

conference opponents, Macalester, Hamline, and Duluth. In non-conference play they defeated the University of North Dakota and St. Olaf, only to fall to Concordia 5-4. Participation in the annual Blue Devils Invitational Tournament hosted by Stout State completed their preparations for the MIAC.

The 1976 MIAC tournament was held on the St. John's campus, May 7-8. Tom Kozlak, the *Record* columnist, reported: "Good news and bad news resulted from the tennis meet. The good news is that for the first time in seven years Gustavus did not win the conference crown. The bad news is that it was Concordia rather than St. John's that had the pleasure of dethroning the conference champs (*Record*, May 14, 1976, p. 15).

The Jays were proud to have assisted the Concordia Cobbers win the conference title, however. It was the Vertin-Lilly doubles combination that upset the seeded Gustavus doubles in the first round, enroute to their own number one finish as doubles champion in the meet. It was this doubles team that also defeated the contending Concordia doubles, thereby giving St. John's the point that was needed to finish one-half point ahead of the University of Minnesota-Duluth for third place in the conference. The sensational freshman doubles pair of Hendrickson and LaDouceur that had gone through the season undefeated fell to Gustavus in the semi-finals. St. John's finished in third place in the conference and fourth place in the NAIA District 13 play-offs.

— 1977 —

Tennis coach John Grobe was expecting his 1977 season to be the best in three years and the team to finish in second place in the MIAC. Initial success in the preliminary meets justified his optimism. The team was strong in depth with tried netters at every level: senior John "Joeko" Vertin, juniors Robert Fischer and Michael Lilly, sophomores John Hendrickson and Michael LaDouceur, and freshman sensation Michael "Chilippe" Philippe.

Success in the preliminary meets justified Grobe's daring prediction. St. John's won victories over four of the strong teams in the conference early in the season: Concordia 7-2, Macalester 8-1, St. Thomas 8-1, St. Mary's 9-0, St. Olaf 7-2. The one great obstacle to a higher than second place was the redoubtable Gustavus team which fairly swamped the Johnnies in a devastating sweep of all the meet matches, 9-0.

The Gustavus defeat did not discourage the Johnnies' hopes for second place in the MIAC, but, as often happened, the teams they had defeated comparatively easily in the opening weeks of the season had

improved. Three of St. John's top singles players were injured and unable to play. The end result was that St. John's ended the season in fifth place, much to their disappointment. Gustavus won the tournament with a whopping 27 points; St. Thomas, St. Olaf and Concordia tied with 8½ points each, leaving St. John's in their wake with 7 points. It was not all defeat, however. A redeeming feature was the stout play of John Vertin who went down to defeat only in the finals to the Gustavus "superstar." The doubles combination of Bob Fischer and Mike Philippe also fell to the powerful Gusties in the finals.

In the NAIA District 13 play-offs St. John's finished in second place, tied with Concordia with five points each. Gustavus again overwhelmed the other contestants and dominated all the scoring with 27 points.

Team members were Michael Bosanko, Minneapolis; Bob Fischer, St. Paul; John Hendrickson, St. Paul; Mike LaDouceur, St. Cloud; Mike Lilly, New Hope; John "Joeko" Vertin, Breckenridge; Mike Philippe, Chicago; James Prittinen, Virginia; and Paul Wotta, Milwaukee.

— 1978 —

Coach John Grobe was disappointed with the fifth place finish of his 1977 tennis team but was finally rewarded for his hard work by winning a well-earned second place in 1978, behind the almost invincible Gusties who again walked off with the championship. Second place was not an easily earned objective, however. St. John's was plagued by injuries part of the season. In a triangular meet with Eau Claire and Stout, St. John's had to default seven matches—a tennis elbow sustained by number one singles star Bob Fischer, a turned ankle by Mike Philippe, and strained stomach muscles by John Hendrickson.

In the regular pre-MIAC meets the team maintained only a .500 average, three wins and three losses: wins over Concordia (6-2), St. Mary's (7-2) and Hamline (7-2), but losses to St. Olaf (2-7), St. Thomas (1-2) and Gustavus (0-9). Nevertheless, Coach Grobe was convinced that when the MIAC tournament came around his Johnnies of 1978 would fare better than they did in 1977. He predicted that they would take second place.

