

Butler Eagle



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BUTLER

WRESTLING

PRESS RELEASES

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Butler wrestling season tough to gauge

Golden Tornado facing early obstacles; solid matmen return throughout county

John Enrietto - Eagle Sports Editor - December 06, 2023



Butler sophomore Santino Sloboda is coming off a 40-win season as a freshman. He was a WPIAL runner-up and placed fourth in the PIAA Tournament. Eagle File Photo

Butler wrestling coach Scott Stoner knows what he's up against as he begins his 31st season at the helm of the Golden Tornado. "My coaching skills are going to be challenged this year," Stoner said. "It's up to me to bring a lot of young guys along."

While Butler returns stellar wrestlers like sophomore Santino Sloboda (40-3, WPIAL runner-up) at 121 pounds, junior Kase Chopp (34-9) at 139 and junior Gavin Rush (24-14) at 145, the Tornado are also starting three freshmen and are dealing with a number of injuries. And Ana Malovicvh will be wrestling for the school's first varsity girls team.

Rush has a shoulder injury, Troy Ritson (189) is coming off a knee injury from football, Brennan Michael (172) has a torn labrum and sophomore Sutton Stoner is out for the season with a dislocated elbow.

"We have the ability to grow, but we'll be piecing a lineup together here," Coach Stoner said. "Some of our more inexperienced guys at the varsity level had great careers in junior high. We'll see how they progress.

Butler is coming off a 21-2 season — the two losses by a total of three points — and finished fifth at the Chartiers Houston Tournament over the weekend. Chopp won four matches at that tourney, Sloboda went 3-0, Nicholas Savannah and Sullivan Stutz — both freshmen — won three matches each.

Butler wrestling drops home opener

Golden Tornado drop 5 consecutive matches late in 42-33 loss

John Enrietto - Eagle Sports Editor - December 07, 2023



Butler's Sullivan Stutz pins Indiana's Connor Sevajian in their 121-pound match during the Golden Tornado's 42-33 dual match loss to the Indians on Wednesday night..(Justin Guido/Special to the Eagle)

BUTLER TWP — A positive start, but a painful finish. Butler opened its dual match wrestling season Wednesday night with three consecutive first-period pins, only to drop five straight matches later in watching a 27-12 lead evaporate into a 42-33 loss to Indiana in the Butler Intermediate gym.

“That was tough sledding,” Butler coach Scott Stoner said. “I knew coming in that Indiana has a stronger lineup than us. We had to generate a lot of pins and not give up many. “It didn’t work out that way.”

Butler got pins from Nick Savannah at 107 pounds, Santino Sloboda at 114 and Sullivan Stutz at 121 to jump out to an 18-0 lead. All of those pinfalls were decisive. “We’re not that weak in the lighter weights,” Indiana coach Tony Donatelli said. “Butler’s just really strong there. We felt we could do well at the heavier weights and get back in it.” The Indians, seeing their first varsity action of the season, went on to record pins at 127, 145, 152, 160, 172 and 215 pounds. The latter pin occurred 16 seconds into the third period.



Butler's Leo Iarrapino takes down Indiana's Tyson Blystone in their 1389-pound match Wednesday night. Iarrapino won by a 5-4 decision. (Justin Guido/Special to the Eagle)

"Butler has a great wrestling program, but I know they're dealing with a bunch of injuries right now," Donatelli said. "We have a young team with a few freshmen in our lineup. We needed to take advantage (of Butler's injuries) and we did."

The Tornado's Kase Chopp won by pin at 145 pounds and heavyweight Diamond Cantera closed the evening with a pin in 42 seconds. But those points weren't enough.

Gavin Rush, one of Butler's top returnees, is out with a shoulder injury, adding to a growing list of sidelined Tornado wrestlers. Troy Ritson, counted on as a starter this

year, injured a knee at last weekend's Chartiers Houston Tournament.

Butler has four would-be starters sidelined right now, likely for the season. "Our work in the room hasn't been very good so far," Stoner said. "We're just not intense enough ... definitely a lack of focus. I don't know if the kids see all the injuries and just figure we're not going to be that good this year, so we're not working hard ... I don't know what goes on in kids' heads?"

"The guys who are healthy, they have to work hard on their own skills. I'm not sure what direction this season is going to go right now, but the potential is here."

Butler forfeited matches at 133 and 189 pounds, "a costly 12 points to give up," Stoner said. The only match to go the distance Wednesday was at 139 pounds, where Butler's Leo Iarrapino rallied for a 5-4 decision over Jacob Snyder.

Iarrapino scored a couple of escape points late. With the score tied at 4-4, Snyder voluntarily allowed Iarrapino to escape with 20 seconds left. Iarrapino held on for the decision.

"I think our guy lost track of what the score was at the time," Donatelli said. "He is known to get some quick takedowns, but I don't know if he lets their kid up if he knew the score was tied."

Butler's varsity does not return to action until Dec. 16 at the Kiski Duals. The Golden Tornado host the Doc Phillips JV Tournament this Saturday. The inaugural Butler girls tournament takes place that day as well.

