UNCP's Davis’ golden opportunity awaits

By Nick Phillips
Aust. Sports Editor

The time has come for UNCP senior J.J. Davis to travel and compete with the best wrestlers in the country. As many students are preparing for final exams and getting ready for the summer, Davis is set to roll off the first step in his Olympic journey first hand. He’s placed 6th at the Division II National tournament and will move onto the University World Games and the team will compete in the throwing events.

Tremendous support

Davis, whose Olympic journey first began through known through- out the campus after the Men’s 32 edition of The Pine Needle, Neville said, he has received tremendous support from everyone, faculty and students alike, all across the university.

“Every since the story came out, I’ve gotten a lot of questions about if I got on my way to the Olympic team. It’s been great. I’ve got a lot of support from the faculty, and the coaching staff has been there every step of the way.”

Many wonder how Davis is going to juggle studying for final exams while traveling and focusing on his oppo- nents.

“The faculty has been great helping me get cer- tain things handled and turned in earlier, so I don’t miss stuff.”

It is something that I have been planning for, so going along and keeping my grades up was all part of it. Coach de- cidedly wouldn’t let me go off and miss days of class if I didn’t turn the grades to,” he said.

National tournament

Davis is set to embark on the University World University, the first of many steps.

If he places there, he will move on into the University World University, team. Ramsey ran a personal-best and with the ultimate goal of receiving an invitation to the Olympic Training Center.

Braves’ head wrestling coach Jamie Gibbs expressed the entire team’s opinion of Davis when he called the wrestler “the best in the system.”

“Overall, his constant improvement to constantly keep improving and that he never really hangs his head and gets discouraged with things,” said Gibbs on his first thoughts when asked of Davis and work ethic during his time here.

Gibbs said he and his staff, along with Davis’ fellow wrestlers, will all help push and train Davis in the practice gym to show Davis in the practice gym to show what he knows and his goals and is now on “cruise-control” as he works towards the time approach.

When hearing his coach’s words, Davis said, “I hope I’m going to be able to be on cruise control, but most likely, I’m going to be pushed as hard as I can be on cruise-control and make my way to the finals, so be it. But I’m going to do whatever it takes.”

Decision to redshirt

Since he was red- shirted in his freshman and sophomore college level, Davis was unable to get many matches under his belt, so while try- ing to do well and place, he will also be using this time and tournament to “gain momentum towards my final year, my senior year.”

The musician in Davis has already given his sen- ior year to the Braves in the way of the Braves – Your Voice.

“Just like Caesar said, ‘I came, I saw, I conquered’. That’s how I want to start off my year. And I’m going to keep improving in every- thing.”

The earlier March 12 edition, Davis was contemplating which weight class to compete in. With the tourma- linity of everyday training, Davis has pretty much locked down his goals weight at 174 pounds, and “if the facilities and my best-fit,” he will go 174 in the Freestyle.

Back next fall

Regardless of his placement and outcome, Davis will be back on campus next fall as a part of the Braves program, as he quickly adds to his sights the goal of a National Championship.

After his surprising sixth place finish last season, the All-American has his eyes towards winning the D-II Championship. “All-Americans at the D-II level, people with those types of credentials are a dime a dozen,” said Gibbs, “but he’s got the ability to wrestle up to the freestyle level, and become UNCP’s first National Champion.”

“We want the best for him. He deserves the best – he’s a hard working kid who has bought into the system here. We wish him luck,” Gibbs said.

As Davis prepares for his final days before embarking on the next chapter in his career, he will have the entire University behind him, and on his side, rooting for him.

His fan base will not fail him in his placement, as he has built himself up following a hereafter as head, as not only students, faculty and coaches – that have all expressed their support towards another student reaching for his dreams.

Softball Sweeps Lander

By Nick Phillips
Aust. Sports Editor

UNCP produced a Peach Belt Conference sweep over the Lander on April 10. The Lady Braves were aided by two game winners, and sophomore Martika Elmore picked up two victories on the mound.

In game one, sophomore Lynn Grattan’s sacrifice fly plated Jamie Bragg to start the game. After the home team, finally scored three runs in the fourth inning, with three runs of their own in the fifth inning. Senior Candace Evans single plated two runners during the inning and LaTonya Elmore came on in relief for the Lady Braves.

Game two

The Lady Braves would allow a Lander run to score in the bottom of the frame, but snuffed out any hope of a comeback in the fourth inning. With the final score of 6-4.

Two home runs were hit in the game, one by Davis and the other by sophomore Morgan Patrick tied the game with a swing of the bat, blasting a three- run homer to left-center action.

Women’s golf finishes fourth at shortest event

By Matt Smith
Sports Editor

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