

OVAC All-Star grapplers take to the mat Tuesday

By **SETH STASKEY**
Times Leader Sports Editor

Usually in all-star events throughout the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference, it's Ohio against West Virginia.

However, this Tuesday, the two bordering states will unite forces against a common enemy...Pennsylvania.

A collection of 14 wrestlers will travel to Hopewell High School in Aliquippa to take on the all-stars of the Pennsylvania Midwestern Athletic Conference in the 16th annual Tri-State Wrestling Clash of Champions, which begins at 7 p.m.

"This is a really nice showcase for the wrestlers," said OVAC coordinator Gene Monteleone, who is the former head coach at Wheeling Park and a current assistant coach at St. Clairsville. "It used to be where after the OVAC Tournament (in January), basically the two states went their own way, but this gives them a chance to wrestle again against someone else."

The OVAC has had the MAC's number over the course of history in this event, which was the brainchild of former East Liverpool head coach Nick Trombetta and former Quigley Catholic head coach Ed Driscoll.

All told, the OVAC leads the series 11-4, including victories in the last five events. The OVAC posted a 31-26 victory in last year's event, which was held at Steubenville's Crimson Center.

"The OVAC has been pretty dominant in this the last few years, but the MAC is a little smaller," Monteleone said. "They've only got 17 or so schools whereas the OVAC now has 45 schools, which offer wrestling."

Cameron's Ron Trowbridge is serving as the head coach after he led his Dragons to the OVAC Class 1-A title in the OVAC Tournament. He's joined on the OVAC staff by Paul Jackson (South), Frank Crain (Oak Glen) and Tom Brown (Caldwell).

All told, 11 schools are represented on the OVAC squad.

"We usually take the highest placing senior in each respective weight class," Monteleone said. "I think we've got five state finalists on the OVAC team and I think at least a third of the team qualified for its respective state tournament."

"I really think the OVAC is going to be highly competitive again," Monteleone said. "We've got three guys already signed Division I."

The dual allows each wrestler 10 pounds of leeway because West Virginia's state meet was concluded two weeks ago, while the Buckeye State crowned its champions last weekend in Columbus.

Pennsylvania's state meet just wrapped up on Saturday.

"It's tough to wrestle for six minutes when you're out of shape, so hopefully some of the kids have continued to work out and prepare for this," Monteleone said. "We've had two practices and that gets a little harder each time because of the rising fuel prices and the size of (the OVAC), it's tough to get everyone together."

The members of both teams will be treated to a banquet Monday evening at Undo's in Weirton. It begins at 6 p.m.

The complete rosters are as follows:

OVAC

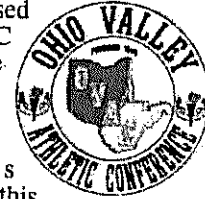
Josh Bartrug (River, 112); Alex Cheslock (University, 112); Ryan Richter (Monroe Central, 119); Jesse Shiffhauer (University



...forces against a common enemy...Pennsylvania.

A collection of 14 wrestlers will travel to Hopewell High School in Aliquippa to take on the all-stars of the Pennsylvania Midwestern Athletic Conference in the 16th annual Tri-State Wrestling Clash of Champions, which begins at 7 p.m.

"This is a really nice showcase for the wrestlers," said OVAC coordinator Gene Monteleone, who is the former head coach at Wheeling Park and a current assistant coach at St. Clairsville. "It used to be where after the OVAC Tournament (in January), basically the two states went their own way, but this gives them a chance to wrestle again against someone else."



The OVAC has had the MAC's number over the course of history in this event, which was the brainchild of former East Liverpool head coach Nick Trombetta and former Quigley Catholic head coach Ed Driscoll.

All told, the OVAC leads the series 11-4, including victories in the last five events. The OVAC posted a 31-26 victory in last year's event, which was held at Steubenville's Crimson Center.

"The OVAC has been pretty dominant in this the last few years, but the MAC is a little smaller," Monteleone said. "They've only got 17 or so schools whereas the OVAC now has 45 schools, which offer wrestling."

Cameron's Ron Trowbridge is serving as the head coach after he led his Dragons to the OVAC Class I-A title in the OVAC Tournament. He's joined on the OVAC staff by Paul Jackson (South), Frank Crain (Oak Glen) and Tom Brown (Caldwell).

All told, 11 schools are represented on the OVAC squad.

"We usually take the highest placing senior in each respective weight class," Monteleone said. "I think we've got five state finalists on the OVAC team and I think at least a third of the team qualified for its respective state tournament."

"I really think the OVAC is going to be highly competitive again," Monteleone said. "We've got three guys already signed Division I."

The dual allows each wrestler 10 pounds of leeway because West Virginia's state meet was concluded two weeks ago, while the Buckeye State crowned its champions last weekend in Columbus.

Pennsylvania's state meet just wrapped up on Saturday.

"It's tough to wrestle for six minutes when you're out of shape, so hopefully some of the kids have continued to work out and prepare for this," Monteleone said. "We've had two practices and that gets a little harder each time because of the rising fuel prices and the size of (the OVAC), it's tough to get everyone together."

The members of both teams will be treated to a banquet Monday evening at Undo's in Weirton. It begins at 6 p.m.

The complete rosters are as follows:

OVAC

Josh Bartrug (River, 112); Alex Cheslock (University, 112); Ryan Richter (Monroe Central, 119); Jesse Shiffbauer (University, 125); Kyle Bauer (Wheeling Park, 130); Robert Fraley (University, 135); Hans Rogerson (Wheeling Park, 140); David Schliepper (Cameron, 145); Dominic Prezgia (St. Clairsville, 152); Mike Rose (Martins Ferry, 160); Chris Smith (Parkersburg South, 171); Brent Kirk (Buckeye Local, 189); Caleb Gunn (Cambridge, 215) and Aaron Silverio (Shadyside, 285).

MAC

Jaron Martin (South Side Beaver, 112); Tyler Rommes (Burgettstown, 112); Tim Dusch (Hopewell, 119); Dylan McHaffie (South Side Beaver, 125); Dominic Pulcini (Burgettstown, 130); Jack Haney (Central Valley, 135); Dave Demor (South Side Beaver, 140); Cody Mutkus (Hopewell, 152); Aaron McKinney (West Allegheny, 152); Justin Martz (South Side Beaver, 160); Ronnie Dakan (Mars, 171); Brent Sutton (Ambridge, 189); Anthony Kashiwsky (Hopewell, 215) and Richie Smallwood (Hopewell, 285).

Staskey can be reached at sstaskey@timesleaderonline.com