Indiana 42, Butler 33

107 pounds-Nick Savannah (B) pinned Hunter Williams, 1:30; **114**-Santino Sloboda (B) pinned Rowan Grantz, 1:13; **121**-Sullivan Stutz (B) pinned Connor Sevajian, 1:09; **127**-Nico Fanella (I) pinned Ira Stiefel, 1:17; **133**-Carter Putt (I) by forfeit; **139**-Leo Iarrapino (B) dec. Tyson Blystone, 5-4; **145**-Kase Chopp (B) pinned Jacob Snyder, 2:49; **152**-Trent Bufalo (I) pinned Bryson Seth, 1:56; **160**-Will Turner (I) pinned Ryan Curry, :29; **172**-Dominic Fanella (I) pinned Dawson Davis, 4:49; **189**-Jackson Higgins (I) by forfeit; **215**-Carson Beatty (I) pinned Ethan DeLess, 4:16; **285**-Diamond Cantera (B) pinned Cash Allshouse, :42

Work in Progress

Young SV lineup takes down Butler wrestlers

[Derek Pyda](#) - Eagle Staff Writer - December 21, 2023

JACKSON TWP — The varsity wrestling teams at Butler and Seneca Valley are both dealing with a lot of youth and inexperience on the roster. However, the Raiders' green lineup showed it is well ahead of the Golden Tornado.

SV (4-2) tallied six pins in a 49-19 victory over Butler in the Raiders' William Paul Gymnasium on Wednesday. SV's wrestlers managed an early takedown in many of the bouts. "We want our guys to get that initial contact, start scoring points by getting the first takedown," said SV coach Kevin Wildrick. "We're a pretty young team, with a few vets like Connor Smith and J.T. Mallery leading the way. "We've wrestled tough in the early going this season. Right now, we're working on a lot of little things that will help our guys improve."

Jack Tofanelli (127 pounds), Angel Kristo (152), Brody Pirt (160), Brooks Beres (172), Tom Wuycheck (215) and Roman Royal (285) all earned pins for the Raiders, who jumped out to a 39-0 lead before Butler's Nicholas Savannah earned a major decision at 107 pounds.



Sullivan Stutz and Kase Chopp tallied pins for the Golden Tornado (2-5).

Seneca Valley Connor Smith scrambles with Butler Santino Sloboda in the 121lb match during a WPIAL AAA Section 2 Wrestling dual match at Seneca Valley High School on Wednesday December 20, 2023.(Justin Guido/Special to the Eagle)

“We have five starters out with injury right now and that makes all the difference,” said Butler coach Scott Stoner. “We’re throwing bodies out there, trying to teach them a few moves and hoping they

don’t get pinned, but they’re not ready. They’re not close to being in the lineup under normal circumstances.”

Butler Nicholas Savannah tries to pin Seneca Valley Riley Smith in the 107lb match during a WPIAL AAA Section 2 Wrestling dual match at Seneca Valley High School on Wednesday December 20, 2023.



Seneca Valley Tommy Wuycheck gets a double leg take down on Butler Lucas Zanaglio in the 215lb match during a WPIAL AAA Section 2

Wrestling dual match at Seneca Valley High School on Wednesday December 20, 2023.

Seneca Valley 49, Butler 19

107 pounds-Nicholas Savannah (B) major dec. Riley Smith; 114-Sullivan Stutz (B) pinned Vincent Garrastazu, 1:35; 121-Santino Sloboda (B) dec. Connor Smith, 7-4; 127- Jack Tofanelli (SV) pinned Ira Stiefel, :25; 133-Zach Hill (SV) major dec. Leo Iarrapino, 12-1; 139-Kase Chopp (B) pinned James Bidoli, 1:37; 145-Noah Rieger (SV) dec. Brycen Seth, 2-0; 152-Angel Kristo (SV) pinned Ryan Curry, 2:53; 160-Brody Pirt (SV) pinned Devin Loy, :24; 172-Brooks Beres (SV) pinned Dawson Davis, :57; 189-Corey Wolfe (SV) won by forfeit; 215-Tom Wuycheck (SV) pinned Luke Zanaglio; 285-Roman Royal (SV) pinned Stone Spack

North Hills consistency stops Butler on mats

John Enrietto - Eagle Sports Editor - January 04, 2024



Butler's Case Chopp locks in with North Hills Kaden Salvatore in the 139lbs match during a WPIAL AAA Section 2 dual meet at Butler Intermediate High School on Wednesday January 3, 2024. (Justin Guido/Special to the Eagle)

BUTLER TWP — Butler enjoyed a run of three consecutive pins. North Hills enjoyed a run of consistent wrestling otherwise, winning all but one of the other matches in rolling to a 48-23 dual match victory over the Golden Tornado on Wednesday night in the Butler Intermediate gym. The Indians (7-1) have only one wrestler in their lineup with

a losing record. North Hills' lone dual match loss this season is a close decision to Fox Chapel. The match started at 189 pounds, where the Tornado (2-6) forfeited. It was one of three Butler forfeits on the night. "Our regular 215-pounder wasn't here tonight," North Hills coach Jose Martinez said. "We could have bumped our 189-pounder up, but

Dan (Kunesky) is our back-up at 215 and he's been practicing hard all year. "He deserved a shot, so we gave it to him." Kunesky surrendered an early takedown to Butler's Lucas Zanaglio, but came back to secure a pin at the 1:44 mark of the opening period.



