

St. Mary Saints seal second in Peery Tourney

After completing the ultimate season in 2005, with a 21-1 overall record, a Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association of Maryland B Conference title, and a B Conference Prep State title, St. Mary's, Annapolis, wrestling program has their work cut out for them.

Attempting to fill 14 weight classes with a 22-man roster often has head coach Wayne Hicks and his Saints scrambling, but through team dedication, the Saints are getting the job done with a 5-2 overall record, 1-1 in the league.

On Dec. 16-17, the Saints, along with 10 other regional teams, hit the mats at the eighth Annual Ed Peery Invitational Wrestling Tournament at Annapolis Christian School. Peery, a well-accomplished coach, was with the Naval Academy program for close to 30 years.

In a segment taken from the tournament program, the reach of Coach Peery is wide, "In a day when character and integrity are not modeled by many leaders, Ed shows young men differently. That, combined with an acknowledgement that a deep personal faith in God is more important than the outcome of a wrestling match, is why we are the ones honored by being at the Ed Peery Invitational Wrestling Tournament."

For the second year in a row, Calvert Hall College High School, Towson, won the tourney while the St. Mary's Saints placed second behind the success of two individual champions and three runners-up.

Junior Fred Green (135), a three-year varsity grappler, improved his personal record to 10-0 after three tourney victories over the weekend, his last coming in the finals over Good Counsel. "Fred is a tenacious wrestler. He keeps learning and therefore he keeps improving. He's a wrestler that never quits," said Hicks.

The other individual tournament champ was senior Robert "G" Garland (215). Though Garland is actually 190 pounds, he has wrestled at the 215 weight class for

the past two seasons and remains successful. Now 8-2 on the year, Garland defeated Calvert Hall during the Peery Invite. During the match, Garland was down 7-2 but late in the third period, Garland turned the tides on his opponent and executed a masterful pin for the win. Uniquely, Garland pinned all of his opponents during the tournament.

Runners-up for the Saints during the Peery Invite were sophomore Brad Molina(112), senior Chris Ruland (125) and senior Ryan Kelly(152).

Hicks is in his sixth season with the St. Mary's program and for the last three seasons, has been assisted by his son David, another excellent wrestler. It's all in the family, as senior Matt Hicks (119) finishes up his high school wrestling career this season.

Overall this season, a nice surprise for the Saints has been the presence of freshman Sam Vaughters (103). Vaughters has come up through the ranks of the Navy Juniors wrestling program and shows great promise for the future. During the Peery Invite, Vaughters showed a gutsy performance with two overtime victories, eventually losing in the semi-finals.

The Saints look to defend to the MIAA B Conference title but must handle a tough squad from John Carroll. The Patriots remain undefeated, handing the Saints their first league loss on Dec. 9, 39-29.