

ER's O'Lena, A Dying Breed

The Dick O'Lenas are becoming extinct, like the great condors that once roamed the wild Andes.

O'Lena is one of the last of the calloused holler guys, a leader in football, a leader in wrestling, a leader in East Rochester.

He's fearless, almost reckless.

"He doesn't baby anybody," says Coach Don Quinn. "He comes from a home of 10 brothers and sisters and there's no room for babying.

"Kids today are supposed to be bigger and stronger, but I think there are more cases of malnutrition, curvature of the spine—kids bent over the left and twisted to the right—than ever before. They don't know what it is to walk two blocks.

"But Dick is a hard worker, he's the great minority."

Besides being the lone senior on the team and a hard worker, O'Lena is one of the county's premier wrestlers, perhaps the best at 169 pounds.

He's unbeaten, having pinned Pete Mustardo of Greece Olympia in 3:55 and decided defending sectional champ Kurt Blank of Irondequoit 5-2. Blank scored on two escapes.

O'Lena has not been taken down this season, including six victories (three pins) in Christmas tournaments at Webster and Auburn.

He didn't wrestle against Fairport because Quinn decided his match would be too easy. That's Dick O'Lena, something special.

"You can't always expect to get a pin," says Quinn. "But Dick's a pinner, and he's an excellent takedown man."

O'Lena likes to pin his opponent sure, but he'll take a decision.

"They (opponents) practice so long on not getting on their backs," says O'Lena, "that



—Times-Union Photo—Brad Bliss

Dick O'Lena relaxes at home.

it's hard to get them over. They just won't go sometimes.

"But I believe any guy out there, fluke or not, can pin you. You have to take everybody seriously."

O'Lena has beaten probably the best in Blank, but he will have to get past him again to win the county title and the sectionals. Dick's goal is to become the fourth ER wrestler in four years to make the state mee.

"Three years ago Jim Tortoricci went and finished third, Mike Duffy went two years ago and finished second, and Tim Gay went last year and won. It's become a tradition."

Dick O'Lena wants to continue the tradition. And he makes you believe he will.