Grobe's confidence was well-founded. Gustavus, as usual, came out ahead of the pack by garnering 25 points for first place by a huge margin. But St. John's took second with a score of 12½ points, one ahead of St. Thomas 11½, St. Olaf 6, Augsburg 3½, Concordia 3, St. Mary's 2, Bethel 1, and Macalester 0.

In spite of the overwhelming superiority of Gustavus, the MIAC tournament nevertheless had its thrilling moments. At the end of the first day of the meet (Friday) St. John's and St. Thomas were tied at 11½ points for second place. On Saturday, however, Mike Philippe battered Hamline's Klingenberg to defeat by scores of 6-1 and 6-4, thereby clinching second place for St. John's, one point ahead of the Tommies, 12½-11½. Another thriller was the battle of Bob Fischer with the Gusties' Dick Schneider for first place in the number one category. Fischer lost, but the match was uncertain until the end. After winning the first set 6-2, Fischer was leading Schneider 5-2 in the second when suddenly Schneider rallied and won the match 1-2, 5-7, 1-6. Also in the finals, in a hard-fought doubles battle, Gustavus overcame St. John's Mike Lilly-Bruce Ervin doubles combination 7-5 and 6-3.

John Grobe was especially elated by his team's performance since he ended his coaching career at St. John's on a winning note. He left St. John's at the end of the academic year to take the position of admissions director at Carroll College, Helena, Montana. Of his 1978 team he said, "This is the best team effort we've had since I became coach. It was satisfying to finish ahead of St. Thomas and St. Olaf, since both teams had defeated us once each this season."

Members of the 1978 team were the following: Bob Fischer, St. Paul; John Hendrickson, St. Paul; Michael Lilly, Minneapolis; Michael LaDouceur, St. Cloud; Mike Philippe, Chicago; Paul Wotta, Milwaukee.

Surprise of the year was freshman Bruce Ervin, Edina, who was one of the stoutest competitors on the team. Two other freshmen, Michael Toninato, Grace Heights, and Timothy Claar, Bloomington, gave promise of being among the outstanding players of the future.



CHAPTER VIII

Wrestling

Adapted in part from a study by David Grovum, '77, "The Wrestling Program and Terry Haws at St. John's," 1977.

There is something about their sport that wrestlers are proud of. There are rules and regulations that are strictly observed. Holds that might injure an opponent are barred. The wrestler is always competing with an opponent of his own weight, and for this reason wrestlers are classified into ten different weight categories or divisions: 118 pounds, 126, 139, 142, 150, 158, 167, 177, 190, and heavyweight. And, since each wrestler has a weight within his class that is natural or best suited to him, he must be truly dedicated in order to maintain it. He may starve himself for days trying to reach that all-important weight limitation.

In the twenty-eight seasons that St. John's has had intercollegiate wrestling teams, St. John's has won fourteen Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference championships and placed second twice. It has produced 72 individual MIAC champions. After each MIAC tournament the wrestler considered to be the most valuable is selected by a vote of all the coaches. St. John's has a record of three such awards. In short, after examining the record of St. John's in wrestling, one can recognize that the wrestling program has been one of the school's most honorable sporting activities.

It all started in the fall of 1941 when a freshman by the name of Daniel Rooney from Robbinsdale came to St. John's. He was a two-time Minnesota high school wrestling champion. Shortly after his ar-

rival he learned for the first time that St. John's had no wrestling program. His reaction was an astounded "What, no wrestling at St. John's!" After making this astonishing discovery he began to think things over and finally decided to establish a full-fledged wrestling program, with himself as the wrestling coach. With a small crowd of approximately thirty enthusiasts, including several students from the St. John's Prep School, he succeeded in obtaining the approval of the athletic director and commenced the task of molding a team.

The first wrestling match was held on February 16, 1942, following a St. John's basketball game. The event was received with enthusiasm by the faculty and student body. Although St. John's lost 19-8 to a veteran Macalester team, the expectations for further developments soared high. A second encounter with Macalester was set for later in February that St. John's lost after a toughly contested battle, 19-16. The Jays had improved and exhibited their progress with considerably more activity and a variety of holds. As for Rooney, he won his first match at 128 pounds in the first meeting. In the second, he was awarded a victory in his first match by a forfeiture, but earned a decision in the second. Two other St. John's men won matches that evening: Daniel "Bunny" Radakovich at 165 pounds and Richard Weber at heavy-weight.

