

Butler Eagle

Article published December 4, 2008

Area mats see plenty of changes

Call it a changing of the guard.

Butler County area high school wrestling is entering a bit of a transition period this season.

- Butler graduated seven starters and has eight freshmen or sophomores contending to replace them.
- Mars has 10 freshmen or sophomores in its lineup and has built its system to 50 wrestlers.
- Bob Becker, a member of Slippery Rock's first high school wrestling team, has returned from the Air Force and joins fellow former Rockets wrestler Jeff Kline as co-head coach.
- Marty Ruley is entering his 31st — and final — season as Grove City coach.
- Tom Tomeo — one of Ruley's finest wrestlers — is taking over as Seneca Valley coach.

Here is a look at area wrestling teams for the coming season:

Butler

Coach: Scott Stoner, 16th year

Last year: 21-6

Starters lost: Dave Jaillet (119 pounds), Aaron Raible (135), Ken Rosenabuer (140), Jon Sanko (145, Waynesburg College), Alex Evanoff (145-160, Waynesburg College), Josh Pascazi (145-160, Duquesne), Mark Moses (HWT)

Prospective lineup: **103** and **112**-Brandon Bauer (Fr., 18-13), Nick Sutton (Fr.) or Randy Kelley (Fr., 18-9), **119**-Zach Reges (Fr., 21-8), **125**-Eric Tuck (So., 24-17), **130**-Cody Hartman (So., 23-7), **135**-Dillon Weston (17-0), **140**-Mike Crawford (So., 32-9), **145**-Cole Baxter (So., 33-8), **152**-Dakoda Collins (Fr., 27-1), **160**-Derek Hays (Sr., 19-14), **171**-Mike Scialabba (Jr., 2-5), **189**-Chris White (Jr., 12-16), **215**-Marino Quercio (Sr., 14-12) or Alex Miranda (Jr., 7-10), **275**-Alex Truman (Sr.)

Note: Bauer, Kelley, Reges, Hartman, Weston, Collins' records are from junior high.

Stoner says: "Seven of Baxter's losses were by one point last year and he should be a beast. Crawford is jumping from 119 to 140 and is physically maturing. We've got four WPIAL qualifiers back (Tuck, Crawford, Baxter, Quercio) and Truman can bench 365 pounds at heavyweight as a first-year senior."

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George "Doc" Phillips Wrestling Tournament

Ten Butler wrestlers placed during the fifth annual George "Doc" Phillips Memorial JV Tournament last weekend at the Intermediate High School gym.

Dakoda Collins at 152 pounds, Mike Scialabba at 171 and Alex Miranda at 215 won their weight classes. Zach Reges at 119, Todd Wiest at 152 and Alex Truman at 215 placed second.

Brandon Bauer at 103, Cody Hartman at 130 and Sam Stuckey at 135 placed third and Matt Pribis at 160 pounds placed fourth.

Butler Eagle

Article published December 11, 2008

Short night

Butler wrestlers handle depleted Knoch, 76-3

BUTLER TWP— Opening night, the show must go on. And it did. Barely.

Butler opened its varsity wrestling season Wednesday night with a 76-3 triumph over Knoch. Only four matches were actually contested and the competition was completed in 30 minutes.

"This was tough," Butler coach Scott Stoner admitted. "It's the first match of the year, big crowd, all the kids are in uniform raring to go. You want to get them all out there and you can't."

Knoch (0-2) normally has an 11-wrestler lineup, but six are sidelined by injuries and a seventh failed to make weight.

The Knights averted the shutout on the final match of the evening. Grayson Hixon scored two back points with eight seconds remaining to edge Golden Tornado freshman Zach Reges, 6-4.

"That was a big win for Grayson and a big win for our team," Knoch coach Mark McLaughlin said. "Nobody wants to get shut out."

"It's been depressing in our (wrestling) room, with three or four kids on the mat practicing with six others standing around watching."

The Knights are missing Graham Evans with a foot injury, Brit Faust was unavailable Wednesday after having wisdom teeth extracted, Jakob Will has a high ankle sprain, Davis Mowry a shoulder separation, Jim Zellhardt a concussion and Joe Hlebiczki a torn labrum.

