

## Macomb Township

December 07, 2011

# Dakota wrestling hopes to ride deep roster to state crown

**By Jason Davis**  
**C & G Staff Writer**

MACOMB TOWNSHIP — Macomb Dakota wrestling coach Bill Witgen gushes when discussing the prospects for this year's squad.

"We were really young last year," said Witgen, in his fourth year with the Cougars. "Now, we're just a year older, stronger and bigger. On paper, this team should be a state (finals) qualifier."

Witgen said he has so many strong performers back this year — Dakota lost just one grappler to graduation from a team that finished 18-5, 6-1 in the Macomb Area Conference White Division — the school may field two varsity squads.

The "A" group would take on high-level competition, while the "B" team, according to the Dakota coach, would face mid-level competition.

"We have so many guys who could start at other places," Witgen said. "There will be some competition for spots on both teams, though."

"No disrespect to the other coaches in the division, but myself and the other coaches really like the talent we have here."

That talent includes junior 112-pounder Frankie Dogosh, 125-pound junior Ryan Kanam, sophomore 135-pounder Jake Johnson, 140-pound junior Kenny Seelye, sophomore 145-pounder Alex Bozivnoski and 160-pound sophomore Josh Burnham.

Witgen believes the Cougars are two grapplers deep in the 125- to 160-pound weight classes. He feels that strength is necessary as his group hits the mats with the likes of Romeo, Chippewa Valley and Macomb L'Anse Creuse North.



Photo by Patricia O'Blenes

**Senior Macomb Dakota grappler Jared Wilkes works to take down sophomore Josh Burnham during practice. Several Cougar wrestlers are expected to have big years this season.**

The Cougars fell to L'Anse Creuse in last season's district final.

"We're in a very competitive area, but our goal is to finish top three in the county," Witgen said. "We also want to win the MAC, and with the talent we have here, I think we can be top eight in the state."

A returning two-time state qualifier, Seelye said this year's group has the potential to be great.

"And we're all really young, too, so we'll be together as a team for a while," said Seelye, who placed seventh in his weight class in last season's state tournament.

"We have a lot of guys back who are good wrestlers, too, so we're going to try our best to make it to (the state finals)."

"Staying healthy will be important for us," said Johnson, who qualified for the state tournament last year as a freshman. "Even though we have a lot of guys who can wrestle, it won't make a difference if they get hurt.

"If we can stay healthy and keep working hard, we'll be tough to beat.

You can reach C & G Staff Writer Jason Davis at [jdavis@candgnews.com](mailto:jdavis@candgnews.com) or at [\(586\)498-1107](tel:(586)498-1107).

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