

Upper weights key Defenders' win

The Daily Item

December 11, 2013

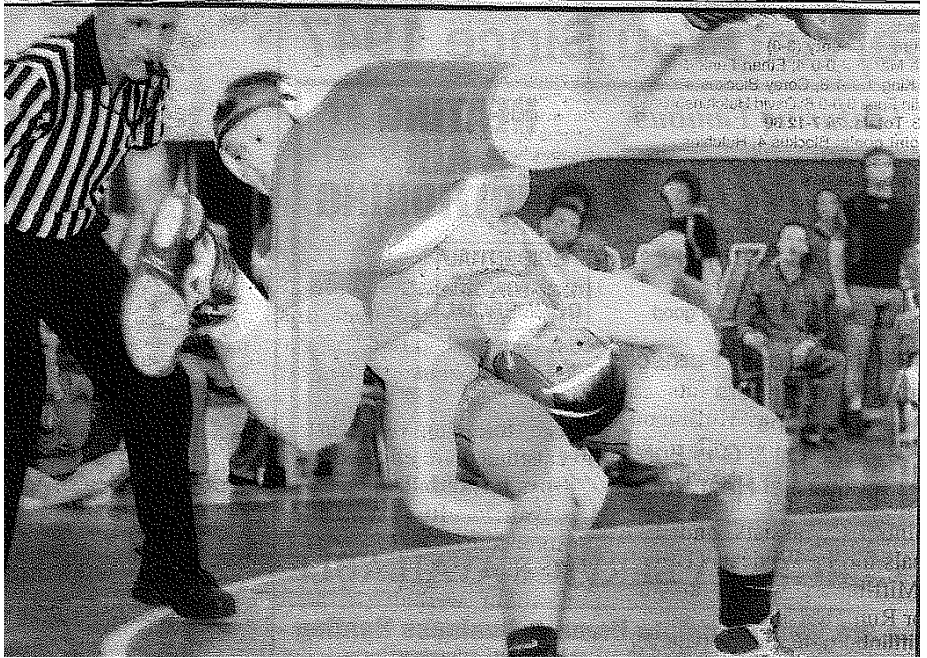
The Standard Journal

By Frank Dimon

TURBOTVILLE—In his first 41 years at Warrior Run, Wayne Smythe has put together plenty of powerful dual meet teams.

Tuesday night, the Defenders, in their home opener Heartland Athletic Conference III against opponent Muncy, showed that the 42nd edition might be as good as any of its Smythe-built predecessors.

Spurred by key falls in the upper weights from Wes Cupp and Matt Kilgus, the Defenders overpowered Muncy, 43-26.



Cupp, a first-year starter as a sophomore at 195, decked the Indians Hunter Gardner with 20 seconds remaining in the first period to push Warrior Run's early lead to 24-4, and when Kilgus, a starter last season, followed with a third-period fall over Scott Appleman while leading 4-3, the match was virtually wrapped up.

That's because, even though Muncy picked up forfeits at 285 and 106 and the 113-pound Top Hat champion, Angelo Barberio, earned a major decision at 113, the Defenders countered with a pair of state qualifiers, Eric Hunt (120) and Zack LeBarron (126), and another tested veteran, Brian LeBarron (132), down the stretch.

That trio accounted for 13 team points and, after the Indians had cut the margin to 30-2— with four bouts to go, wrapped up Smythe's 509th career win.

"The team had a great tournament last weekend and this dual meet was against a rival that always has a traditionally strong team," Smythe said. "We got the win from (Cupp) at 195 and that is a tough spot for a sophomore because they are usually facint more experienced kids. We were pleased by his performance. Kilgus is a veteran and he used some strong mat strategy and he used it to his advantage."

Muncy, a team with just one senior in its lineup, managed just one win in the first six bouts wrestled when Top Hat runner-up, Dakota Nixon, majored Masen Wagner, 13-5, in the second bout of the night.

Leading up to the critical falls by Cupp and Kilgus, the Defenders got a 3-0 decision from Andrew Walker in the opening bout at 145, a forfeit to Elias George at 160, and a fall from Daniel Breech at 170. Breech and George missed the DKI last weekend.

Hunter Stroup ended that run with an 8-4 win at 182 to hand off an 18-4 lead to Cupp.

"We are a young team," Muncy coach Denny Harer said. "We had some close matches where we got pinned and that hurt us. The matches at 195 and 220 were good matches until the pins. The final tonight was 43-26, but in reality it felt closer than that."

But with Muncy rallying to within 10, Hunt started closing the door on the Indians when he turned Abien Berry twice in the third period and pulled away for a 12-2 major. Zack LeBarron followed with a second-period fall over A.J. Krah while leading 6-2 and Brian LeBarron, after surrendering the first takedown, stormed back for a 6-2 win.

We've seen a lot of success from those guys and we can depend on them," Smythe said. "We were able to do that tonight."