The 2003-04 wrestling season was just like many of today’s reality shows. We had our share of excitement, production, good times, along with some ups and downs, but when the dust settled, our team can reflect on this past year as another good year for the Cardinals and our wrestling family. We have just graduated another great class of seniors who were instrumental in bringing success to our program. Over the past four seasons, our team is 49-31. Although we fell short of having our fourth consecutive winning season, the 2003-04 team was a pleasure to coach because each squad member worked extremely hard, wrestled smart and gelled together to become a solid unit by the end of the year. This year’s team faced adversities including some unfortunate injuries and dealing with some holes in the lower weights. Despite these challenges, we remained optimistic, positive and continued to strive for excellence.

We seemed to be a tournament team ready to score big and pick up some key wins from the outset. We came out on fire with a second-place finish at the Roger Williams Tournament followed up by an impressive fifth-place finish in a highly touted field of 19 teams at the Doug Parker Invitational hosted by Springfield. These two tournament finishes helped catapult our squad to a 28th national team ranking which included individual rankings for Gabe Fierro-Fine ‘04 (ranked seventh in the nation at 141) and Adam Jonas ’04 (ranked eighth in the nation at 157). Each wrestler won two tournaments in the early going to set the pace for our team. Gabe won the championship at the RIT tournament versus some of the nation’s toughest competition. Adam also was recognized as “Wrestler of the Month” for the month of November with his top finish at the Roger Williams and Doug Parker Tournaments. In addition, we placed third at the Ursinus Invitational in January. There were many great accomplishments and achievements throughout the season and especially in tournaments from Dave Bartlett ’06 at 165, Kevin Egolf ’05 at 149 and Matt Moran ’04 at heavyweight. Dan deLalla ’07 was certainly the newcomer of the year with his fourth-place finish at Roger Williams, top-six finish at Doug Parker, and third-place showing at Ursinus. It also was a special time this season when our team got Camilo Rincon-Camacho ’05 back from study abroad in South America. This really enhanced the competition at 149 where we had three top wrestlers in New England all at one weight. Other bright spots for our team were the addition of freshman Mike Lima ’07 at 184 and Gian Ishino ’07 at 141. Both of these wrestlers had great opportunities to show their potential and will be significant contributors next season. At our annual wrestling dinner we like to acknowledge each individual and what they bring to help the program succeed. What I will say is that we have a special group of young men who with continued dedication and commitment to excellence as a student and wrestler, will bring our program many years of continued success.

Our season came to a close at the New England College Conference Wrestling Championships where we finished seventh in the field of 15 teams. Injury (all-New England team captain Chris Robichaud ’04) and Illness (heavyweight Matt Moran, ranked third) hit us going into the championships, but we wrestled to the best of our ability. We came away with four all-New England wrestlers. These same four individuals all achieved the prestigious distinction of “Scholar All-American” as well. At 141, Gabe finished his career as a four-time all-New England wrestler placing third this year while Kevin Egolf, at 149, really stepped up his intensity level this season, wrestling very consistently and finding himself placing fifth in his first championship. Next, in a rematch of the semifinals two years ago, Adam Jonas fought two hard matches, one of which was a thrilling bout in overtime, but fell just short of becoming a champion at 157, settling for runner-up. We get Adam back next year as he pursues his M.A. in psychology for a fifth year at Wesleyan. Lastly, Dave Bartlett wrestled a tremendous tournament as the eighth seed and wound up finishing second after a torn hamstring muscle would not allow him to compete and finish the title match.

I mentioned the four scholar All-Americans above. This is a tremendous accomplishment for these young men who challenge themselves each day academically and athletically in the two toughest endeavors at Wesleyan University. Gabe had a 3.24 GPA, Kevin a 3.66 GPA, Adam a 3.73 GPA and Dave had a 3.25 GPA. Hats off to their accomplishments on and off the mat. As a team, Wesleyan finished 10th in the nation for top grade-point average as a “Scholar All-American Wrestling Team”. The team’s average GPA was a 3.23. Each member of this team is committed to excellence and the future looks bright as we have great leadership again next season, experienced underclassmen, and a great incoming class of eight freshmen. There is good reason to be excited and optimistic as we move into the summer. It is in the summer where winter champions are made.

