

Wrestling

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guy, where you get the takedown and let the guy go. It's trying to score points and control the opponent rather than getting the pin."

Williams' go-for-it-all style of wrestling is contagious amongst his teammates.

"Anytime you see a guy on your team beat up on another guy, it fires the whole team up," freshman Luke Larwin said. "His style of wrestling fits in well at Oregon and with what we're trying to accomplish. Shaun is exciting to watch."

Williams learned the fast and furious style of wrestling in his native South Africa, where freestyle wrestling is the predominant style.

"Freestyle is similar to collegiate wrestling except that in freestyle there are more throws and takedowns," Williams said. "I prefer freestyle but collegiate wrestling is OK. I'm much more competitive in freestyle."

Williams has made a quick transition from freestyle to junior college and finally to Division I wrestling. His skills at fast-paced freestyle have helped Williams out in the talented 125-pound class.

"The transition is going all right," Williams said. "I'm still learning even though I've been wrestling in college for five years. The hardest part about freestyle to college is getting out of the bottom position."

The No. 13-ranked Williams has compiled a 5-4 record against seven of the top-10 125-pounders in the nation.

Williams has beaten No. 9 in-state rival Nathan Navarro of Oregon State twice and split decisions with Oklahoma State's No. 4 Matt Brown. The most memorable win for Williams was a 7-3 upset over North Carolina's then-No. 3 Chuckie Connors in early December. The win was Williams' first over a Division I

ranked opponent and vaulted him onto the national scene.

"That weight class is like most of them — anyone in the top-10 can win that weight," Kearney said. "I think that Shaun is capable of being in that mix at the national tournament even though he's not the favorite. But they wrestle tournaments because the favorites don't always win."

The road to Oregon

South Africa is not exactly known for its wrestling, which hindered Williams growing up.

"Wrestling in South Africa is probably smaller than in other countries in Africa, which isn't that big," Williams said. "But I still think that we have some talent out there. It's just that we are so disconnected from the rest of the world. It's an eight-hour flight to Europe and a 14-hour flight to America, so we can't really compete internationally."

Williams earned a break immediately after high school, when he was invited to train with the Sunkist Kids Wrestling Club in Phoenix, Ariz.

"They usually have a lot of wrestlers in the Olympics and World Championships so I was excited," Williams said. "I wanted to stay in '95, but I ran out of money so I went back home."

Back in his hometown of Pretoria, Williams began training with the South African Olympic team. Williams easily qualified for 1996 Olympics at 119 kilograms and believed that he would be returning to America. Unfortunately, politics intervened.

"It was in '96, two years after the first democratic elections," Williams said. "For political reasons I was not selected for the Olympic team — even though I qualified. The International Olympic Committee allocated spots for previously underprivileged peo-

ple who basically went to the Olympics to be spectators."

Williams said that South Africa had around 300 slots but only sent 180 athletes. He also mentioned how there were seven South African wrestlers who qualified, but only two were selected to participate.

"It was a big thing; people weren't happy," he said. "But there's nothing you can do."

Williams plans on going to the Olympics in 2004 and possibly 2008.

"Due to limited participation in freestyle competition, I didn't have the qualifications for last year," Williams said. "I will be done with college next year, and I will definitely go."

Williams shrugged off the setback and enrolled at North Idaho Junior College in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, where he was the national champion at 125 pounds in 1999 and runner-up in 1998.

