Penn State wrestlers, Sunday afternoon's Nittany Lion Open seemed like déjà-vu. More than 400 competitors were entered in the

11 of the 40 semifinalists were from Penn State, setting up intrasquad semifinals in two different weight classes.

Redshirt freshman David Taylor and freshman James Vollrath, as well as true freshman Andrew Alton and senior Adam Lynch were given the opportunity for a rematch of this season's intrasquad match, which took place on Nov. 4.

Earlier in the year, Taylor pinned Vollrath in 4:14 to solidify his starting spot at the 157-pound weight class. In Sunday's semifinal match, the outcome was much of the same, as Taylor cruised to a 12-0 victory.

"You wrestle each other in practice all the time," Taylor said. "You don't feel good when you wrestle your teammate but sometimes you just gotta do it."

"What Alton does is unique. You may not see anyone do what he does ever again."

Cael Sanderson coach

In the 141-pound semifinal, Alton pinned Lynch once again. The two did not wrestle in the intrasquad match earlier this year, but held a closed wrestle-off in practice to decide who would start at 141-pounds — a match Alton also won by fall.

"This match was intense," Alton said. "We are friends off mat, and enemies on the mat."

Alton took the time to praise Lynch, saying his performance throughout the entire tournament was awesome. After his victory in the semifinals, Alton went on to dominate No. 20-ranked Zack Kemmerer, a senior from the University of Pennsylvania. Alton pulled off an under hook move for a 39-second pin on Kemmerer, who holds the PIAA record for most wins in a career with 199.

With a pin in the championship match, Alton continued his dominance this season going 6-0 on the

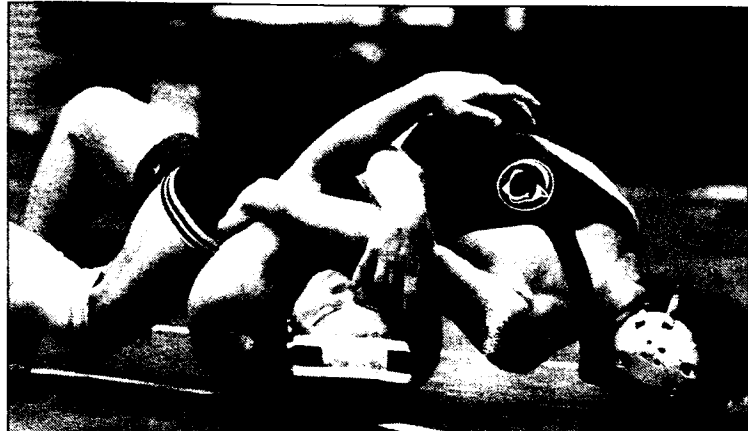
day with five pins. Coach Cael Sanderson said Alton's performance was impressive once again, as he entered Sunday with four dual meet pins.

"What Alton does is unique," said Sanderson, who is the only college wrestler to never lose a college match. "You may not see anyone do what he does ever again."

Taylor also won his respective championship at 157-pounds, defeating Jesse Dong from Virginia Tech in a 9-3 decision. Dong, who was the No. 3-seeded wrestler in nationals last year, gave Taylor all he could handle, but Taylor's superior conditioning allowed him to hang on for the win.

Sanderson said one thing that can be learned from having so many semifinalists is his team is very deep.

"I think we have some great



True freshman Andrew Alton (top) wrestles an opponent Sunday.

Amanda August/Collegian

depth in certain weight classes," he said. "It's good for the program when you have guys competing against each other."

Taylor said people are starting to realize even with a roster littered with inexperienced wrestlers, the team can compete with anyone in the country.

Junior Justin Ortega, who was knocked out of the tournament in the semifinals, wrestled against his teammate, freshman Nick Ruggear, in the consolation cham-

pionship of the 197-pound weight class, which was also a rematch from the intrasquad match. He said wrestling against teammates in a tournament environment is different than in practice.

"It's kind of like a lose-lose situation," Ortega said.

"You don't want to beat your teammate in front of the home crowd, but you don't want to lose either."

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HOROSCOPES

By Jacqueline Bigar

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