COACHES INSIDE TRIP

Dear Wesleyan Wrestling Alumnus, Parents, Wrestlers, and Wesleyan Supporters:

We are in off-season mode right now. The Cardinals had another overall successful campaign this past season. There already is much to look forward to for next season. We have five tremendous seniors to help lead the team next year along with eight freshmen entering the program. What is really exciting is that we will have high quality light-weights who will challenge each other and really add fire and intensity to our team. In addition, our past freshmen, who are now “mighty sophomores,” gained very valuable mat time, which has instilled a positive outlook on their training and optimism for next season. The team also returns two New England finalists in Adam Jonas at 157 and Dave Bartlett at 165 along with fifth-place finisher Kevin Egolf. This bodes well as a base to build upon for next season.

This summer will be the Summer Olympic Games in Athens. I recently returned from Indianapolis where I attended our national coaches conference in conjunction with the Wrestling Olympic Trials. Maybe some of you had a chance to see the matches on USA Network a couple of weeks ago. What a great time to learn more about our great sport and gather new ideas to share with our team and program. The trials matches were full of intense action and great skill. One highlight of the tournament was the 16:54 bout between two former silver medalists at 121 lbs. in Greco-Roman. It is something special to witness the desire and determination these athletes have and to think about all the sacrifices each one has made to represent the United States. Another important side I saw was how these athletes won and lost with great class. These young men are true Olympians and great representatives of our country. This summer also marks the inaugural event of women’s wrestling in Athens. The women will compete in four weight classes this summer. Check your local listings and NBC affiliate stations and continue to support our great sport by watching the summer games. The U.S.A. is sure to have some great finishes from our freestyle and Greco-Roman teams.

Some other exciting news this summer is that we will again be hosting the Connecticut National High School Team July 16-21. This will be their training camp before heading out to Fargo, N.D. for the freestyle and Greco-Roman Nationals. Also, one of our team members, Dan deLalla, will be heading over to Romania and Bucharest for two weeks as a member of the Division III National Team. Other team members Adam Jonas and Jeff Bean ’03 took advantage of this experience during their time at Wesleyan. What is great about this trip is that it is like a study abroad program while wrestling at the same time. Each athlete can, and many do, raise all of the funds to go on this trip, which is an added bonus. I hope many of our wrestlers take full advantage of this opportunity in the
future. Lastly, on a personal note, my wife and I will be having a baby on June 28th. This will be our second child and we are very excited. I have been busy bringing out all of the gear that goes along with having a newborn such as the cribs, pack-n-play, car seats, stuffed animals, changing stations, new decorations and many other items. The ultrasounds say that we are having a girl. We will see and we cannot wait, especially my wife who is quite uncomfortable at this time. I can only imagine.

I would now like to take this time thank each of you for your support this past year. We are able to do many things with your generous contributions such as new traveling uniforms, new team banner, pull-up bars, team practice apparel, team t-shirts, some overnight accommodations, awards for the wrestling banquet, meals on the road, recruiting expenditures, Gatorade and fruit for the athletes during competitions all year and many other useful things. Each of your contributions and donations enable our team to experience a season of success, improvement, and achievement. For all the alumni and friends who have been contributing to the wrestling team and Wesleyan University I want to thank you. If you have supported us in the past please consider supporting us in the future. If you have any questions or need any information about Wesleyan and the wrestling program please do not hesitate to call me. I hope we can continue relationship working with our Wesleyan Wrestling Program and family.

P.S. If a donation is made to the wrestling team, please make the check payable to:

Wesleyan University Wrestling

Please send the check to:

Wrestling Office
Wesleyan University
Freeman Athletic Center
161 Cross Street
Middletown, CT 06459

Yours in wrestling,

Drew S. Black
Head Wrestling Coach

Special Thanks to the Class of 2004

Each one of these gentlemen was instrumental to the successes of the Wesleyan wrestling program the past four years. It was their passion to succeed and tireless work ethic which enabled them to do so much at Wesleyan and now in their future endeavors. This class, these role model student-athletes, have left us with a solid foundation to build future champions and future leaders.

