

Not in the Cards

Mifflingburg, Lewisburg, Warrior Run come up empty at District 4 team tournament

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By: Frank Dimon

MILTON—Towanda coach Bill Sexton admits his wrestling team is comprised of a bunch of “average joes” who often wrestle like “above average joes.”

At the District 4 Class AA Team Tournament at Milton, the average joes handed Sexton his fourth team title—the first since 2011—when the Black Knights slipped past Montoursville, 31-27, thanks to Tristan Decker’s 14-0 major decision over Bryce O’Conner in the final bout of an entertaining final.

Jersey Shore earned its third consecutive Class AAA championship with an easy 39-24 triumph over Shikellamy. Wyalusing claimed third place in the AA tournament but had to go to Criteria H (most first points earned) to collect a 37-36 win over Hughesville.

It was a tough day for the locals from Warrior Run, Lewisburg and Mifflinburg. The Defenders overpowered the Green Dragons, 41-21, in the morning quarterfinals, fell to Towanda, 36-25, in the semifinals, and were eliminated by Wyalusing, 31-25, in a meeting that wasn’t decided until the final bout.

Lewisburg bounced back from its loss to the Defenders with a solid effort in a 51-25 victory over Line Mountain but were eliminated when Hughesville won the final two bouts in a 36-24 win in the consolation semifinals.

Mifflinburg endured a pair of tough losses. The Wildcats (8-8) were belted by Montoursville, 55-21, in the quarterfinals and Wyalusing, 52-19, in the first round of consolations.

Cole Walter (152) had a pair of falls for Mifflinburg.

“I thought we fought today and I saw some good things,” Mifflinburg coach Dave Murray said.

“We have a good portion of the guys ready for the postseason. I saw some highlights in there.”

Lewisburg (16-6) turned in a solid effort in its win over Line Mountain. The Green Dragons streaked to a decisive 39-4 lead eight bouts into the meet, getting falls from Trey Delbaugh (138), Max Reed (160), Logan Aikey (170), and John Ward (220).

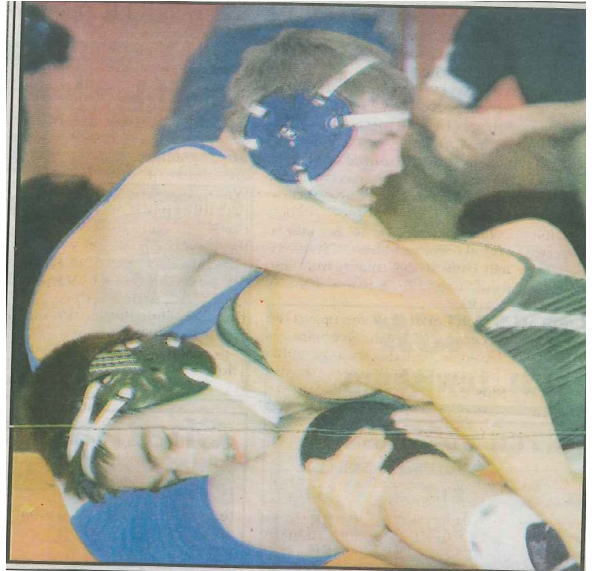
Brian Friery (106) and Jordan Gessner (120) added falls late in the match for Lewisburg.

Against Hughesville, the Green Dragons owned a 21-19 edge after Friery pinned Braden Stahlnecker in the ninth bout of the dual. But the Spartans used Trevor Sones’ 10-8 decision over Gessner and bonus-point wins from Nate Hampton and Zach Fry to seal the victory.

“We knew that it was going to be a tough day in this gym,” said Lewisburg coach Jim Snyder. “I liked the way we battled today. The difference was we lost the close matches, almost all of them. But I really liked the way we came after Hughesville today.”

In its quarterfinal meeting with Lewisburg, the Defenders were nursing a 17-15 lead with six bouts remaining. But back-to-back falls from Hunter Bohannon (220) and Matt Kilgus (285) gave Warrior Run (14-6) some breathing room.

A fall from Bradly Styers (113) and decisions from Eric Hunt (120) and Zach LeBarron (126) sealed the victory. Hunt need an over-time takedown to get past Gessner. 6-4, and LeBarron blanked Dante Taylor, 6-0.



Warrior Run’s Hunter Stroup fights off a takedown attempt by Lewisburg’s Nick Bernstein at 182 pounds during the quarterfinals of the District 4 Class AA Team Tournament at Milton Saturday. Stroup won a 9-6 decision.

Warrior Run fell behind Towanda, 36-0, and never recovered. The Defenders won the final five bouts against the Black Knights getting falls from Jared Miller (106), Styers and Zach LeBarron.

Against Wyalusing, Warrior Run again fell behind early, trailing 25-9 with five bouts remaining. Styer started the another comeback effort with a second-period fall over Jacob Sandfort and Hunt's 12-4 major over Tracy Brown cut the Rams' lead to 25-19.

Zack LeBarron, who upped his record to 24-1 with three wins on Saturday, tied the match with a first-period fall over Charlie Stretch. But Collin Edsell handed Brian LeBarron his second loss of the season, 4-0, to give Wyalusing a 28-25 lead.

Ryan Force survived a gutsy performance from the Defenders' Tyler Hornberger, who forced overtime after trailing 8-0, and rescued a 10-9 win in the third extra period. Hornberger needed a fall since the Rams owned the criteria advantage had the match ended in a tie and he did have a cradle hooked up at one point in the overtime.

"It was a strong effort (by Hornberger)," said Warrior Run coach Wayne Smythe. "He didn't take any periods off; he went three periods (and overtime) and came out on the short end. He was trying to get the pin and that is not easy."

NOTES: Milton's Bob Greenly, former coach of the Black Panthers and longtime president of the District 4 Wrestling Coaches Association, was inducted in the organization's Hall of Fame prior to the finals...Towanda will face either Ft. LeBoeuf, the District 10 runner-up, or Jefferson Morgan, the District 7 third place finisher, Thursday at the Giant Center in Hershey... Montoursville will face Chestnut Ridge, the District 5 champion... Wyalusing will take a day longer route to get to Hershey. The Rams will face District 11 runner-up Saucon Valley at Whitehall tonight. A win there would send them to the Giant Center and a meeting with Reynolds, the District 10 champion.