The St. John's wrestling team engaged in two more dual meets that winter. They lost to the University of Minnesota Farm School 18-14, and to Carleton College 23-11. Although the 1942 Jays lost four meets that inception year, Dan Rooney himself went undefeated. In March of 1942 he bettered his undefeated record by capturing the 115 pound championship in the Northwest Amateur Athletic Union Tournament. The St. John's team took fourth place. Daniel Rooney was pleased with the team's progress.

Then the war intervened. Coach Rooney re-assembled a team of some twenty men in 1943 but was unable to schedule matches at St. John's with other schools. Then gas rationing made squad travel to other schools impossible. College enrollments dwindled, and finally in 1943 Rooney himself was drafted. College sports folded for the duration.

— 1946-47 —

After the end of the war, in the 1946-47 winter sport season, wrestling was resumed at St. John's. Under student coach John Condon the first intercollegiate wrestling meet was held at Macalester in a five-team conference get-together. John Condon was the only SJU wrestler to take first-place honors. It was an event that aroused little interest at St. John's, and indeed must have been a drab affair, to say the least.

— 1947-48 —

The first official mat season at St. John's for which a championship was ever awarded took place in the 1947-48 season, namely, to Macalester. The irony of the situation was rather evident, for Macalester and St. John's were the only schools to enter teams. The enthusiasts, nevertheless, did not lose hope but went ahead campaigning among other conference schools for the development of wrestling as an MIAC monogram winning sport. The St. John's record for the year was three wins, one loss, and two ties: two wins over the University of Minnesota Farm School, and a victory over Gustavus, 19-6. At the MIAC tournament that year St. John's had one individual champion, John Weimerskirch from Litchfield, who was an outstanding star in the St. John's annals for all his four years at St. John's. Because of him St. John's took second place in the meet. The coach of the year, Norman McDonnell, admitted that the team was lacking in experience in tournament competition.

— 1948-49 —

The coaching duties were again taken over by Norman McDonnell (brother of Fr. Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B.). The team improved greatly over the mediocre showing of the past year, with a record of five victories and one defeat. In the MIAC tournament SJU again placed second to Macalester by a score of 40-45. The championship was in doubt, however, until the finals in the heavyweight division when George "Judd" Pribyl of St. John's was decisioned by a score of 1-0. St. John's won three individual championships: John Weimerskirch won at 145 pounds, Coach Norman McDonnell at 157 pounds, and Ted Burgraff at 175 pounds.

The Status of Wrestling in 1949

At this point, as we look in retrospect over the past few years, wrestling had finally taken hold on the St. John's campus. The period from 1942 until 1949 had been difficult years for the program. First, the war years when it had to be dropped completely, then the years of adjustment when veterans returning to college were unsettled about their futures, and anything new like a wrestling program was looked at askance as something new-fangled that would gradually die out when the few enthusiasts had either left St. John's, graduated, or had turned to the established major sports program. The student-coaches were persistent, however, and interest began to grow. The very popularity of successful wrestlers as campus citizens, men such as John Weimerskirch and George Pribyl, gave the sport a prestige value that

soon became contagious. And not to be underestimated in this process of building up interest in wrestling was the role of the student-coach.

The student-coach was usually considered the best wrestler on the team. He was almost always a senior appointed by the athletic director and given some financial allowance for his work. The use of student-coaches was very economical for the school, though this was not the basic reason for choosing students to serve as coaches. The basic reason was that there were very few wrestling coaches around, and students with some skill in the sport and leadership talents were the most convenient coaches available. Athletic Director George Durenberger said of them: "They had great enthusiasm for the sport and they were much closer to the students. They were natural and very successful. There was no reason to make a switch in policy."

This policy of appointing student-coaches continued through the 1950's and into the 1960's. However, as the sport continued to grow and the necessity of doing some recruiting became more urgent, there was need of a permanent faculty coach. Besides, student-coaches had begun to complain that their coaching duties were interfering with their academic programs. A new system had to come eventually.