Gabe Fierro-Fine finished his career as one of Wesleyan’s best wrestlers. He was a four-time all-New England wrestler, placing fourth in 2001, third in 2002, fourth in 2003 and third in 2004 at 141 pounds. As a coach, it was such a pleasure to work with someone who was so driven, determined and motivated to succeed. Things did not always come easy for Gabe. He really had to work at his academic and his athletic commitments. The extra time, energy, and effort paid off for Gabe. He finished his career with an 80-37 official record which included a team best 24-5 individual record for the 2003-04 season. Another great accomplishment of which I am very proud was Gabe receiving a “Scholar All-American Award”. Gabe had a 3.24 GPA in his final year. Gabe was a fantastic leader, role model, student and wrestler for the Cardinals. Gabe should always hold his head up high as he reflects upon what he did and the positive effects he had on this program. He is another pillar that we will build upon in the program. Gabe’s future plans will take him to medical school.

Matt Moran came into the wrestling family as a top 184-pound wrestler and left as a top light heavyweight. In his junior year, when we decided to make the adjustment from 197 to heavyweight, Matt became a force to be reckoned with. You could see that he elevated his mat skills and became a very confident wrestler. Matt experienced his best season on the mat as a senior, finishing 24-11. He has been a strong anchor at the end of our lineup where he secured a handful of team wins by pulling out a close bout in the final seconds. I will always remember the New England Duals at Coast Guard where he pulled off two team victories versus Rhode Island College and heated rival Roger Williams. How can I forget the win over Williams where Matt and our team were wrestling two opponents on the mat at the same time. Matt should be proud of what he accomplished while learning not to worry about what he cannot control. Matt will be working for American Express in Hartford, Conn.

Adam Faris is from the great state of New Jersey. He was an all-New England wrestler in his junior season at 197. Adam split his time as a dual-sport athlete, excelling in both football and wrestling. Adam was a top tackle for the football team during his senior year and also was a three-year starter for us on the wrestling team. Adam’s low ankle shot and jersey roll will be missed as a 197-pounder in our program. Adam was a team player and was always ready to do what was best for the team. Adam is considering a career in law enforcement or moving into an ROTC program.

Lonnie Klein was my first true heavyweight recruit. Lonnie, whi is better known as “The Dawg” or “The Lon Dawg,” was a fixture for our program at heavyweight. Although Lonnie did not get to start for our team on a regular basis he was essential to our team’s success. When the call came for him to go out and compete, Lonnie did just that, he competed! The time has come to “Let the Dawg Out- Oo Oo!” Lonnie will possibly be involved with some political campaigns and then look to enter law school in the near future.

Kevin Egolf ’05 Receives Wesleyan Memorial Prize for 2003-04

The team’s starter at 149 pounds, Kevin Egolf ’05 was named the Wesleyan Memorial Prize winner for the 2003-04 academic year. The prize, awarded by the University in memory of fellow students who made the supreme sacrifice during World War II, goes to the member of the junior class outstanding in the qualities of character, leadership and scholarship.

Weekly Update Throughout the Wrestling Season

I would like to keep the wrestling alumni, parents and friends of Wesleyan wrestling abreast of the weekly events, competitions, news, and happenings with the wrestling program via a weekly email newsletter. This has been very well received and enjoyable for our supporters to be able to get a pulse on the team and where we are heading next. Please send me your email address or a change in your email address to dblack@wesleyan.edu or call me at 860-685-2907. I look forward to hearing from our wrestling alumni. If you have email addresses of other teammates and/or friends of Wesleyan wrestling, and you think they might want to be included, please send those as well. Thank you.
Mr. J. Robert Lamade '44  
Mr. Frank Leone '71  
Dr. Michael Levine '60  
Mr. Ronald Loose  
Mr. Bill Robichaud & family (Friend and Family Member)  
Dr. Matthew Skalla '85  
Mr. Dennis Spencer '98  
Mr. Avi Springer '01  
Mr. Scott Steele '80  
Mr. Arthur W. Stemler '49  
Dr. Robert White, Jr. '82 (THE WHIZZER)  
Dr. Allan F. Williams '61

