

Non-stop toward the top

Schroeder's Gillespie continues rapid rise

BY STAFF WRITER

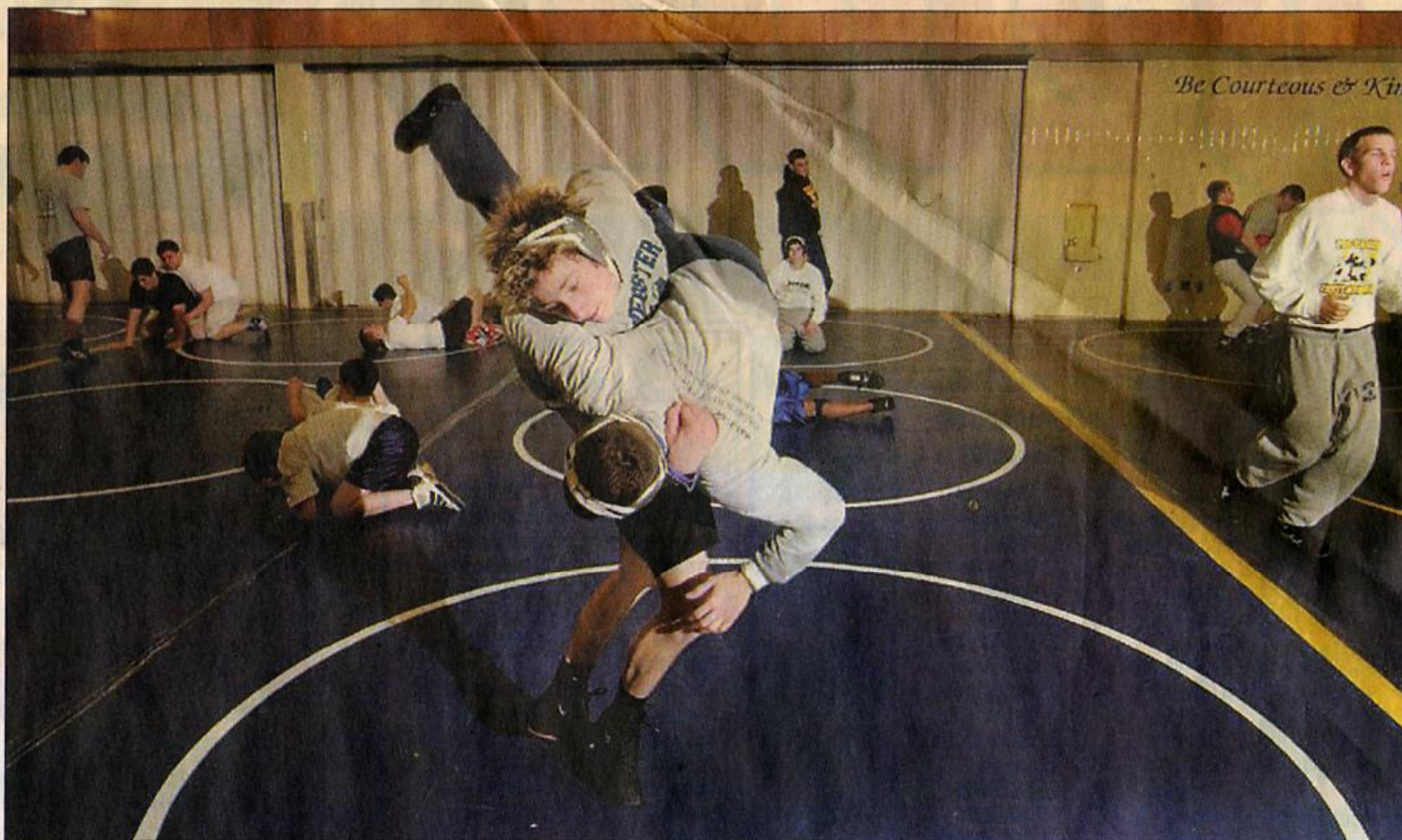
JAMES JOHNSON

WEBSTER — Gregor Gillespie's first full varsity wrestling season wasn't a bad one at all.

