

Spartans rally by Defenders

Warrior Run starts huge match well

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By Frank Dimon

TURBOTVILLE—Jared Miller handed Warrior Run a huge helping of momentum in just the second bout of Thursday night's critical Heartland Athletic Conference II showdown in the Defenders' tightly packed gym.

With his team already trailing in the matchup of two of District 4's better teams, Miller was tilted three times by Branden Stahlnecker in the first first period and trailed 11-0. But Miller, a sophomore 106-pounder, hooked up a spladle after escaping to start the second period and posted a stunning fall in 3:37.

When teammate Eric Hunt followed with a first-period fall at 1:13, and once-beaten Zack LeBarron survived an overtime scare at 120 with a reversal in the third extra period for a 9-7 decision, Warrior Run held a 15-3 lead.

But Hughesville, a team that hadn't reacted well after falling behind in a couple of early season losses, found a way to win this time. The Spartans earned key wins in swing bouts at 132, 145, and 152, and then won three of the final four bouts for an entertaining 36-24 victory.

"Hughesville wrestled more fundamentally sound than we did," said Defenders coach Wayne Smythe, whose team dropped to 6-2 (2-2 in HACII). "There were points where I was really pleased with the way we wrestled." Miller had his own back perilously close to the mat when he adjusted his pinning combination to get the early fall. Hunt improved to 13-1 when he used double arm bars to stick Zack Beamer.

LeBarron overcame Trevor Sones' 7-4 lead after two periods with a strong third, and then escaped eight seconds into the third overtime period.

But the Defenders wouldn't win again until 160—a stretch of five bouts. The Spartans' Devin Stahlnecker, a junior with one loss, converted a double-leg takedown 31 seconds into overtime to hand Brian LeBarron his first loss, 6-4, at 126. Unheralded Nate Hampton picked up a fall in the second period at 132.

"A dual meet is full of ups-and-downs and you have to stay together," said Hughesville coach Steve Budman. "We are going to have some bad things happen but hopefully some good things will happen."

Zack Fry, up a weight at 138, blanked Tyler Hornberger, 6-0, and Matt Heinrich controlled a 6-3 decision over Andrew Walker at 145. And if Miller's win was unlikely for Warrior Run earlier in the match, Houston Bryant's 10-16 win over Masen Wagner at 152 was almost as unexpected for the Spartans (10-4, 3-1).

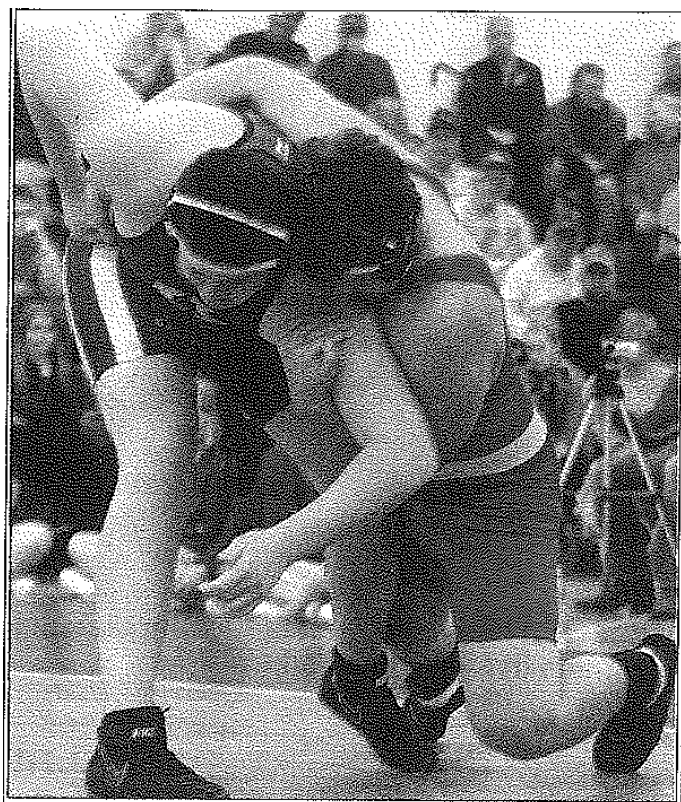
Bryant, the owner of an unimpressive 4-10 mark at the start of the night, hit two Peterson rolls—the second at time expired—for all of his points in a 10-6 decision that handed Hughesville a 21-15 lead.

Hughesville 36

Warrior Run 24



Warrior Run's Zack LeBarron and Hughesville's Trevor Sones lock up during Thursday's 120-pound match.



Hughesville's Jacoby Foresman tries to stand up as Warrior Run's Matt Kilgus holds during Thursday's 285-pound match at Warrior Run.

"There were some bouts in that stretch and they won them," Smythe said. "We didn't lose just because of those, but they make you think of all the ways we could have won the match."

Elias George's first period fall at 160 helped Defenders get back to even at 21, but Robert White followed with a first-period fall at 170 for Hughesville. Unbeaten Matt Her was workmanlike in a 6-1 decision at 182 to push the Spartans' margin to 30-21.

Hunter Stroup managed a 10-3 win at 195, but Hughesville's Ethan Barnes capped the win a first-period fall in the final bout.