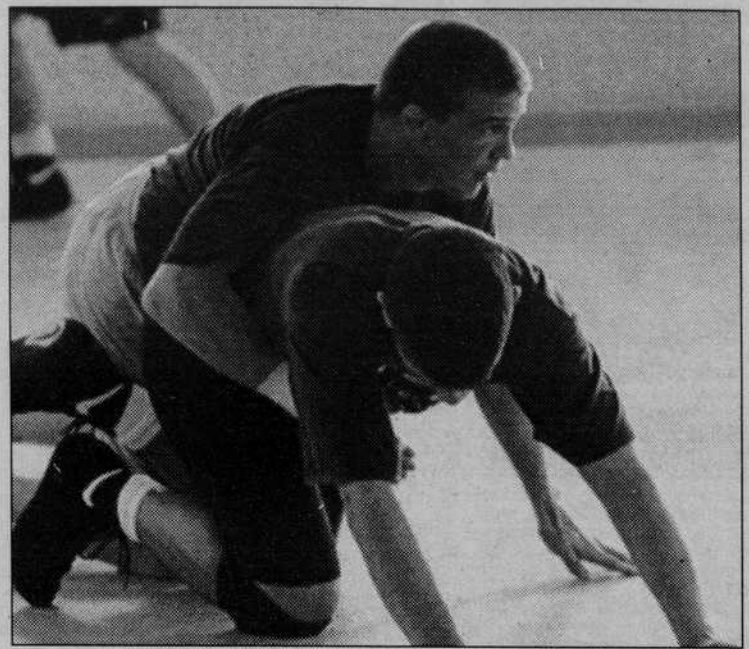
When his junior college eligibility ran out in 1999, Williams was wooed by Big-10 Conference powerhouse Minnesota. After signing a letter of intent and going on a recruiting trip, however, Williams decided that the Midwest wasn't for him.

"When I got there it was a big city, and my fiancé at the time, now my wife, couldn't adapt to it," said Williams, who is nearing the one-year anniversary of his wedding. "Right when I got there I decided I didn't like it."

Fortunately for Oregon, Williams and his wife did like the Pacific Northwest.

"I really like the area," he said. "I was looking for a small town with more diversity. I grew up on a farm, and I like smaller towns."

This weekend, Williams will wrestle for the last time this season in Eugene at the Pacific-10 Championships on Feb. 25-26 at McArthur



Chrystal McConnell Emerald

South African Shaun Williams (left) has a 24-8 record and leads the team in extra point decisions.

SHAUN WILLIAMS



Weight: 125 pounds (lightweight)

Year: Junior (TR)

Hometown: Pretoria, South Africa (Langen Hoven/North Idaho College)

2000-01: Record: 24-8, 11-3 Pac-10

Accomplishments: Ranked No. 13 by Amateur Wrestling News. Has upsets over No. 4 Chuckie Connors of North Carolina, No. 3 Matt Brown of Oklahoma State and No. 7 Bo Maynes of Oklahoma.

Before Oregon: Qualified for 1996 South African Olympic Team at 119 kg. National Junior College Champion at North Idaho College. Placed at the 1995 ES-POIR World Championships.

Court. Williams will be the favorite but will receive stiff competition from Navarro, Cal State-Bakersfield's Reuben DeLeon and Boise

State's Ben Vombaur.

And no matter who Williams faces, one thing is for certain about the match: It will be fast and furious.

Law School 101

An Introduction to Legal Education for Students of Color

Friday, February 23

Program begins at 9:45 am
and ends at 2:00 pm

William W. Knight Law Center
1515 Agate St., University of Oregon

To Register please contact Teresa Specht:
(541) 346-1810 or
tspecht@law.uoregon.edu

***No Fee to Attend**

You are invited to attend **break-out sessions** with current law students and discuss timely current events that affect the legal profession and all of us as **citizens**. Program activities include a simulated law class, lunch and an admissions information session.

The program includes remarks by **Ibrahim Gassama**, Associate Professor at the University of Oregon School of Law and distinguished recipient of several awards for his contribution to human rights. Most recently, Gassama was honored with the SALT award for his work on behalf of South Africa and its citizens. Also speaking is Associate Professor **Keith Aoki**. He has served on the editorial board of the Harvard Environmental Law Review and on the editorial staff of the Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review. A highlight of the program is a film about Native American issues and experience. Introducing and discussing the film is **Dean of the UO law school, Rennard Strickland**, a distinguished legal scholar and specialist in Native American law and heritage.