2005-2006 Wrestling Preview

Following a much-improved 12-5 record in 2004, this season Old Dominion Wrestling is expected to continue their winning ways. Second-year head coach Steve Martin looks to toughen up the Old Dominion Wrestling schedule again this season, as the Monarchs will travel across the country seeking out the nation's top competition. ODU will wrestle 11 of the nation's top 25 teams and compete in some of the toughest college tournaments throughout the year.

InterMat, the nation's top wrestling Internet resource for collegiate wrestling news, released the Junior National All-American signings list boasting ODU as having the eighth-ranked recruiting class in the nation, Old Dominion’s incoming freshman class won more All-American medals than any other college's freshman class, including powerhouses Iowa, Iowa State and Oklahoma State. While Michigan State claimed the most individual titles, with four titles in both Greco-Roman and freestyle, Old Dominion had four individual wrestlers win five total medals. Freshman recruit Cam Watkins was a double medallist, holding a medal in both freestyle and Greco Roman. Newcomers Kevin Harrington, Ben Fiacco, and Kaylen Baxter each won individual medals as well.

The Monarchs returning starters this year include senior John Dolida (Bridgewater, NJ) who will be starting in the heavy weight class this season, Nelson”Robby” Gosnell competing at 165, and NCAA Tournament qualifier Adam Wright who will look to wrestle at 197 his senior year. Junior Jacob Forestiere returns to compete for the position at 149 after red shirting last year. NCAA Qualifier and Big Ten placewinner, Michael Martin (Chesapeake, VA.) comes to Old Dominion as a transfer from Illinois and will look to bring depth to his Uncle Steve’s team wrestling at 133. Graduate student T.J Hansen is expected to make an immediate impact to the Monarch squad as an anticipated starter at 174 pounds.

The Monarchs have a long and grueling season in front of them and with out a doubt the toughest in ODU history, facing challenging tournaments such as the ODU Invitational, the Mat Town Tournament, the Las Vegas Invitational, Avalon Duals, Southern Scuffle and the Virginia State Intercollegiates. ODU will be going up against tough teams UNC Chapel Hill, University of Northern Iowa, Slippery Rock University, Maryland, UVA, and Hofstra. Nevertheless, Coach Martin and his staff feel that this is what is needed. "I am confident our student-athletes will be ready to perform when they look across the mat and see someone standing in a Big 10 or Big 12 uniform. We will make sure of that", Martin said.

The Monarchs by Weight Class

125: Braxdon Scaletta will start this weight class as a freshman. Scaletta won his junior and senior year of high school and was a senior national All-American. Ranked sixth by Wrestling USA and ninth by Intermat, Scaletta compiled a high school record of 176-11. Bryan Lashomb is a backup wrestler for this weight class.
133: Michael Martin will start at 133 lbs. Martin is a transfer from Illinois where he was a 2004 NCAA qualifier and Big Ten placewinner. Martin beat NCAA All-American Cory Cooperman of Lehigh in an opening round fall 26 seconds into their 2004 NCAA championship match. Backup for the 133 weight class will be Selas Douglas, and freshmen Ryan Williams and Mike Abell.

141: Returning this year to wrestle at 141 will be Shannon Slack. Slack lead the team with 12 major decisions and 37 victories last year in his first year at Old Dominion. Former CAA Wrestler of the Week, Slack finished 13-3 in dual meets. Backing up 141 will be Kyle Pardun, Kaylen Baxter, and Cam Watkins.

149: Freshman Jeff Becker will be starting at 149. During his high school campaign, Becker was a three-time PIAC state placewinner. He was a USA Wrestling Cadet Freestyle national runner up in 2002 and a two-time freestyle All-American. Becker was ranked 27th in the nation by Wrestling USA Magazine. Josh Tyler and Jacob Forestiere will back up the 149 weight class.

157: Nick Pullano will start in this weight class. Last year Pullano finished the season 17-20 earning two falls and a notable victory over VMI’s Chris Hardy in a dual meet. Pullano won the ODU Invitational last year at 157 pounds. Backing up 157 will be freshman Chris Brown.

165: Nelson “Robby” Gosnell will start at this weight class. Last year Gosnell went 30-10, 12 –5 in dual meets, and 8-1 in the conference at 165. He placed fourth at the Missouri Open and third at the Mat Town USA Invitational. Gosnell was also a Virginia Intercollegiate State Champion. Bryan Lenhardt will back up Gosnell at 165.

174: Graduate student T.J. Hansen is expected to start at 174. Hansen comes to ODU from Missouri where he carried a 46-28 career record. Last year, Hansen took first in the Missouri Valley Open, and had two wins by fall including one over Purdue’s Nick Skinner in less than three minutes. Backing up will be Bryan Koz and Bryan Lenhardt.

184: Kevin Harrington will start at 184. Harrington drops down to 184 after earning Sectional Champion while wrestling in New York at 215 pounds. During his high school campaign he went 93-22 and was a 2005 USA Wrestling Junior All-American. Bryan Koz and Bryan Lenhardt will back up the 184 weight class.

197: Returning NCAA qualifier Adam Wright will compete at this weight class. Wright earned his second consecutive 30-win season, and a runner up finish at the Missouri Open. He had a victory over NCAA All-American Matt Pell of Missouri last year at the Missouri Open. David Mendoza will be backing up Wright at 197 pounds.

285: John Dolida returns for his senior season to wrestle at 285/Hwt. class. Dolida wrestled at 197 last year and finished with an 8-15 record. He went 4-8 in dual meets and earned three falls. Backing up Dolida will be freshmen Matt Pellar and Robert Nixon.