

H.S. wrestling: George, Defenders start well at districts

February 22, 2014

Daily Item

By Frank Dimon

WILLIAMSPORT—On a night nearly devoid of upsets, Warrior Run's Eli George knocked off Troy's Nick Stephani in convincing fashion Friday to highlight a solid night by Warrior Run during the quarterfinals of the District 4 Class AA tournament at Williamsport.

George, the sixth seed at 160 pounds, turned Stephani, the third seed, for three back points in the second period and then sealed an 8-3 victory with a late takedown. He will face Benton's Jeric Kasunic in today's semifinals that might have significant implications in the race for the team title.

The Tigers, the defending champions, enjoyed a terrific evening with six wrestlers advancing to the semis and they own a 54-39 edge over the Defenders.

Warrior Run will send three other wrestlers to the semis. Eric Hunt (113) pinned Ethan Landis of Canton in 1:10 and will get state qualifier Ethan Calkins of Troy. Zack LeBarron (120) blanked Milton's Logan Bennett, 9-0, and will face Benton freshman Mike Stuart.

The Defenders other semifinalist, Brian LeBarron (126), eased past Mifflinburg's Noah Kuba, 5-1, and will face top seed Lewis Williams of Central Columbia.

Southern Columbia, Midd-West, and Milton will each have three wrestlers in the semis. Todd Lane (120) and Kent Lane (138) both had falls in the quarterfinals, while Blake Marks (152) opened with a fall in the preliminary round and then overpowered Towanda's Justin Sheets in an 18-2 (5:34) technical fall in the semis.

Todd Lane will face Williamson's Tyrus Hamblin, and Kent Lane will face Cody Klinger of Bloomsburg. Marks gets Benton's Dom Vitale.

Midd-West advanced Tanner Ebright (132), Alex Leiberman (170), and Zach Longacre (120). Ebright saw no time on the mat when Towanda senior Terrick Vargeson re-injured his knee in a win in the prelims and defaulted. Ebright will face once-beaten Keith Batkowski of Montoursville.

Leiberman, a defending district champion, handled Hughesville's Robert White, 8-3, and will face Bloomsburg's Brandon Conrad in the semis. Longacre pinned Lewisburg's Jon Ward and will face Montoursville's Ben Cerney.

Milton sent Zach Bennett (145), Ryan Preisch (160), and Bradon Stokes (195) to the semis. Bennett surrendered the opening takedown to Line Mountain's Kenny Boyer but stormed back for a 6-2 and will face Hughesville's Dakota Nixon in the semis.

Preisch needed just 33 seconds to pin Brandon Devonshire of Northeast Bradford and gets Towanda sophomore Dayton Wickwire in the semis. Stokes edged Tyler Betz of Montgomery, 2-1, and will face Benton's Logan Womelsdorf.

Milton's Gage Heller (182), a second seed, was upset by Benton's Brad Miccio, 6-4.

Lewisburg and Line Mountain both advanced a pair of wrestlers to the semis. The Green Dragons' Brian Friery (106) and Dante Taylor (126) both won. Friery pinned Hunter Cohick of Troy in 1:16 and will take on Bentons' Alan Diltz. Taylor knocked off Andy Aguiler of Muncy, 8-5, and gets veteran Shawn Nitzcinski of Sullivan County.

For the Eagles, Cameron Newman (113) and Garrett Keiffer (285) moved into the semis. Newman outlasted Lewisburg's Jordan Gessner in 4-2 with a reversal in the third period of overtime and will face Kyle Drick of Montgomery. Keiffer pinned Warrior Run's Matt Kilgus in the third period and will get Troy's Dylan Brennan.

Mifflinburg sends Cole Walter (152) to semis after his first-period pin of Montgomery's Tom Goetz in the quarterfinals. Walter will face Austin Saxer of Northeast Bradford.

All wrestlers remain alive with Friday night's losers battling in the first round of consolations today at 8:30am. The semis are slated for 10.