After the Webster Schroeder lightweight finished third at the state meet as an eighth-grader, he took a break from the sport for about two weeks.

When Gillespie returned to high school action, he put together an even better season. One more win, and Gillespie could have called himself the state's 112-pound champion.

This time, instead of taking a break, Gillespie strapped on his head gear and began to prepare himself for prime competition during the sum-



MAX SCHULTE staff photographer

Webster Schroeder sophomore Gregor Gillespie takes teammate Andrew Krieger to the mat during a recent practice session. Gillespie and Krieger both have earned their 100th career victories this season.

mer and this high school season.

"I just wanted to get back into it," the 119-pound sophomore said, as he sat on a table and watched teammates during a recent practice. "I was pretty happy with making it that far (at states), but if I could've redone that last match I would have.

"I wanted to go out there and wrestle again. I made it that far, I wanted to finish it up."

Who knows if Gillespie will even make it back to states again, let alone any weight division final? Two trips to Syracuse certainly shows he is talented enough to return there in his remaining two-and-a-half years of eligibility.

It is not a given, however. Not with dozens of other motivated and talented 119-pounders working out all over the state, including Section V.

"Wrestlers do reach plateaus," Schroeder coach Dean Salvaggio said. "I've seen people go to states when they were young and never go back. You don't take anything for granted.

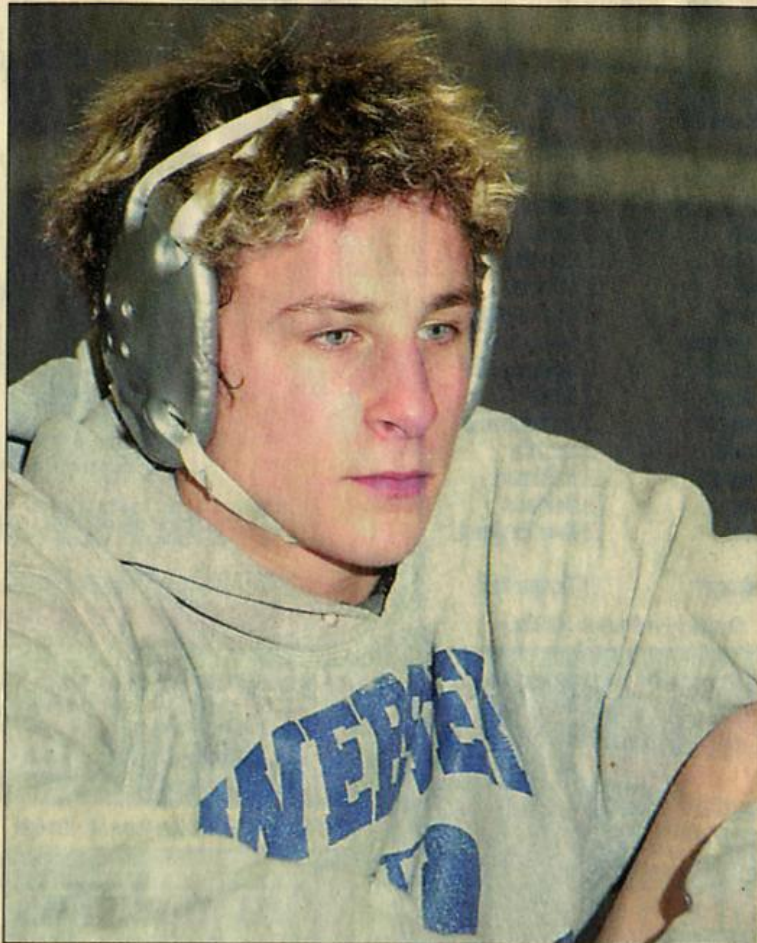
"Getting out of Section V is more than half of the battle."

