

Monarchs practice at Cleveland High

Special to the Banner

The Jones Wrestling Center at Cleveland High School was the center of activity Friday as Old Dominion University wrestlers prepared there for the team's showdown against the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

The team out of Norfolk, Va., includes four returning starters from last year's lineup; Brennan Brumley, Tristan Warner, Joe Budi and Grant Chapman. Old Dominion head coach Steve Martin chose the Jones Wrestling Center as the site for the team's practice due to the center's state-of-the-art features.

The facility was a gift to the alma mater of entrepreneur Allan Jones, a 1972 graduate of Cleveland High School, and was named in honor of his father, the late W.A. (Bill) Jones.

The Jones Wrestling Center includes digital scoreboards, padded walls and inflatable, overhead heating ducts. Jones donated more than \$896,000 for this state-of-the-art center starting in 2001, and was the sole funder for the project.

"To me, wrestling is not just a sport," Jones said. "Unlike football, basketball and baseball, wrestling is an individual achievement sport. Two wrestlers take to the mat and only one walks off the victor. It takes determination, discipline and character to come out ahead in wrestling. I have seen it firsthand as a driving force in building character and discipline in my former classmates who are doc-

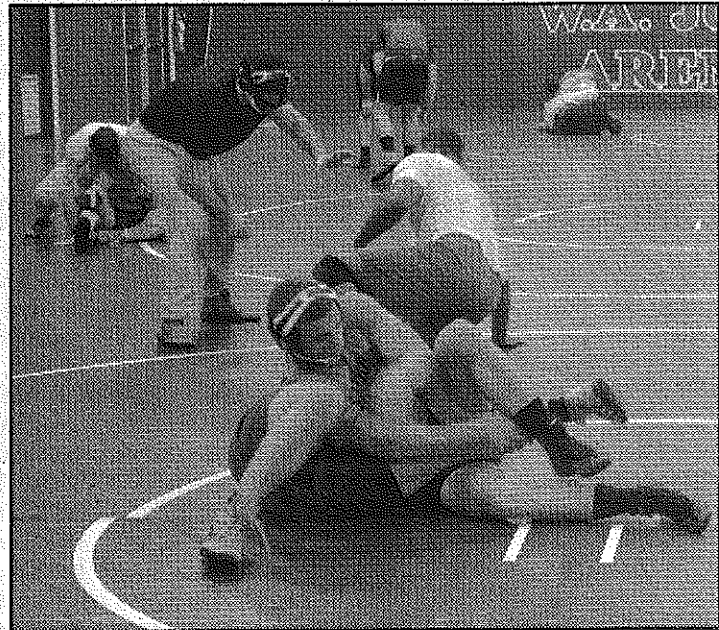
tors, entrepreneurs and government leaders today."

Jones was voted outstanding wrestler in 1971, most valuable wrestler in 1972 and runner-up at 155 pounds in 1972 under coach Duane Shriver. Jones came within a point of winning the state wrestling championship in 1972 and 38 years later — on the same date — his son Bailey, became Tennessee's 160-pound state wrestling champion. Jones' son Will was also an all-star wrestler, in 2006, but was forced to forfeit in sixth place in the state semifinals due to a severe case of the flu.

Eric Phillips coach, of the Cleveland High wrestling team who was on hand for the Old Dominion practice, said it's an honor to have inherited a dedicated wrestling gymnasium for the Blue Raiders team.

"There are a lot of wrestling programs that practice in cafeterias and rundown buildings," Mr. Phillips said. "This Jones Wrestling Center has made our wrestlers feel special, and it's something they've really taken ownership in."

Following the UTC match on Friday, Old Dominion traveled to Blacksburg, Va., for the Hokie Okie tournament.



THE OLD DOMINION Monarchs wrestling team practiced at Cleveland High School before taking on the UTC Mocs in Chattanooga, Friday.