Butler's Santino Sloboda scores a reversal against North Hills Giovanie Schipani in the 114lbs match during a WPIAL AAA Section 2 dual meet at Butler Intermediate High School on Wednesday January 3, 2024.

"We won that first match by forfeit, but it was important for us to get jump-started by winning the first match on the mat," Martinez said. "That's why Kunesky is our wrestler of the night." The Indians jumped out to a 33-5 lead — Butler's five points courtesy of a technical fall by unbeaten Santino Sloboda at 114 pounds — before the Tornado reeled off their three pins in a row. Leo Iarrapino (16-8) got things started at 133 pounds with a pin in 1:56.

Kase Chopp followed suit at 139, pinning his opponent in 1:40. Chopp is 16-2 on the year with 13 of his victories coming by pinfall. "Kase has been coming along," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "He did a great job at the Southmoreland Tournament and was in

position to win there. He was tied 5-5 with a tough kid from Baldwin. "Kase went for it, got caught and put on his back. I don't mind that. He was aggressive on the mat."

Gavin Rush (9-5), battling injury all year at 145, completed the run of pins by putting his foe to the mat in 2:36. Dawson Davis (4-11) nearly scored a surprise win for Butler at 160 pounds, leading Santo Cerminaro (9-3) 2-1 after two periods. Cerminaro scored a reversal with 1:22 left in the match and held on for a 3-2 decision. "We could have won that one," Stoner said. "We got put on our back and didn't have an answer from there."

"Our guys who won tonight ... They've been wrestling during the summer and compete beyond the (high school) season. That's the result you get."

Sloboda (15-0) faced Giovanie Schipani (11-3) at 114 and controlled the match

throughout, building a 19-4 lead to stop the bout with 23 seconds left. "He didn't get the pin, but 19-4 is a domination," Martinez said. "That kid (Sloboda) is that good. He's probably going to win the WPIAL."



Butler's Nick Savannah gets poked in the eye against North Hills Brady Rohaly in the 107lbs match during a WPIAL AAA Section 2 dual meet at Butler Intermediate High School on Wednesday January 3, 2024. (Justin Guido/Special to the Eagle)



Butler's Gavin Rush tries to pin North Hills Dominic Horton in the 145lbs match during a WPIAL AAA Section 2 dual meet at Butler Intermediate High School on Wednesday January 3, 2024. (Justin Guido/Special to the Eagle)

North Hills 48, Butler 23 (match started at 189)107 pounds-Brady Rohaly (NH) dec. Nick Savannah, 6-2; 114-Satio Sloboda (B) tech fall (19-4) over Giovanie Schipani, 5:37; 121-Logan Milligan(NH) by forfeit; 127-Paul Cerminaro (NH) pinned Ira Stiefel, :32; 133-Leo Iarrapino (B) pinned Tristan Albert, 1:56; 139-Kase Chopp (B) pinned Kaden Salvatore, 1:40;

145-Gavin Rush (B) pinned Dominic Horton, 2:36; 152-Carter Morvay (NH) pinned Brycen Seth, :50; 160-Santo Cerminaro (NH) dec. Dawson Davis, 3-2; 172-Parker Geiger (NH) by forfeit; 189-Evan Letke (NH) by forfeit; 215-Dan Kunesky (NH) pinned Lucas Zanaglio, 1:44; 285-Burkhonjan Sobirjonav (NH) pinned Diamond Cantera, 5:16

Sloboda going for it all

Butler sophomore wrestler taking aim at WPIAL title

John Enrietto - Eagle Sports Editor - January 06, 2024



Butler Santino Sloboda scores a reversal against North Hills Giovanie Schipani in the 114lbs match during a WPIAL AAA Section 2 dual meet at Butler Intermediate High School on Wednesday January 3, 2024. (Justin Guido/Special to the Eagle)

BUTLER TWP — The WPIAL Wrestling Championships are more than a month away, but it's never too early to jockey for position. Just ask Santino Sloboda.

Butler's sophomore 114-pounder is working toward dropping to 107 before the postseason competition begins. "It's all about finding the best path," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "Santino's goal is to win a WPIAL title. It has to be that way. "There's nowhere else to go for him." Sloboda was 40-3 as a freshman, placing second at the WPIAL Championships and fourth at the PIAA Championships. All three of his losses came in the postseason. Sloboda still has yet to lose a regular season match, improving to 15-0 this year with a 19-4 technical fall over North Hills' Giovanie Schipani on Wednesday night. He is 55-3 in his still young varsity career. "I'm starting to work now on getting down to 107 pounds," Sloboda said. "It has to be a gradual process, but I'll get there."

He actually wrestled at 121 pounds against Seneca Valley and decisioned Raiders standout Connor Smith, 7-4. Norwin freshman Landon Sidun is 26-1 on the season at 114 pounds. Stoner wants Sloboda to stay out of that weight class in the WPIAL tourney.

"People will read this and think, 'why not just stay at 114 and wrestle that kid?'," Stoner said. "Santino's got a shot against any kid he wrestles, but you want to go with your best chance." "If he goes back to 107, I like his chances more. You want to set your kids up for success."