— 1949-50 —

In the 1949-50 season, Jack Hyneman, a Litchfield product, was appointed student-coach, and Judd Pribyl was elected team captain. It was a year in which the general feeling among the wrestlers was that now was the time to move up. The most important move in this direction was a victory over Macalester. Macalester had been conference champion for the past three years and again was coming up with a strong team. By this time, however, the Jays were also beginning to feel their strength and accepted the challenge. They proved to be as good as their self-evaluation and defeated Macalester for the first time, 18-12. The *Record* for the year reported, "St. John's won four out of the eight matches, with three pins by the Johnnies deciding the match." The St. John's team went 3-3 on the season, which included victories over Macalester, 18-12, and two victories over the St. Cloud Teachers by scores of 18-12 and 19-13 respectively.

Although the state meet was scheduled to be held at St. John's, problems arose which forced the meet to be held at Gustavus—and again Macalester came up with a tremendous performance to take first-place honors. St. John's placed fourth in the tournament behind Macalester, St. Thomas and Gustavus. "The outstanding star of the day was John Weimerskirch," who successfully defended his 1947 title

at 145 pounds. Captain Judd Pribyl and Fred Grant won the remaining St. John's points.

— 1950-51 —

Jack Hyneman again accepted the coaching duties of the St. John's team for the year 1950-51. As could be expected, the nucleus of the team centered around John Weimerskirch, who was undefeated in two years and had won two MIAC wrestling championships. Near the end of the season, however, John had his undefeated streak broken at forty-four. He was beaten on a pin by a former Northwest A.A.U. champion who had enrolled at St. Cloud Teachers College.

Going into the 1950-51 tournament, St. John's had another fantastic wrestler besides John on its squad—Jim McKeown, who carried an unbeaten record into the conference. Both men lived up to expectations by winning the individual titles in their respective weights. There was also a third Johnnie that year to win an individual title, senior Judd Pribyl, who outpointed the defending champion Don Messegna of St. Thomas in the 177 pound class, 5-4. It was an exciting match, and when it was over a happy mob of Johnnie students carried the winner off the mat. It was a sure sign that finally wrestling had found a way into the Johnnie hearts. It was the happiest day of Judd Pribyl's life.

Although the Jays won four individual championships, they could muster only enough points for fourth place in the conference. St. Olaf won the MIAC championship. As for John Weimerskirch, after winning his third straight consecutive title and amassing a record of 59 wins and two losses, he was awarded the Carl Larson Memorial Trophy, an award given to the outstanding wrestler in an MIAC tournament.

— 1951-52 —

Entering the 1951-52 wrestling season Athletic Director George Durenberger appointed John Weimerskirch wrestling coach, with captain-elect Jim McKeown as his principal pal and adviser. Both men were previous MIAC champions and most certainly the best informed and most capable wrestlers on campus. There was a large turnout of candidates for the squad, among them only five veterans. To counteract the small number of veterans was the leadership ability of the two expert wrestlers. With luck they were bound to go far.

Under careful guidance and coaching the team managed to carry a 6-2 record for the season. Highlight of the season was the Jays' defeat of St. Cloud Teachers College by a score of 20-13 in their first match. It was a remarkable achievement, because St. Cloud had been the previous year's Northwest A.A.U. champion. Pins by John Weimerskirch and Leo Kemper led the way.

The 1952 wrestling team made history in March of that year by bringing home its first MIAC wrestling championship. It was the first outright St. John's championship in any sport in ten years. Four of the eight individual championships were won by St. John's: John Weimerskirch (145), Jim McKeown (157), Fred Grant (130) and Clem Schoenbauer at heavyweight. Beginning with this championship, St. John's was not to give up the title for the next seven years.

1952 marks the end of John Weimerskirch's wrestling career at St. John's, one of the most remarkable in MIAC wrestling history. John was a brilliant wrestler. He began his wrestling career in Litchfield, Minnesota, where he won the state high school championship, first at 98 pounds in his junior year and at 133 pounds in his senior year. As a freshman at St. John's he won his first MIAC championship at 147 pounds, then repeated as champion in his sophomore, junior and senior years at the same weight. The team recognized his unusual ability and elected him to the captaincy in both his sophomore and junior years. He had qualities of leadership also, for when the athletic director appointed him as wrestling coach for the 1951-52 season, he coached the Johnnies to the first championship in St. John's wrestling history.

