

Regional **WAR**

By Matt Fisher '07, Hyde School – Bath, Maine

I'm standing in a hallway of a high school gym looking at the bracket for the 2006 Maine Class C Western Regional Wrestling tournament in the one hundred and fifty two pound weight class. I am the last seed for the tournament due to sickness and a dislocated shoulder that had kept me out of action for the majority of my season. My season thus far contains only three matches, two of which have been victories: one a sixteen-second pin, the other I won with one second left.

I find my name; my stomach does a somersault, as I see the name Getchall and the school "Dirigo" in parentheses. The name is new to me, but I know the school's reputation to be big in the state's wrestling circles. I realize my match is going to be soon,

Iowa City - 197 lbs. Dan Erekson (Iowa) dec. Kurt Bakes (Iowa State), 11-9. Photo by John Johnson.

so I go warm up.

My name is called over the loud speaker and thoughts start streaming into my head. All the fans in the crowd are in vivid color and the volume in the room has somehow increased. I wave to my family, check in at the table, go to the center of the mat and wait. We come face-to-face and I just stare blankly at him, fighting any emotion that will show my lack of confidence. We shake hands briefly and the whistle blows. As Getchall and I circle each other, the room is gone. It's just me, the mat, and Getchall now. The now silent crowd is out of focus because it is no longer important.

We tie up, cautiously trying to predict each other's movements. This match could decide who goes to the state tournament in a week. I see my opening and shoot in with a high single leg takedown. I get him and the coaches know it, because they automatically become new members of the match, breaking through the silence my focus had

created before the match. As I go behind him, he struggles out-of-bounds. The whistle blows, no points. A familiar sharp pain in my shoulder begins to return as we get back in the middle to continue. Every movement makes the pain in my shoulder more apparent. I am on the losing end for the rest of the period.

For the second period, the ref flips the coin and Getchall gets the choice, but he defers the decision to me. I choose "down," look to the crowd, and give my uncle the "thumbs up" sign. The second period starts with some fire. I immediately do an inside switch and stand up. My shoulder is searing with pain and it feels like nails are being driven to the bone. We tie up and I let him shoot in. I sprawl and his face is slammed into the mat. The red liquid starts gushing from his nose almost instantly. The blood time starts and I go to my coaches; they both look grim. We talk over what I need to do differently, but I am too distracted; the second period is over already. His nose stops bleeding and we continue our war.

For the third and final period, Getchall picks "down." I am waiting for the ref's signal to start. I see my team members cheering and my family as well. The intensity is back. I no longer feel like I am moving in slow motion. I move quickly off the starting whistle, thinking to myself: "two minutes to pin." I try to turn him, but he won't budge. He does a granby roll and gets the reversal. Once again I am face down on the mat. He's stalling, wearing me down, trying to ride out the match. But then he sets his hips too high and I know I have him. I bump him higher onto me, securing his head and an arm. I'm pulling as hard as I can against him, against the pain and the fatigue. Then, finally, he's on his back. I make him realize what it's like to be in the position I had been in multiple times this match. I make him pay for his mistake, pinning him with only 15 seconds left. The Hyde fans cheer, the Dirigo fans shut up; it doesn't get any better than this.