Butler's Santino Sloboda takes control of North Hills' Giovanie Schipani in their 114-pound match recently at Butler Intermediate High School. Justin Guido/Special to the Eagle

Sloboda said that coming so close to the WPIAL crown last year makes this season's goals clear. "The WPIAL championship and taking a shot at the state are where I'm at," he said. "There are ways for me to get better, things I'm still working on. "I'm good in scramble mode ... I can get in and out of things ... but I can improve using my hands in matches and the fundamental stuff."

Stoner admitted Sloboda is a bit difficult to coach "because he's so funky on the mat and does moves nobody else does. "I have to let him go at times because he knows how to get out of trouble with some of the risky stuff he does. But the question is always there, when will he go to the well once too often? That's something that's hard to gauge."

Sloboda has been a year-round wrestler since he was a small child. He does club wrestling a couple of nights a week at Quest in Washington (Pa.). While no one on the Golden Tornado's current roster can truly challenge Sloboda in the wrestling room, he sees high-level competition during club practice. He also gets challenged by Butler assistant coach Blake Caudill in the Tornado wrestling room. "Coach Caudill drills me pretty hard," Sloboda said. "I've learned a lot from him."

Of Sloboda's 15 wins this season, nine have come via pin, two by technical fall. "Even after all these years, Santino is more passionate about the sport than ever," Stoner said. "There's no telling how far he's gonna go."

Cole Baxter holds the Tornado's career wins record at 160. Sloboda has talked about taking a run at that. "A lot of factors come into play there," Stoner said. "How many matches he gets, staying healthy ... You never know. All I know is, I have to give him the freedom to do his thing because it's obviously working for him. That is an extremely talented wrestler." When asked if he's picked up a few more moves since last season, Sloboda couldn't help but smile. "I picked up another couple of moves over the summer," he said. "But it's about recognizing when to apply them during a match, reading and countering your opponent. "That's what I love about wrestling."

2 Tornado Wrestlers Reach Finals of Mid-Winter Mayhem

Butler sophomore Santino Slobodas won at the 114-pound weight class Saturday at the Mid Winter Mayhem hosted by the Kovalick Center on the campus of Indiana (Pa.) University. There were 58 teams competing.

Sloboda (20-0) went 5-0 for the day as the No. 2 seed at 114. He defeated top-seed Brock Ruthermel of Line Mountain, 2-1, in the finals, scoring a reversal in the third period for the win.

Golden Tornado junior Kase Chopp took second at 139 pounds despite entering the competition as the No. 7 seed. He upset No. 2 seed and returning state champion Dalton Perry of Central Mountain in the quarterfinals. Chopp (21-3) trailed 7-1 in the match, scored a takedown, received a stalling point, then got a reversal and back points in the final seconds for an 8-7 decision. Chopp lost by technical fall to Bo Bassett of Bishop McCort in the finals.

Butler placed 15th in the tournament as a team,. Nick Savannah went 2-2 at 107 pounds, Leo Iarrapino 3-2 at 133, Dawson Davis 2-2 at 160, Luke Zanaglio 2-2 at 215 and Diamond Cantera 3-2 at heavyweight.

Gaining momentum on the mat

**Butler's Chopp rolling
toward 100 wins,
possible pins record**

[John Enrietto - Eagle Sports
Editor - January 18, 2024](#)

Butler's Kase Chopp, right, takes control of an opponent on the wrestling mat. Chopp hopes to win a section title and place at the state tournament this season. Butler Eagle File Photo



BUTLER TWP – When it comes to wrestling, Kase Chopp is aptly named. The Butler junior chops his opponents to the mat with regularity. “I like the throws – feet to back,” Chopp said. “That’s my best move.” And his most productive one. Chopp is 21-3 this season at 139 pounds, with 17 of those wins coming by pin. He had 21 pins among his 34 wins last season and had 14 pins among his 24 triumphs as a freshman.

“Kase is very strong and powerful up top,” Butler wrestling coach Scott Stoner said. “He’s built like a wrestler. “His throws are his go-to moves, for sure. But you have to have more than one tool in the shed. There are times when your favorite move isn’t there and you have to go to something else.”

Chopp learned such a thing last weekend at the Mid-Winter Mayhem, a 58-team high school wrestling event hosted by Indiana (Pa.) University. Seeded seventh in that event, he rallied to defeat second-seed and defending PIAA champion Dalton Perry of Central Mountain. Perry had a 7-4 lead as time was running out.

“My goal entering that match was to keep it close, not get beat up too bad,” Chopp admitted. “I didn’t think I had a chance at the end there. “I went for kind of a desperation move, a hip and elbow roll, and I got it. Winning that match by a point ... I feel like it lit a spark on the rest of my season. “It lit a fire under me. I want to keep knocking off bigger people,” he added.

Chopp has a career record of 79-25 for the Golden Tornado. He’s improved his winning percentage with each season. Butler’s single-season pins record is 26, shared by four wrestlers. Cole Baxter holds the program’s career pins mark of 86. Chopp is currently 12th in career pins at Butler – and climbing that chart fast.

“I feel like I can take a shot at the single-season (pins) record, maybe the career record if I get another 15 pins or so before this season is over,” he said. “He’s a highly athletic kid,” Stoner said of Chopp. “He’s got tremendous foot speed and can use his hips. Shooting, takedowns, these are elements of his skill set Kase needs to refine.”