John Weimerskirch's record is best seen in his won-loss record: 82 victories versus only two losses, and the all-conference award in each of his four years of competition. To top off all the long lists of first, he was the first MIAC wrestler to receive the Carl Larson Memorial Trophy, awarded annually to the outstanding MIAC wrestler for the year.

After graduation, John Weimerskirch entered the Navy and retired in 1971 with the rank of commander. He continued his education since his retirement, and though presently engaged as an engineering technician, he has an advanced degree in education. He writes, "If ever you need a wrestling coach with an advanced degree in higher education administration, let me know."

— 1952-53 —

Jim McKeown took over the coaching duties of wrestling in the fall of 1952. It was reported: "The team has its largest turn-out in St. John's history with only one veteran missing from the last year's squad—John Weimerskirch." Fred Grant, a 1950 individual MIAC champion, was elected captain.

Early in the season the Johnnie matmen, including Captain Fred Grant, were plagued with various injuries, but Coach Jim McKeown was unworried, feeling that somehow he would field a full squad.

The coach's optimism was rewarded for, after overcoming the injuries, the team produced a 9-2 winning record which included a streak of six straight dual meets—the best performance of any wrestling team prior to this date.

Entering the MIAC wrestling tournament March 5, 1953, the Jays were the overwhelming favorite for the crown and, in fact, proved it conclusively by out-wrestling St. Thomas by twelve points. The Jays won five individual titles and three second-place finishes. Jim McKeown won his third straight title and was awarded the Carl Johnson Memorial Trophy as the tournament's outstanding wrestler. Fred Grant won his second straight title at 130 pounds. Other winners were Jerre Miller at 123 pounds, Leo Kemper at 177 pounds, and Robert Forster at heavyweight.

— 1953-54 —

In the fall of 1953 George Durenberger appointed Jerre Miller as wrestling coach for the year. With only five lettermen on which to build his first team, he had his work cut out for him. He had a successful season, however, with an 8-2-1 record, the team's one loss being to strong South Dakota State, 22-8. The team entered the MIAC meet a heavy favorite to capture the conference championship.

On March 6, 1953, St. John's won its third consecutive MIAC title with 50 points based on six first-place individual championships and two second-place wins. The 50 points garnered by St. John's doubled runnerup Gustavus's 24 points. Winning individual championships were Lou Adderley (130 pounds), Sy Weber (147)—now Fr. Otto, O.S.B., presently director and facilities manager at the Warner Palaestra—DeVaughn Nelson at 177 pounds, Tom Kempley at 157, Jim Tacheny at 177 pounds, and Leo Kemper, heavyweight.

— 1954-55 —

The job of defending the St. John's title for the 1954-55 season was given to Jim Tacheny, the new player-coach. With him were two veteran champions to assist him in winning the fourth championship.

The season again turned out to be a success, with the team winning six straight dual meets in an overall record of eight wins against three losses. The Jays defeated every MIAC opponent handily but lost to non-conference foes, St. Cloud twice and South Dakota State once. In a dual meet with St. Thomas, the two teams set the largest number of points registered in any previous meet in a score of 30-10. St. John's won 20 points by pins and 10 by forfeit; St. Thomas won 10 points by two falls.

In the MIAC meet held that year at St. John's, the Jays successfully defended their title for the fourth time. They squeezed by Macalester by a close score, 43-41. Player-coach Jim Tacheny at 167 pounds, DeVaughn Nelson at 157, and Donald Flynn at 137 pounds won divisional titles. Unlucky Lou Adderley suffered a back injury in his final match and had to forfeit his 123 pound title to Kerr of St. Thomas.