2003-04 Wesleyan Wrestling Results  
(Dual-Match Record: 8-11)

11/22/03: Doug Parker Invitational at Springfield - 5th (tied) of 19 teams  
12/6/03: R.I.T Invitational Tournament - 13th of 17 teams  
1/6/04: (at Springfield) - Bridgewater St., 26-12 W.; Cortland St., 18-25 L.; at Springfield, 6-43 L.  
1/14/04: Trinity, 10-27 L.  
1/17/04: Ursinus College Brute-Adidas Invitational - 3rd of 9 teams  
1/21/04: Roger Williams, 26-17 W.  
1/25/04: NECCWA Duals at Bridgewater St. - 8th of 15 teams  
1/28/04: at Coast Guard, 15-28 L.  
1/31/04: at Johnson & Wales, 16-24 L.; Southern Maine (at J&W), 22-21 W.  
2/5/04: at W.P.I., 11-27 L.  
2/8/04: at W.N.E.C., 28-15 W.; Williams (at WNEC), 19-18 W.; Oneonta St. (at WNEC), 7-37 L.  
2/15/04: NECCWA J.V. Championships at Springfield - no team scoring  
2/21-22/04: NECCWA Championships at W.P.I. - 7th (tied) of 15 teams

Annual Wrestling Awards Banquet

After each season we have a semi-formal banquet so we can reflect on the past season and recognize the team and each individual for their improvements, successes and achievements. This year we celebrated at the First & Last Tavern on Main Street in Middletown. The special award recipients were:

** 11th Man Award - Dan DeLalla **  
** Most Improved Wrestler - Dave Bartlett **  
** Ironman Award - Kevin Egolf **  
** Excellence in Leadership, Wrestling, & Scholarship - Gabe Fierro-Fine **  
** Excellence in Scholarship - Adam Jonas & Dan Case (3.73 GPA) **

In December, 2003, Wesleyan wrestling sponsored a Father & Son Wrestling Clinic that featured 5000 NCAA Division I 149-pound champion Tony Davis from the University of Northern Iowa. He demonstrated basic fundamentals of wrestling along with some classic "clinic" moves.

Most Recent 2003-04 Contributors to the Wesleyan University Wrestling Program

Mr. Henry B. Anderson '40  
Mr. Nick Bazos '02  
Mr. John W. Bratmeyer '57  
Mr. Mike Charlton '89  
Dr. Allan Chebuske '80  
Mr. Andrew Craighead '83  
Mr. Jon R. Criss '03  
Mr. Vincent C. DeLalla (friend and family member)  
Mr. David & Susannah Jonas (Aten Corporation) (Friend and Family Member)

Dave Bartlett '06 posted a 9-7 dual-match record and a 14-7 mark in tournaments to finish the year with a 23-14 overall record. He was one of two Cardinals to reach the finals of the NECCWA tournament, winning his first four matches despite being seeded eighth in the field at 165 pounds. He knocked of the first, third and fourth seeds on his way to the title match, which he lost due to injury.

Wesleyan's 2003-04 NECCWA Placewinners

Joined by head coach Drew Black (far right) and assistant coach Joe Gaboury (behind), Wesleyan NECCWA placewinners (L to R) Kevin Egolf '05, Gabe Fierro-Fine '04 and Adam Jonas '04 display their trophies. Missing is Dave Bartlett '06, who had departed to attend to the injury he suffered during the championship match.
Posing in their practice facility in the Freeman Athletic Center, the 2003-04 wrestling Cardinals proudly display their new banner purchased this past season with funds generously donated by supporters of the team.