When he was a freshman, Chopp admitted his immediate goal was to join the 100-win club at Butler. His goal has since gone beyond that. “One of our assistant coaches, Blake Caudill, works with me in the room a lot and he’s been talking trash on me” Chopp said, laughing. “He’s got 128 career wins. All I want to do now is pass him up.”

Chopp said a number of Butler wrestling alumni come by the room to work with current members of the team. Steven Green, another former 100-win wrestler with the Tornado, has been working with Chopp. “You appreciate their dedication to the program and their help has been invaluable to me,” Chopp said.

Stoner agreed. “Wrestling is a team sport,” the coach said. “The mind-set has to be preparation, to be at your best to score points for the team. Everyone in the room helps each other with that.”

Last summer, Chopp competed at nationals in Fargo, N.D., for the first time. He finished around .500 in his matches there. But he gained so much more than a couple of wins. “Going out there, competing against such high-level talent, you have to work hard to get ready,” he said. “The hard work I put in for that tournament carried over to this season.”

Chopp plans to drop to 133 pounds by the time the postseason tournaments roll around. “The 139-pound class is loaded throughout the state,” he said. “I’ll be a strong 133-pounder. My immediate goal is to win a section championship, finish among the top four at WPIALs, hopefully place in the state tournament.”

Chopp joined Butler’s elementary wrestling program as a youngster and has stayed with it ever since. “Wrestling is a lifestyle and Kase has taken on that lifestyle,” Stoner said. “He’s set himself up to wrestle in college and he knows what it takes to prepare to face higher-level competition. “He’s earned everything he’s got.”

Butler wrestlers net win vs. Mars

January 18, 2024



ADAMS TWP – Butler’s wrestling team has battled injuries and inexperience all season long. For at least one night, the Golden Tornado were able to pass their frustrations in competition off to their opponent.

Wrestling at 215 pounds, Butler’s Lucas Zanaglio (left) takes on Mars’ Gus Aubrecht during the match Thursday January 18, 2024.

Taking an 18-0 lead due to three Mars forfeits to begin the match, Butler went on to earn five pins in a 59-15 victory Thursday against the host Planets. “We’ve been getting beat up and needed this,” said Butler coach Scott Stoner. “We have some holes in our lineup, but I am seeing progress out of kids who are not seasoned veterans.” One of them is Lucas Zanaglio, a sophomore who faced Mars’ 215-pounder Gus Aubrecht.



Wrestling at 285 pounds, Butler's Diamond Cantera (gray) takes down Mars' Jonnie Maestra during the match Thursday January 18, 2024. Ralph LoVuolo/Special to the Eagle. 1/28/2024

The latter held a 4-2 lead after two periods and allowed just an escape in the third to earn a 4-3 victory. "Lucas kept it close against a kid with 17 wins," said Stoner. "That was encouraging for him."



Aubrecht, a senior, was an unknown coming into the season. "He hadn't wrestled since the youth level, but I kept bugging him about coming out," said Mars coach Ben Rings. "He's always in good position and starting to turn the corner."

Wrestling at 145 pounds, Butler's Kase Chopp (left) takes on Mars' Liam Hein during the match on Thursday January 18, 2024. Ralph LoVuolo/Special to the Butler Eagle. 1/28/2024



Wrestling at 139 pounds, Butler's Leo Iarrapino takes the win over Mars' Brandon Frantz on Thursday January 18, 2024. Ralph LoVuolo/Special to the Butler Eagle. 1/28/2024

Another bout that Stoner and Rings both spoke positively of came at 145 pounds. Mars' Liam Hein led Butler's Kase Chopp for most of the encounter, but Chopp earned a

takedown to tie the score at 4-4 with 30 seconds left in the third period, then pinned Hein with just six seconds remaining.



Wrestling at 172 pounds, Butler's Dawson Davis (top) takes on Mars' Cooper Courson during the match Thursday January 18, 2024. Ralph LoVuolo/Special to the Eagle. 1/28/2024

“Kase has been wrestling really well and we moved him up a weight class to face a really tough kid from Mars,” Stoner said. “When you have a kid competing at a high level, you want to challenge him as much as you can.”

Hein, a junior, has a bright future, according to Rings. “Liam is getting to the point where he realizes he can hang with really good wrestlers, even potential state-placers,” he said.

Also earning pins for Butler (3-7, 1-3) were Leo Iarrapino (139 pounds), Dawson Davis (172), Braylon May (189) and Diamond Cantera (285).

Butler competes at the Clearfield Duals on Saturday while Mars travels to North Allegheny on Wednesday.

Butler 59, Mars 15 (Match started at 107 pounds)

107: Nick Savannah (B) won by forfeit; **114:** Sullivan Stutz (B) won by forfeit; **121:** Santino Sloboda (B) won by forfeit; **127:** Paxton Hartle (M) pinned Ira Stiefel, 2:58; **133:** Eaden Scheller (B) won by forfeit; **139:** Leo Iarrapino (B) pinned Brandon Frantz, 2:58; **145:** Kase Chopp (B) pinned Liam Hein, 5:54; **152:** Gavin Rush (B) by technical fall over Andy Diaz, 16-0; **160:** Joseph Zottola (M) pinned Devin Loy, :22; **172:** Dawson Davis (B) pinned Cooper Courson, 4:28; **189:** Braylon May (B) pinned Ethan Wolf, 1:15; **215:** Gus Aubrecht (M) dec. Lucas Zanaglio, 4-3; **285:** Diamond Cantera (B) pinned Jonnie Maestra

Butler Wrestlers 3 Wins at Clearfied Duals

Butler went 3-2 at the 16-team Clearfield Duals, defeating Kane (66-12), Curwensville (45-30) and DuBois (49-25). Losses came against Mifflin County (49-18) and Brockway (36-36, tiebreaker).