— 1955-56 —

Going into the 1955-56 season, player-coach DeVaughn Nelson had the problem of working an inexperienced team daily in order to get his new men prepared for the defense of the wrestling title. It was especially difficult this year because one champion of the previous year, one runnerup, and four other first-string men had either graduated or transferred to the University of Minnesota. The determination and rigorous training of the Jay matmen paid off, however, in a very satisfactory 8-4 season. Coach Nelson personally racked up seven straight wins in his 167 division.

In the March 3 MIAC meet, St. John's retained its conference championship for an unprecedented fifth straight time. Four Johnnies acquired individual titles: Coach Nelson his third title at 167 pounds, Donald Flynn his second at 137, Mike Gibbs at 147, and Larry Betzler at 157. Al Eisele, a later *Record* sportswriter, in a study of the five years 1952-56, found that the Jays by now had totaled twenty-three individual championships in all, with championships in each weight classification.

— 1956-57 —

Sophomore Larry Betzler was appointed coach for the 1956-57 season, the only returning wrestler with an MIAC title. As was expected, the shortage of experienced wrestlers made the work of coaching doubly difficult, but Betzler was a hustler and an enthusiast who insisted on hard work and dedication. The record of the Jays prior to the conference meet was mediocre, five wins in the conference meets and two losses, but a good record overall that made the possibility of retaining the championship at least worth anticipating.

Despite misgivings, some of them justifiable, St. John's won its sixth straight championship by the slender margin of 59-58, a one-point advantage over powerful Concordia. Concordia won three individual championships against two for St. John's (Betzler in the 147 class and John O'Fallon in the 167). The St. John's depth proved just a point too much for the Cobbers. Gary Sauer and Pat Walrath were runners-up in the tournament.

It was what were called "the shock troops" that pulled out the victory: namely, Jerry Dalseth, Arnie Mages, Roger Ludwig, and Dean Hall. Of these men, Dean Hall was the only one who would be missing in the following year. Once more things were looking good for the future!

— 1957-58 —

On the opening day of wrestling practice in November, 1957, the squad was greeted by the new coach Mike O'Fallon, a member of the faculty and a former MIAC champion, the first non-student coach in St. John's wrestling history. The new coach had reason to be optimistic since on the team were two MIAC champions, Larry Betzler and John O'Fallon, and two runnersup, Gary Sauer and Pat Walrath.

It was an eminently successful season. The Johnnies piled up a record number of nine meet victories versus only one defeat at the hands of St. Thomas by a score of 18-14. It was an off-day meet in which unusual things happened, for Larry Betzler, the three-year standby of the Johnnies, suffered his first defeat in fourteen encounters.

The string of St. John's victories and their scores was impressive. The Johnnies defeated Macalester 30-5, St. Thomas, in a return match, 25-8, and Gustavus 35-5. In non-conference meets St. John's also defeated Marquette 19-9 and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee 23-9.

The St. John's grapplers again showed their power in the MIAC tournament by taking the conference title by a margin of 16 points over its nearest competitor, Macalester, 72-56. Individual titlists were Gary Sauer, 123 pounds; Larry Betzler, 147 pounds; and James Kuelbs, who wrestled at 157. MIAC team standings for the season were St. John's first, 72 points; Macalester second, 56; Gustavus third, 42; St. Thomas fourth, 35 points; Concordia fifth, 29 points; Augsburg sixth, 27 points.

The 1958 champions took part in the first NAIA wrestling tournament at Mankato the week following the MIAC meet. The Johnnies tied for seventh place in the tournament, Gary Sauer taking third place in the 123 pound classification. Larry Betzler advanced to the consolation finals but was decisioned by Tom Tessler of Northern Illinois University, the eventual winner of the national championship.

— 1958-59 —

In 1958-59 the athletic department reverted to the former policy of using student-coaches in the training of its wrestling team. The new student-coach, Jim Kuelbs, a talented athlete and wrestler, found him-

self in charge of one of the top teams in the MIAC of his time. Prospects of a winning season were excellent and the successful defense of the 1958 championship seemed assured.

The season opened with a 29-3 defeat of North Dakota State, followed by a third-place finish in the Carleton Invitational. St. John's pace-setters in the field of fourteen teams were Bob Dumonceaux, heavyweight, Gary Sauer at 123 pounds, John O'Fallon, 177 pounds, and Jim Kuelbs at 157. In an early-season match with Marquette University, St. John's came up with a 29-9 victory, followed closely by a defeat of St. Thomas 21-4. Coach Jim Kuelbs pinned his man in one minute, thirty-six seconds.

