Dieringer-led Pirates get ready for challenge in search of 9th straight NSC crown

With eight straight North Shore Conference team titles under their belts, members of the Port Washington wrestling squad should be hungry for a little competition this season.

If so, the Pirates probably won't be disappointed.

"We're expecting the conference to be a lot tougher than it has been in the past," said Port coach Angelo LaRosa, whose team maintained its league streak by edging Germantown last season.

"Germantown will be strong, and most of the other teams have improved, so it should be a lot more interesting."

The loss of three 2009 state qualifiers will also make the Pirates' title defense more challenging. Tony Werner (130 pounds), Eric Croatt (135) and Andy Dieringer (145) all graduated after finishing in the top six at the WIAA Division 2

finals.

Even so, talent and numbers will again make Port a favorite.

“We have a lot of young guys but this year, more than ever, we will have a lot of depth,” said LaRosa, who enters his fourth season at the Pirates’ helm.

“We’ll be able to move guys around in different weight classes to get the match-ups we want. It will make us more balanced than in the past.”

The Pirates, who defeated Germantown, 36-31, in their closest conference dual meet last season, will again be led by Alex Dieringer. The junior is coming off a second-place state finish at 125 pounds after winning a state crown as a freshman and will be hungrier than ever, according to his coach.

“Alex is ready to go. He’s so advanced technically and much more physical than in the past,” LaRosa said.

“He’s one of the top high-school wrestlers in the country.”

Dieringer, who has an 83-3 career record, will probably start the season at 140 pounds before settling in at 135, LaRosa said.

Port’s other returning state qualifier is junior Trevor Schumacher, who posted a 25-16 mark last season that included a third-place sectional finish at 140 pounds. He’s expected to contribute in the 140 to 152 weight classes.

“Trevor is really strong and athletic and has another year of experience, so we’re expecting great things from him,” LaRosa said.

“Our goal is to get him back to state on the medals stand this year.”

The Pirates have only four seniors on a roster of more than two dozen wrestlers. They are Nate Hilton (189/215), Ryan Wischer (160), Mike Hernandez (215) and Tim Montoya (285).

LaRosa expects contributions from all four seniors, singling out Wischer, who he said is probably the team’s most improved wrestler.

“I’ve never seen someone come so far,” LaRosa said. “He’s worked so hard, and it’s going to pay off for him.”

Port’s other juniors include Justin Meins (125/130), Jake Maechtle (135/140), Colin Baake (130/135), Dylan Coomer (130/135), Nate Flack (171/189) and Mark Strong (189/215).

Maechtle is poised for a breakthrough season after spending much of his freshman year at the junior-varsity level, LaRosa said.

Leading a contingent of talented Port sophomores are Adam Dreikosen (119), David Cornell (112), Andy McGee (125) and Bret Winker (160/171).

Dreikosen “is the best second-year wrestler I’ve ever seen,” LaRosa said. “He picks things up really fast.”

Bolstering the Pirates lineup will be a number of freshmen who excelled in the Piranhas youth wrestling program, including Jermaine Will (103), Jason Marhal (103), Eli Rosado (112), Tyler Madden (119/125), Nathan Schnell (119/125), Josh Meins (145/152) and Ryan
Stietz (152/160).

“Half of our team is freshmen, so we’re really young,” LaRosa said. “But they’re also very good, so it will help keep the program growing.”

The Pirates won’t have to wait long to have their mettle tested. They open the season Thursday, Dec. 3, with a 6:30 p.m. conference dual meet at Germantown.

“It’s going to be very big, our first real test, in our first meet,” LaRosa said.

On Saturday, Port will participate in the Spartan Duals at Luxemburg-Casco.

THE PORT WASHINGTON wrestling team’s hopes of successfully defending its North Shore Conference title and securing postseason honors will depend largely on strong performances from veteran members such as juniors Alex Dieringer (top) and Trevor Schumacher (bottom). Photo by Sam Arendt