

# Club team small, but potent; grapples with the best of them

By **MARK MONROE**  
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The University of Toledo Wrestling Club is a small, but formidable group that made an impact on the mats at regional and national tournaments this season.

The UT club team, which competes in the National Collegiate Wrestling Association, qualified five wrestlers to the national championships last month in Lakeland, Fla.

Junior Adam Murray, a 197-pounder from Pickerington North High School, won a third consecutive individual title for the Rockets.

Murray is only the second wrestler to accomplish the feat in the 11-year history of the NCWA.

Three local wrestlers also helped Toledo place third in the North Central Conference tournament. Drew Metzger (Findlay), Brent Stockman (Defiance), and Jeff Piotrowski (Central Catholic) were among seven grapplers who competed for the Rockets at the tournament in Columbus last month.

Coach Matthew Rempe said the team had wrestlers in just seven of the 11 weight classes but still finished third.

"The cool thing was how we did at the national qualifier," Rempe said. "We only took seven athletes and took third out of 30 teams."

Murray, Metzger (235 pounds), Stockman (125), Tom Kiefer (174 of St. Peter Chanel High), and Matt Marek (184 of Nordononia) also qualified for the national meet.

They led the Rockets to a 12<sup>th</sup>-place finish out of 75 teams.

Murray, who also is the team's student coordinator, went 20-0. He also was named the confer-



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Above, the University of Toledo Wrestling Club's members are, back row, from left, coach Matthew Rempe, Luke Nye, Drew Metzger, Tom Kiefer, and Adam Murray, and front row, from left, Matt Marek and Jeff Piotrowski. At right, Adam Murray throws Matt Marek to the mat during a practice.

ence wrestler of the year. "Adam blows through you. He's a pinner," Rempe said. "But he's fundamentally sound, too."

During the course of the three-day national tournament, Murray defeated opponents from Luzerne County Community College, the University of New Hampshire, Florida Gulf Coast University, and Miami University. He then knocked off a foe from the University of Central Florida for the championship. He pinned all but one opponent.

"Murray is an excellent ex-

ample of a superior student-athlete," Rempe said.

"He maintains a 3.75 GPA in mechanical engineering, while sharing coaching duties." Metzger placed fifth to earn all-American status along with Murray.

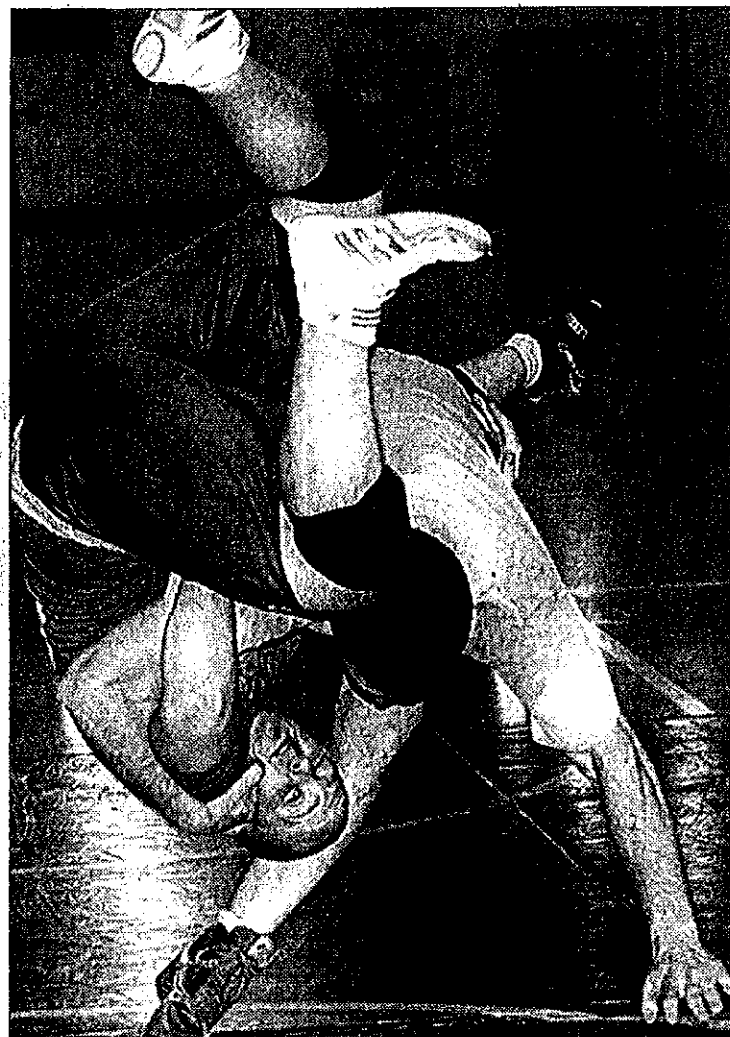
"Drew will wait and wait and then execute flawlessly," Rempe said.

Stockman went 1-2 at the national tournament. Stockman, who is 30 years old, joined the team after serving in the U.S. Marine Corps.

"He came out late in this season and worked incredibly hard

**These guys are there because they love the sport.**

**Matthew Rempe, coach**



to get in shape," Rempe said. "He still wanted to do it."

Kiefer posted a 2-2 record and Marek lost twice at nationals.

"The people that we have are winning. We just need more numbers," Rempe said.

The team had as many as 20 wrestlers through the season, he said.

This is Rempe's first year with the UT club team. It was

founded in 1997 by wrestlers from local high schools, including Bryan Knepper (Anthony Wayne). The club has competed in the NCWA, which was established the same year.

As a nonsanctioned sport, the athletes are not granted scholarships.

"These guys are there because they love the sport," Rempe said.

The team competed in events in Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. In early February, the club hosted a dual meet tournament. Teams from Bowling Green, Dayton, Miami, Ohio State, and Ohio universities competed.

"Part of the reason I got involved was because I enjoy coaching high-caliber wrestlers," Rempe said.

"We have good-quality wrestlers that I can take and help with their techniques and get rid of bad habits that won't work in collegiate wrestling."

Rempe, who is a 39-year-old from Sylvania, wrestled for the University of Nebraska. He also was an assistant coach at Toledo Christian High School.

Rempe said he knew the UT Wrestling Club was a quality program and wanted to help it grow.

"I feel we have more talent at UT than we have out on the mat and it's just because people don't know about the club," Rempe said.

Rempe said while the group emphasizes conditioning, it also is a relaxed organization.

"We have a fun atmosphere in practice," Rempe said. "It's not military-style. It's about getting in shape, too. We really push each other hard."

Rempe said any UT student interested in joining the team can e-mail him at toledowrestling@gmail.com.

"We're looking for good people," Rempe said.

"We had seven [of 11 weight classes] that were ready to compete at the conference championships. We'd like to have good wrestlers at every weight class."

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