In a quadrangular meet hosted by Carleton, young Tom Brudos, Gary Sauer, freshmen Jerry O'Rourke and Bob Dumonceaux led the way to a first-place finish. But it was not easy sailing in every encounter. In a meet held at South Dakota State, the Johnnies dropped again to third place behind powerful University of Minnesota with its 96 points and South Dakota's 55 points. St. John's garnered 48 points.

In dual meets the Johnnies continued to have their ups and downs, defeating Macalester 20-9 but losing to Bemidji 24-8 (they had red faces over this one).

Meanwhile the youthful freshmen were making their way upward, winning matches and displacing their less talented elders. They were Bob Randall, John Fritz, Jerry O'Rourke, Fred Philipson, and Bob Mariana, all talented wrestlers following the examples of the standbys Gary Sauer, Tom Brudos, Larry Betzler, John O'Fallon, Jim Kuelbs and Bob Dumonceaux. Except for possible accidents and unforeseen circumstances, the way looked clear for a repetition of the MIAC crown.

St. John's entered the 1958-59 MIAC tourney with a very respectable 8-3-1 won-loss-tie record for the season. The Johnnies did very well in the meet. Individual champions were Gary Sauer at 123 pounds, Tom Brudos at 130, freshman Jerry Dalseth at 137, Larry Betzler at 147 (his fourth in succession), and Jim Kuelbs at 157 (his second consecutive title). Bob Dumonceaux took third place in the 191 category and Bob Mariana third place in the heavyweight division. But Macalester tied the Johnnies with 76 points.

This tie score with Macalester furnishes one of those ironies that takes place when a strong wrestling team with an abundance of first-place winners can be defeated or tied by a weaker one which, though unable to win first places, manages to win enough second, third, even fourth and fifth places to defeat the stronger team. This happened in the 1959 MIAC meet. St. John's won five first places in individual

championships, three more than Macalester. The Macs, however, placed seven men in the final rounds, five of them finishing second and two of them fourth—enough in points to tie the stronger St. John's.

Leading the St. John's pack were Larry Betzler who won his fourth straight 147-pound title and Jim Kuelbs at 157 pounds. The three remaining 1959 champions were Gary Sauer, Tom Brudos and Jerry Dalseth at 123, 130 and 137 pounds respectively.

— 1959-60 —

The young St. John's wrestling team failed by a single point in their quest for a ninth straight MIAC championship in the meet held on the Collegeville campus, March 5, 1960. The Macalester "Scotsmen," who had tied the Jays in 1959, won the 1960 title with a total of 64 points to the 63 of St. John's.

There was considerable chagrin in the Johnnie camp when the realization sank in that, after a period of eight years of victories, St. John's found itself in second place by the hairline margin of one measly point. On the other hand, the teams had tied the year before, and by the law of averages (if there is such a thing) some one of the Minnesota colleges was bound to catch up sometime. The bad luck simply took place in 1960, a year the Jays expected to win the title for the ninth time.

Student-coach Jim Kuelbs had a good day of it, however. He not only won the championship in the 167 class for the third time, but he was also awarded the Carl Larson Trophy, granted annually to the outstanding wrestler of the conference meet. But the real surprise of the meet was that St. John's second personal championship was won by Pat Murtaugh, a freshman, in the 157 class.

While enumerating the strokes of good fortune, it may be well to mention the hard luck of freshman Thomas Frank, who, after winning his first two matches, in the third suffered the excruciating pain of a dislocated elbow and hence was forced to forfeit his match. An enterprising calculator might assume that if Frank had not suffered his accident the one-point advantage of Macalester would have vanished into thin air and St. John's would then have won its ninth successive championship.

Quality performers on the St. John's squad mentioned in the final report are the following: Douglas Svihel, third, 123 pound class; Ben Pulkrabek, second, 177 class; Bob Dumonceaux, second, heavyweight; Jerry O'Rourke, third, heavyweight; Steve Dalseth, third, 137 class; John Fritz, third, 147 class.