Golden Tornado sophomore Santino Sloboda improved to 27-0 on the season by winning all five of his matches at 114 or 121 pounds. Sullivan Stutz, also wrestling at 114 or 121, went 4-1. Kase Chopp at 139, Gavin Rush at 145 and heavyweight Diamond Cantera were also 4-1. Finishing 3-2 for Butler were Leo Iarrapino at 133, Dawson Davis at 160 and Luke Zanaglio at 215. The Tornado host Pine-Richland at 7 p.m. Wednesday.

Butler Wrestlers Fall to PR Rams 48-24



Butler's Kase Chopp matched up against Domic Ferraro in a battle of two of the best in the WPIAL at 139 pounds.

It's been a trying season for the Tornado (6-10, 1-4), who failed to qualify for the section tournament. But when coach Scott Stoner looks ahead to the 2024-25 season, he likes what he sees.



Butler's Nick Savannah gains control over Pine-Richland's Aiden Rohaly in a bout at 107 on Wednesday, Jan. 24 at Butler Intermediate High School. Kyle

“Every year, whether you're reaping the benefits of an experienced team or not, it's hard not to look down the road,” he said. “We have a number of guys who are injured this season who will be back next year, plus a strong core who have been working in

and out of the weight room.”



Butler's Sullivan Stutz grabs the arm of Pine-Richland's Peyton Ferguson in a bout at 121 on Wednesday, Jan. 24 at Butler Intermediate High School. Kyle Prudhomme/Butler Eagle (01/24/24)
KYLE PRUDHOMME



Butler's Dawson Davis reverses the control of Pine-Richland's Grant Pillar in a bout at 172 on Wednesday, Jan. 24 at Butler Intermediate High School. Kyle Prudhomme/Butler Eagle (01/24/24)
KYLE PRUDHOMME

One of the reasons for optimism is current freshman Nick Savannah, who moved his record to 22-9 with a pin of Pine-Richland's Aiden Rohaly in the second period at 107

pounds.

"I'm not focused on my record, just getting better," Savannah said. "If I do that, the points and wins will take care of themselves." Stoner sees a high ceiling for Savannah. "Nick's been hot and cold this year," he said. "At the Southmoreland Tournament, he came out bangin' and beat some really good kids. At other times, he's been timid. We're looking for him to become more assertive and aggressive." Savannah said he is aware of the areas where he needs to improve and looks forward to being part of a bright future for Butler.

"With all of the experience and talent we'll have coming back next year, it's going to be a different atmosphere," he said.

Santino Sloboda (114 pounds) and Leo Iarrapino (133) also won by fall.

Sloboda, Chopp, claim section mat titles

16 county wrestlers advance to WPIAL 3A tourney

John Enrietto - Eagle Sports Editor- February 25, 2024

VANDERGRIFT – When it comes to winning section wrestling titles, Butler's Santino Sloboda and Seneca Valley's Connor Smith have been there, done that. The Golden Tornado's Kase Chopp and Mars' Liam Hein ascended that mountain for the first time.

Those four Class AAA Northern Section champions lead 16 Butler County wrestlers who have qualified for this weekend's WPIAL Championships at Canon-McMillan High School. Those matmen placed among the top six in their respective weight classes at the section meet held Saturday at Kiski Area.



Even with Plum's Carson Yocca on his head, Butler's Kase Chopp maintains control and cruises to a win in the 133-pound WPIAL AAA Northern Section championship match on Saturday.

Butler advanced Nick Savannah (27-10) at 107 pounds, Sloboda (32-0) at 114, Chopp (30-5) at 133, Gavin Rush (20-11) at 139, Leo Iarrapino (25-14) at 145 and Dawson Davis (15-19) at 160.



Sloboda stayed unbeaten on the season by pinning Landon Funk of Fox Chapel in the first period of their championship match. Sloboda won his other two matches Saturday by technical fall and pinfall.

All serious and in control on Saturday was Butler's Santino Sloboda in his 114-pound section title match with Fox Chapel's Landon Funk.

“He was dominant today,” Butler coach Scott Stoner said. “Once he got on top in each match, he just took control. The way he and Kase have been wrestling all year, anything short of section titles for them today would have been a disappointment.”

A sophomore, Sloboda won his second section title in as many years. “I feel good at this weight class,” Sloboda said of wrestling at 114. “I’m confident wrestling at this weight. I always look for the quick takedown and go to work from there.” Chopp was denied a section championship last year as a sophomore when he dropped a match to North Allegheny in triple overtime. “This feels pretty good,” he admitted of his 10-1 decision over Plum’s Carson Yocca in the 133-pound title match. “I did a lot of club wrestling over this past year, a bunch of different clubs to get as many different opponents as I could.



Mars’ Liam Hein takes Butler's Leo Iarrapino airborne during the 145 - pound WPIAL AAA Northern Section final at Kiski Area High School on Saturday.

