

Cassadaga Valley Graduate Is MAC Coach Of Year

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CLEVELAND, Ohio - Following one of the most successful seasons in program history, including a record six national tournament qualifiers, head wrestling coach Jim Beichner was named the Mid American Conference coach of the year, as announced today by the conference.

The honor comes in addition to Beichner being named NYS Division I Coach of the Year twice (1996, 2004), East Coast Wrestling Association Coach of the Year and the Amateur Wrestling News Rookie Coach of the Year during his 16 seasons at Buffalo.

"I am very excited for our program to receive this award. It is truly an honor to receive this from my peers in the MAC," said Beichner, a Cassadaga Valley graduate. "We have a great group of coaches and programs within the MAC and I have a tremendous amount of respect for each program and our fellow MAC coaches."

Buffalo tied with Kent State as both programs sent six wrestlers to the NCAA Division I Wrestling Championship, the most of any MAC wrestling program. After sending a program-Division I record six wrestlers to the NCAA championships, Beichner has now guided 41 student athletes to the national tournament during his tenure.

In addition, Buffalo finished third in the 2011 MAC Wrestling Tournament as Andrew Schutt (141), Desi Green (149), Mark Lewandowski (157) and John-Martin Cannon (165) each won their weight class for the Bulls. The third-place finish tied the program's best finish in the conference tournament since joining.

"The award is really the result of our athletes beginning with our four MAC Champions and it permeates down to the five wrestlers that placed in the MAC championships and through the entire team, our backups and red-shirts," added Beichner, who was inducted into the Chautauqua Sports hall of Fame in 2004.

At the NCAA tournament, Buffalo wrestlers won six matches, highlighted by sophomore Mark Lewandowski earning a top-12 finish, just one win away from becoming an All-American. All six of the national qualifiers will return in 2011-12 as the team will only lose three wrestlers from the team.

It was not just the work of the wrestlers, Beichner said, but also all the members of the coaching staff.

"There is no chance that I would have received this honor with the efforts of my assistant coaches, Frank Beasley, Ricky Deubel and Jeff Catrabone and strength and conditioning coach Nate Harvey. It's also an award that has to be shared with our trainer - Allison Zulawski, the administration (sport supervisor Paul Vecchio) and other administrative support staff. There are a few other support staff members people that need to be thanked - Danny Bishop, Administrative Assistant, Joe Muscarella and Micky Moran. I am extremely lucky that we have so much help and support. With their help, we are definitely headed in the right direction."

The award was voted on by each of the conference's six head wrestling coaches.

"I sincerely appreciate this recognition and hope that our program wins future awards such as this one because we are consistently winning MAC Championships, producing all-americans and future NCAA champions. I am very proud of everyones efforts and we plan to do even more," Beichner said.