Gillespie has stood up to the local competition so far.

The two-time sectional class champion still can use just his hands to count his defeats, as his career record is 104 wins and 10 losses.

His quickness can produce some surprising results.

Canandaigua's Greg Gelinas, a former sectional champion, qualified for states as a freshman, too. He is also athletic enough to have



Gillespie, the state runner-up at 112 last season, enjoys the hard work and mental challenges of wrestling.

earned all-Finger Lakes honors as a soccer player.

Yet, Gillespie pinned Gelinas in 49 seconds and beat him 11-0 in back-to-back weeks at sectionals and SuperSectionals, the state meet qualifier.

"Gregor does very well under pressure," Salvaggio said. "He has great set-ups and is a very intelligent kid. That helps him a lot.

"You'll have some kids try a move three times and it

doesn't work, doesn't work and doesn't work. His approach is, why waste the energy that third time?"

Gillespie made it clear as a seventh-grader that he was ahead of other JV wrestlers. He won his first 11 matches, but was unable to pass the state's certification tests and didn't move up to the varsity until mid-season.

His talent showed quickly, as he finished third at the Monroe County Champion-

ships and sectionals, before a 2-2 performance at SuperSectionals.

"The off-season is a really big key," Gillespie said. "You can be a JV wrestler, come back after the summer and be a good wrestler."

Gillespie gladly takes input from his father's scouting reports, too. Brad Gillespie, a Bath graduate, became a junior college All-American at Corning Community College in 1973.

"Gregor works extremely hard in-season and off-season," Schroeder teammate and drill partner Andrew Krieger said. "We take it seriously. We want to be the best.

"It's easy to stay on the right path with someone who has the same goal. Most kids his age won't dedicate themselves like he does. He has definitely proved to the team that he wants to be the best."

Gillespie wrestled at the national championships in North Dakota for the first time last summer and finished 6-2, but did not place. He also joined a group of top Buffalo-area wrestlers at the Disney Duals in Orlando, Fla.

"You don't have much of a social life with wrestling," Gillespie said, smiling. "A lot of times, you just want to sleep after practice. Most of my friends are wrestlers anyway.

"I love the sport. I can't say that winning is why I do. I'd still love the sport because of the one-on-one aspect of it. There are no excuses if you lose out there. I love that." □

E-mail address: jjohnson@DemocratandChronicle.com

Wrestlers to watch

96-130 pounds: Kyle Blancke (Geneva), Jasen Borshoff (Pittsford), Trevor Chinn (Canandaigua), Josh Fuller (Spencerport), Greg Gelinas (Canandaigua), Gregor Gillespie (Webster Schroeder), Anwar Goeres (Holley), Andrew Grillo (Holley), Kyle Ingraham (Canandaigua), Andrew Krieger (Webster Schroeder), Mike McNally (Byron-Bergen), Brian Norsen (Newark), Josh Patterson (Wayne), Mike Wood (Eastridge).

135-160 pounds: Mike Brongo (Spencerport), Gene Kobilansky (Brighton), Jeremy Cosimeno (Le Roy), Tom Cuppernell (Canandaigua), Cory Lawrence (Hornell), John Smith (Honeoye Falls-Lima), John Paul Zengerle (Gates Chili).

171-275 pounds: Stephen Cragg (East Rochester), Pat Green (Hornell), John Henneky (Hilton), Andy Merkel (McQuaid), Mike Patterson (Wayne), Steve Stulpin (Spencerport), Pat VanThof (East Rochester).

Key dates

Jan. 31-Feb. 1: Monroe County Championships.

Feb. 8: Spencerport vs. Canandaigua at Finger Lakes Community College.

Feb. 21-22: Section V Championships.

Feb. 28-March 1: Super Sectionals (state meet qualifier) at Brockport State.

March 7-8: State Championships at Onondaga County War Memorial.