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Jim Beichner

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Taking over a dormant program that had produced just six dual meet victories in the previous four seasons, head coach Jim Beichner has taken the Bulls' wrestling program to a complete turnaround. In 14 seasons, Beichner has guided Buffalo to a 126-91-3 (.580) dual meet record and has coached 31 Bulls at the NCAA Championships.

Under Beichner's leadership, four Buffalo wrestlers have reached the 100-win plateau. In 2007, Mark Budd joined Kyle Cerminara, Gary Cooper and Josh States as the only Bulls to reach that prestigious mark, all have done so since Beichner took the reins at UB.

Beichner arrived at UB for the 1995-96 season, and guided the Bulls to a 10-4 dual meet record after going winless the previous season. The Bulls captured third place in the East Coast Wrestling Association (ECWA) Tournament and sent two wrestlers to the NCAA Championships where they each posted wins, the first-ever tournament wins for UB since its return to Division I. Additionally, coach Beichner was recognized for his efforts, receiving the New York State Division I and ECWA Coach of the Year awards, in addition to Amateur Wrestling News Rookie Coach of the Year honors.

In his second season, Beichner guided the team to a 12-2-2 record, the most wins in over a decade for the program. Again, the Bulls finished third at the ECWA Tournament. Jason Wartinger qualified for the NCAA Championships for the third time in his career. In addition, the Bulls finished in the top five in all five tournaments they participated in under Beichner's leadership.

In his third season, UB finished in third place at the ECWA Tournament. In addition, the Bulls made another step towards national prominence by sending three qualifiers to the NCAA National Championships, the third consecutive year Beichner had guided wrestlers to the NCAA Championships.

In addition to the team's success, Beichner helped the UB program and the Western New York area by bringing the National Wrestling Coaches Association All-Star Classic to UB's Alumni Arena. This national tournament showcased some of the top wrestlers in the country at each weight class going against each other as a preview of possible National Championship matchups. All told, there were six National Champions and 19 All-Americans from that season who competed at UB's Alumni Arena.

In 1998-99, Beichner continued the program's upward climb as the Bulls entered the Mid-American Conference, a conference that had two teams finish in the top 10 at the NCAA Championships the previous year. UB finished third in the regular season and fourth at the MAC Championships. Additionally, the Bulls had three qualifiers for the NCAA Championships for the second straight season.

During the 1999-2000 season, Buffalo finished with an 11-5 dual meet record. Within the MAC, the Bulls posted a 2-3 mark leaving them in fourth place. UB also placed fourth at the MAC Championships. Once again, three of Buffalo's wrestlers qualified for the NCAA Championships.

In the 2000-01 campaign under Beichner, four UB wrestlers qualified for the NCAA Championships. Buffalo's lone NCAA qualifier in 2001-02 was freshman standout Kyle Cerminara.

In 2002-03 - along with Labe Black and Gary Cooper reaching the NCAA Championships - Beichner's team went 9-6 and won the New York State Collegiate Championships.

In 2003-04, Beichner led the Bulls to an 8-0 dual meet start on the way to a 12-5 season. Along the way, Buffalo took second at the New York State Collegiate Championships and Ed Pawlak, McKnight and Cerminara won MAC Championships to earn bids to the NCAA Championships.

Though McKnight and Pawlak bowed out in the all-american round at the meet, Cerminara won in overtime en route to an eighth-place finish. UB finished 33rd at the meet, its highest placing in the Division I era.

His team went through a youth movement in 2004-05, with four freshmen being placed in the starting lineup and two sophomores and a junior without consistent starting experience also making the starting 10. The result was a season that saw the Bulls struggle to 3-10 in dual meets, but a season that ended with two wins, including a come-from-behind 18-16 win against Kent State.

Even with the youth, Beichner delivered an NCAA qualifier for the 10th consecutive year, as Mark McKnight reached the tournament and a record five Bulls placed at the Mid-American Conference Championships.