“That’s made a huge difference for me this year. I’ve learned that’s what it takes. I go up against wrestlers with .500 records ... I can tell they’re not doing that.”

“I’ve tried to be more of a leader in the room this year, but I’m not a real

outspoken person. I do the best I can.”

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WPIAL AAA Northern Section

(WPIAL qualifiers from county)

Finals

114 pounds-Santino Sloboda (Butler) pinned Landon Funk (Fox Chapel), 1:25

133-Kase Chopp (Butler) dec. Carson Yocca (Plum), 11-2

145-Liam Hein (Mars) dec. Leo Iarrapino (Butler), 7-0

Consolation Finals

107-Brad Rohaly (North Hills) dec. Nick Savannah (Butler), 6-5 in OT

160-Charlie Campbell (Plum) pinned Dawson Davis (Butler), 2:10

Fifth-Sixth Place

139-Gavin Rush (Butler) forfeit over Griffen Reid (North Allegheny)



Butler's Santino Sloboda locks up with Landon Funk from Fox Chapel today in the 114 pound weight class at the WPIAL AAA Northern sectional championships at Kiski Area High School in Westmoreland County. Ed Thompson/Butler Eagle 02/24/2024



Butler's Kase Chop gets the win and the hand raise in the 133-pound match today at the WPIAL AAA northern sectional championships at Kiski Area High School in Westmoreland County.

SAME GOALS, SAME SITE

Butler's Sloboda, Malovich look to ride momentum to state wrestling tourney

John Enrietto - Eagle Sports Editor - February 29, 2024



Butler's Santino Sloboda is in control of his match with Fox Chapel's Landon Funk at the WPIAL AAA Northern Sectional championships last weekend. Sloboda is 32-0 and seeded No. 1 at this weekend's WPIAL Championships.

Santino Sloboda and Ana Malovich

are both undefeated — and both have goals that extend beyond this weekend. The Butler wrestlers are favored to win their respective weight classes in the boys WPIAL Class AAA Championships and girls Western Regional, both taking place this weekend at Canon-McMillan High School.

Sloboda is 32-0 at 114 pounds this season. The Golden Tornado sophomore was pinned by Canon-McMillan's Tanner Mizenko in last year's WPIAL final. Sloboda is seeded No. 1 in this year's tournament, ahead of Norwin freshman Landon Sidun (35-1). "That kid is the real deal," Butler coach Scott Stoner said of Sidun. "He and Santino are clearly 1-2 in that weight class, whatever order you want to put them. "I'll be surprised if that's not the final and it should be a great match."

3 county wrestlers in WPIAL semifinals

March 02, 2024

Butler's Santino Sloboda and Kase Chopp, along with Seneca Valley's Connor Smith, reached the WPIAL AAA wrestling semifinals with their performances Friday night at Canon-McMillan High School.

Sloboda (34-0), wrestling at 114 pounds, won by technical fall over Nathan Caracciolo of Hempfield, then pinned Evan Tolliver of Ringgold to reach the semifinals, where he will face West Allegheny's Caiden Harbert (34-10). Chopp (33-5), at 133, pinned Joey Maritato of Moon, then edged Carson Yocca of Plum, 4-2, to reach the semifinal round, where he will face top-seed Mason Kernan (33-3) of Bethel Park.

Butler's Gavin Rush at 139, Seneca Valley's Zach Hill at 139 and Thomas Wuycheck at 215, Mars' Liam Hein at 145 and Augustus Aubrecht at 215 reached the second round of consolations on Friday. After pinning Evan Petrovich of Connellsville, Hein dropped a 6-4 decision to Chris Cibrone of Peters Township in the quarterfinals.

The semifinals are slated for noon Saturday, the finals at 4 p.m., at Canon-McMillan. The girls West Regional will take place Saturday at Canon-Mac as well.

Butler's Sloboda wins WPIAL title in wild fashion

John Enrietto - Eagle Sports Editor - March 04, 2024



Butler's Santino Sloboda celebrates his victory over Norwin's Landon Sidun after their 114-pound WPIAL championship match Saturday at Canon-McMillan High School.

CANONSBURG — A high school championship wrestling match is scheduled for 360 seconds. Butler sophomore Santino Sloboda needed all but four of them.

After being taken down by Norwin's Landon Sidun with 22 seconds left — putting him behind 4-3 in their WPIAL 3A 114-pound title match Saturday at Canon-McMillan High School — Sloboda scored a reversal with four seconds remaining to attain a 5-4 victory and improve his season record to 36-0.

“That match was an absolute classic,” Butler coach Scott Stoner said. “Santino kept his cool on the mat. He wrestled as strong a mental match as he did a physical one. “The Sidun kid is ranked No. 1 nationally in his weight class. All we’ve been hearing was how he was going to beat Santino up. He (Sloboda) has been hearing that, too. But he stayed right with him.”

Sloboda becomes Butler’s third-ever WPIAL boys wrestling champion, joining Cole Baxter and Christian Sequete. “I got pinned in the finals here last year,” Sloboda said. “All I’ve wanted was to get my name put up on the wall of the (Butler wrestling) room as a WPIAL champion. Now it’s gonna be there. This is awesome.”

