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A big match for McDonough

Matt McDonough has wrestled his share of big matches, including a state title match and battles with nationally ranked foes. Tonight's bout trumps them all, he said.

McDonough, a senior at Linn-Mar, faces top-ranked Jordan Oliver of Easton Area High School in Easton, Pa., in the 130-pound match of the Cliff Keen/Wrestling USA Dream Team Classic at Iowa City West High School. The meet between all-star teams of Iowa and the rest of the country starts at 6 with doors opening at 4. Tickets are available at the door for \$10.

"It's really big," McDonough said. "Any time you get a chance to wrestle the supposed No. 1 guy at your weight in the entire country, you get a little extra fire burning to go out there and prove something to everybody."

McDonough, ranked third nationally, compiled a 151-15 record at Linn-Mar. He was a four-time placewinner with state titles his final three years. McDonough won a Cadet National freestyle title in 2006 and had a Greco-Roman runner-up finish the same year.

Oliver, a four-time state finalist, won three state titles and four national titles.

For McDonough, it's a chance to prove himself against top competition and show his collegiate potential.

"I want to put on the best performance," McDonough said. "I'm going out there expecting to win against the No. 1 guy, pulling the upset and trying to help the Iowa team beat the U.S. team."

The bout could be the first of many.

"It's the Iowa recruit against the Oklahoma State recruit, so that's an extra thing to keep in mind," said McDonough, who expects to be a 133-pounder at Iowa. "I'll be wrestling him forever. It'll be a big rivalry. We have to start it off on the right foot."

McDonough isn't only Marion wrestler involved. Kris Thompson, a state qualifier for the Marion Indians, will compete at 103 against top-ranked Gilberto Camacho of California.

"It's definitely a huge honor to be asked to be a part of this," Thompson said. "I was pretty excited to get to extend my season another two months."

Thompson will go from singlet to tuxedo. Friends will dine, then pick him up at the all-star event in a rented limousine heading to Marion's prom.

"Hopefully, it will get over pretty quickly and I won't miss too much of the dance," said Thompson, who had a 52-34 career mark and plans to major in industrial engineering at Iowa State.

Other area wrestlers in the dual are Iowa City West teammates Nate Moore and Grant Gambrall. Moore, No. 1 at 125, faces No. 2 Brian Owen of Spokane, Wash. Gambrall, No. 4 at 171, takes on No. 1 Quentin Wright of Pennsylvania.

The Iowa team has six future NCAA Division I wrestlers. McDonough, Moore, Gambrall and Waverly-Shell

Rock's Mark Ballweg (135) will wrestle at Iowa.

Andrew Long and Eric Thompson, top-ranked at 119 and 285, have signed with Iowa State. Sibley-Ocheyedan's Josh Ihnen (189) will wrestle at Nebraska.

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