In 2005-06, Beichner's patience paid off, as the team placed a school-record third at the MAC Championships, led by the individual title efforts of captains Mark Budd and Harold Sherrell. Captain Kyle Cerminara also earned a bid to the NCAA Championships, as the 197-pounder posted a UB-best ranking of second in the final NWCA poll and earned the second seed at the NCAA Championships. Budd also earned a national ranking during the season, egged on by his stunning upset of the nation's No. 1-ranked 133-pounder in December.

The rest of the Bulls also got on the winning track as Mickey Moran went from seven wins as a freshman to 26 and a national ranking as a sophomore, helping the team garner its first national ranking, reaching 24th in the WrestlingReport.com poll.

Despite dealing with numerous injuries, Beichner still guided the 2006-07 Bulls to a winning dual meet record. The Bulls also had success during tournaments throughout the season, as 10 UB wrestlers won tournament titles during the season. The Bulls finished 3rd at the New York State Wrestling Championships and Mark Budd made his second-straight trip to the NCAA Championship.

In his first 14 years, Beichner has made a tremendous impact at the University at Buffalo. He has taken the program from a team with a combined six wins in the four years prior to his arrival to 50 wins in his first five seasons. With 126 dual meet wins, Beichner ranks behind only Ed Michael's 213 career wins at Buffalo.

Beichner and his staff have brought some of the best that collegiate wrestling has to offer to the Western New York area and continue to build a program that is making trips to the NCAA Championships on a regular basis.

Prior to his appointment at UB, Beichner served seven years as an assistant coach at the University of Pittsburgh under head coach Rande Stottlemeyer. At Pittsburgh, Beichner was heavily involved in the day-to-day operations of the program, budgeting, and other administrative duties in addition to his coaching and recruiting responsibilities.

"I was fortunate that Rande gave me the freedom to do what was necessary to get the job done," Beichner commented. "He never put restrictions on my methods, but instead made everything accessible to me at all times."

During his seven-year tenure as an assistant, the Panthers were ranked in the National Top-25 six times, reaching as high as 13th in 1988. During Beichner's last season as an assistant in 1994-95, Pittsburgh was invited to the National Duals Tournament for the first time in school history. En route to an eighth-place finish, the Panthers defeated traditional wrestling powers Oregon State and Arizona State, as well as intrastate rival Penn State for the first time in 19 years.

Beichner's coaching career began at Clarion University following an outstanding collegiate wrestling career for the Golden Eagles. During his four years, Beichner was twice an NCAA Division I All-American at 190 pounds, recorded 125 career victories (tied for third all-time in Clarion history), was twice selected to wrestle in the prestigious East-West All-Star Classic and posted three undefeated dual meet seasons. In addition to captaining Clarion to only his third undefeated dual meet season in more than 38 years of competition, Beichner is 11th in career dual meet wins with 49 and posted the third-best single-season record in school history at 40-4 during the 1984-85 season. In May of 2000, Beichner was inducted into the Clarion Sports Hall of Fame.

It was while coaching at Clarion following his wrestling career that Beichner learned the inner workings of a collegiate wrestling program from one of the winningest coaches in history, Bob Bubb. Currently the Executive Director of the National Wrestling Coaches Association, Bubb had a profound influence on Beichner and his coaching style.

"Coach Bubb was a very regimented coach who ran a strict program," Beichner says. "However, he was more than just a wrestling coach in that he was always there if you were having problems or needed any kind of help. If I can do anything here at UB, I'd like to emulate the way he ran his program and be as successful as he's been."

Beichner began his association with wrestling at Cassadaga Valley High School, located 80 miles southwest of Buffalo. Wrestling under head coach Cliff Blum, Beichner was a three-time New York State High School Tournament placewinner and an inductee into the Cassadaga Hall of Fame in 1982.

"I consider coach Blum to be one of the best coaches I've ever worked with. The majority of my wrestling technique and all the things I've accomplished come as a result of his wrestling program."

In 2004, he was also inducted into the Chautauqua County Hall of Fame for his efforts at Cassadaga Valley, Clarion and UB.

In recognition of the respect he has earned in collegiate wrestling from his peers, Beichner was chosen as President-elect of the National Wrestling Coaches Association. Beichner will begin a two-year term beginning in 2008 when he follows current President Ron Mirikitani.

Beichner and his wife Diane have three children, Jake, Sam, and Grace.



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