



Magic Prep For STLCC-Meramec Duals As Nationally Top Ranked Teams, Grapplers Collide

The nationally second ranked STLCC-Meramec wrestling team takes to the mat this weekend (Jan. 29-30) hosting the Meramec Duals Friday evening at 7:00 and continuing Saturday morning at 10:00. Meramec will compete against tenth ranked Iowa Lakes, thirteenth ranked Southwestern Oregon, and fifteenth ranked Rend Lake. Always tough Rochester (Minn.) will also be in the mix along with another team yet to be named.

Sophomore **Craig Chiles** (Hillsboro), a national qualifier last year, has had his sights set on this meet for some time. He'll get a chance to face second ranked Eric Ellington of Rend Lake in the 133 weight class and hopes to gain some revenge from a year ago when Ellington topped Chiles twice.

"He said I was a crazy kid when he re-wrestled me last year," said Chiles. "I just know that he's really quick. I have to have my head on straight when I walk on the mat and know what I'm up against. I'm pumped, Every time I'm working out I think, 'What is he doing right now?' You know? I have to work harder than him."

Chiles won both matches he wrestled Jan. 23 at the Wabash Duals. The week before, he split a pair of matches at the Lincoln Duals Jan. 16, falling to Labette All-American Donnie Curtis 10-5 before beating Muskegon's Tom Webster 4-3.

"It was a really close match," said Chiles. "I ended up taking him down. We had been working on this front headlock in practice a lot and in the first 10 seconds of the match I hit it and ended up scoring off of it."

However, it's usually late in matches where Chiles will overtake an opponent thanks to his unending stamina and superior training regimen.

"If Craig's on the top of his game he can hang in there and win the match if it's close," said interim head coach **Nick Vogt**. "He's just a hard-nosed kid. He just constantly goes and he's going to beat you if you're out of shape just a little bit. In that third period he's just going to wear you down and get the victory."

Although still sharply focused on the stretch run of the current season, Chiles is looking to continue his career possibly at California Baptist College in Huntington Beach. He has also received interest from NCAA Div. I The Citadel in South Carolina and takes a humble approach to the sport.

"I think it's made me a better person because it kept me out of trouble," said Chiles. "It was something that I always had to strive to be better at. You can't ever be perfect at it. You just work to be as good as you can."

Chiles points to his inspirations as his grandfather for his positive outlook on life despite personal health issues, and his Hillsboro High School coach, Gary Oxford, for his dedication to the wrestlers.

Another Meramec wrestler who will play a key role at the Meramec Duals is freshman **John Vogt** (Ste. Genevieve) at 174 lbs. Vogt, a Missouri prep state champ last year, won both his matches at the Lincoln Duals recently, including a major upset of nationally number one ranked Chad Wright of Labette.

“We had it pretty planned out before the match started,” said interim head coach Nick Vogt, John’s older brother. “We knew what he (Wright) was good at so we tried to stay away from that. He’s got really good shots. I thought if we could just stay away from his shots in general then we’d be doing pretty good. We just worked the match around that and John did everything else he needed to do.”

For John, the match was his finest hour to date on the college mat. The coach wisely didn’t tell his brother of Wright’s lofty ranking to ward off any intimidation factor. Instead, Vogt competed against Wright on the mat like any other opponent.

“I just really wrestled a very defensive match and I made sure that I was able to score last in every period,” said John. “Even though I was defensive I did get tilted on bottom and gave up two near falls. What I really think helped me push the way through seven minutes was that all of my teammates were at the mat side cheering me on.”

Vogt continued his success this past weekend at the Wabash Duals, winning all four matches on the day.

Other probable line up slots include **Sharky Slyter** (Quincy High/Kansas) at 125; Chiles and **Apollo Harris** (Cook High/GA) at 133; eighth ranked **Tyler Holloway** (Brookfield, MO) and **Jernato Harris** (Cook High/GA) at 141; **Seth Horner** (Perry, Ohio) at 149; **Quinten Haynes** (East High/Iowa) at 157; **Anthony Saulle** (Delran High/NJ) at 165; **John Vogt** at 174; and **Deron Winn** (Liberty, MO) at 184.