Sloboda improved his career varsity wrestling record to 76-3. Sidun, a freshman, dropped to 37-2. Stoner attributed the winning move to the “Dirty Boot,” the term they use to describe the reversal maneuver Sloboda executed. “Once he took me down, I knew I had to move,” Sloboda said. “I saw that move was there, so I just went for it and I got him. “Nobody thought I could beat that kid, outside of the 10 people or so in my circle. This feels really good.”

Sloboda scored a takedown on Sidun in the first period, then gave up a reversal. The second period was scoreless and Sloboda scored an escape with 1:49 left in the third for a 3-2 lead before Sidun took him down late to grab the lead. “You can never count that kid out of a match,” Stoner said of Sloboda. “That finish was unbelievable.”



Butler's Santino Sloboda smiles after reversing Norwin's Landon Sidun and winning the 118-pound WPIAL wrestling final at Canon-McMillan High School on Saturday. Morgan Phillips/Butler Eagle (3/2/2024)

Butler 133-pounder Kase Chopp placed fourth and will join Sloboda in representing the Tornado at the state meet. "Kase wrestled a solid tournament," Stoner said. "Those two guys are putting a very positive ending on what was a tough season for us overall."



Butler's Santino Sloboda works against Landon Sidun of Norwin during the 118-pound WPIAL wrestling championship match at Canon-McMillan High School on Saturda. Morgan Phillips/Butler Eagle (3/2/2024)



WPIAL 3A CHAMPIONSHIPS

Championship Final - 114 pounds-Santino Sloboda (Butler) dec. Landon Sidun (Norwin), 5-4

Consolation Finals - 133-Ramil Islamov (Baldwin) dec. Kase Chopp (Butler), 8-3

PIAA wrestling begins Thursday

Unbeatens Sloboda and Malovich head 7 county wrestlers in tournament

John Enrietto - Eagle Sports Editor - March 06, 2024



Butler's Santino Sloboda works on opponent Landon Sidun of Norwin during the WPIAL 114-pound wrestling championship match Saturday at Canon-McMillan High School on Saturday.

How tough are the PIAA Wrestling Championships? Sloboda (36-0) — named the

WPIAL 3A Tournament's Most Outstanding Wrestler after his come-from-behind 5-4 win over Norwin's Landon Sidun in the 114-pound title match — is seeded No. 3 in the PIAA meet behind Colby Martinelli (21-1) of Pennridge and Kaedyn Williams (31-0) of Manheim Township.

“There's a system that they use, based on prestige points,” Butler coach Scott Stoner said. “Martinelli beat Santino at states last year. Williams was fourth at 114 pounds, Santino was fourth at 107 last year. It pretty much came down to a coin toss between them for seeding. “We don't mind (Sloboda) being seeded third because it's a better path for him. Sidun will have to wrestle the No. 1 seed in the second round, which will knock one of them into the consolations. Santino just has to go match-by-match, find a way to win each one.”

Butler wrestling has never had an individual state champion. Sloboda was named Most Outstanding Wrestler at WPIALs based on his unbeaten record and victory over Sidun, who was ranked No. 1 nationally.

3 county wrestlers still alive for gold

March 08, 2024

Three Butler County wrestlers remain in contention for a state championship. At the Giant Center in Hershey, Butler's Santino Sloboda and Ana Malovich and Knoch's Miranda Lajevic each won their lone bout on Thursday. After receiving a bye into the Round of 16 in the Class 3A tournament, Sloboda made quick work of Meadville's Ben Fuller at 114 pounds, tallying three takedowns in a 12-0 major decision. Butler's Kase Chopp (133 pounds) and Seneca Valley's Connor Smith (121) both fell to the consolation bracket. Chopp defeated Sun Valley's Brecken Strickland, 11-4, before losing a 17-5 major decision to Nazareth's Tahir Parkins.

Sloboda drops PIAA wrestling semi-final

Sloboda defeated in semifinal round - [March 09, 2024](#)

Butler's Santino Sloboda (38-1) decisioned Jayden Lee of Radnor, 5-0, in the 114-pound boys quarterfinals. Sloboda's bid for a state title ended with a 6-4 loss to Curtis Nelson of Ridley in the semifinal round. Sloboda is now in the consolation bracket. The Golden Tornado's Kase Chopp dropped a 5-2 decision to James Garcia of Wilson in consolations at 133.

Sloboda finishes 6th in PIAA wrestling

3 other county wrestlers place in tourney

[John Enrietto - Eagle Sports Editor - March 10, 2024](#)

Butler sophomore Santino Sloboda dropped a 6-4 decision to Curtis Nelson of Ridley in the semifinals. He gave up the winning points in the final few seconds of the match. Sloboda wound up placing sixth.

"That semifinal was the exact opposite of how Santino won the WPIAL final," Stoner said. "He had the lead, but was looking for more points. He got rolled over, got caught in a scramble and gave up the points with four or five seconds left. "That loss definitely affected him mentally afterward. It's known as the 'Semi Slide' out here. You come that close to the state finals ... It's hard to get charged up again after that."

Sloboda dropped decisions of 5-1 and 2-0 in consolations to place sixth. His two-year varsity record is 78-6 and he has yet to lose a regular season match. "Santino still has some work to do," Stoner said. "He's a Division I caliber college wrestler, potentially, but has to learn how to bounce back emotionally after tough losses."