

Burnat Wins SUNYAC Title

Potsdam College's Terry Burnat, wrestling at 190 pounds, won his first SUNYAC title last weekend at the State University of New York Athletic Conference Championships held in Buffalo.

Burnat, an All-America candidate, cruised into the final round, then pinned his championship opponent, earning the right to compete in the NCAA Division III National Tournament next weekend in Rock Island, Ill.

Potsdam finished sixth overall, a vast improvement over their eighth place showing last year. Brockport, the perennial national power, won the meet, followed by the University of Buffalo, Albany State, Binghamton, Oswego, Potsdam, Cortland, and Oneonta.

Joining Burnat on his trip out west will be Mike Price, a fourth-place finisher in Buffalo, who was voted a wild card entry by the SUNYAC coaches.

Also placing fourth for the Bears was Rick Bart, a 118-pounder. Coach Neil Johnson's grapplers picked up fifth place efforts from Rex Brown at 150, and Jim Goetz, at 177. Brent Griffin had a chance to place third, but a shoulder separation suffered in a semi-final match with Albany's Dave Averill, forced the 126-pounder to default the rest of his matches, placing him sixth.

In the NCAA tournament, the top eight finishers receive All-America status. Johnson is optimistic Burnat can reach that lofty goal.

"I feel he has a realistic shot at finishing in the top five. If he receives a good seed, and doesn't have to face a tough opponent early in the brackets, he could reach the semi-finals," said Johnson.

"Terry wrestled strong in the SUNYACs. He was hungry. I just hope he didn't peak too early."