"We've just been decimated," McLaughlin said. "We're not even looking at the scoreboard right now. We're concentrating on individual improvement and getting healthy."

Reges took a 4-2 first-period lead on the experienced Hixon, scoring a quick takedown and reversal in the first two minutes.

"Zach came out aggressively and took him down right away," Stoner said. "That speaks volumes for where he's at mentally."

"A month from now, we'll have him at the point where he gets off his back in the third period."

The third period began with the match even at four and Reges in the down position. Hixon never let him escape before securing the winning back points."

(Reges) was a scrappy kid. Grayson had trouble with him," McLaughlin said. "For a freshman to come out and battle like that in his first match shows what kind of junior high and youth program Butler has."

The Tornado won the other three contested matches. Cole Baxter scored a pin at 145 pounds and Derek Hays notched a 14-3 decision at 152.

Senior heavyweight Alex Truman pinned Abe Zito just 38 seconds into their bout.

"We've only had Alex for two years, but he's a power-lifter and a physical specimen,"

Stoner said. "And he's very disciplined for someone his age. It's a pleasure having him in our program."

The Tornado return to action Saturday at the Commodore Perry Duals, facing Port Allegany, Hickory, Mercer, Reynolds and Sharpville.

"We'll get a full load of action in that day," Stoner said. "I feel for their coach (McLaughlin) and what they're going through with health issues.

"I've had losing seasons when we weren't able to put our lineup on the mat because of injuries. It's rough. It's not fun."

Butler 76, Knoch 3

103 — Brandon Bauer (B) by forfeit; **112** — Randy Kelley (B) by forfeit; **119** — Grayson Hixon (K) dec. Zach Reges, 6-4; **125** — Eric Tuck (B) by forfeit; **130** — Cody Hartman (B) by forfeit; **135** — Sam Stuckey (B) by forfeit; **140** — Mike Crawford (B) by forfeit; **145** — Cole Baxter (B) pinned Mason Kauffman, 1:54; **152** — Derek Hays (B) dec. Kevin Green, 14-3; **160** — Dakota Collins (B) by forfeit; **171** — Matt Pribis (B) by forfeit; **189** — Chris White (B) by forfeit; **215** — Marino Quercio (B) by forfeit; **285** — Alex Truman (B) pinned Abe Zito, :38



2008-2009 Big Dog Tournament Championship Team!

Butler Eagle

Article published January 2, 2009

Butler is big dog on mat!

Wrestlers win Brockway event

BUTLER TWP— Butler proved to be the biggest dog in the Brockway Big Dog Wrestling Tournament earlier this week.

The Golden Tornado won the 13-team tournament, tallying 332 points. Runner-up Clearfield had 301 points while St. Marys had 279.

Other participating teams included Penn Cambria, Saegertown, Harbor Creek, Attica (N.Y.), Brookville, Port Allegany, host Brockway, Mercer, Moon and Iroquois.

"This was a very competitive tournament," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "Some of those smaller schools up north, those kids get involved in wrestling at a young age."

The Tornado finished fourth in the Brockway tourney in 2006 and finished second last year. "I love the format they use. That's why we go up there," Stoner said. "Kids can get a lot of matches in."

The tournament took place Monday and Tuesday. The first day consisted of pool play matches, with each wrestler facing the wrestler in his weight class from each of the other schools in his respective pool.

The second day was a double-elimination tournament.

Butler had 11 of its 14 wrestlers place, with Cole Baxter (13-0) staying unbeaten at 145 pounds by winning his weight class.

The sophomore pinned four of the six opponents he faced. He scored a 4-3 decision over Jaron Licatovich of Brockway in the finals.

"I believe those were the first three points earned against Cole this season," Stoner said.

Two other Butler wrestlers, sophomores Dillon Weston at 135 pounds and Mike Crawford at 140, respectively, placed second.

Weston won six consecutive matches, five by pins, before losing a 7-6 decision to Adam Armstrong of Saegertown in the finals. Crawford also won six straight matches before getting pinned by Saegertown's Tim Clark in the finals.

"Mike beat that kid in a physical match earlier in the tournament. He just got caught in the first period of the finals," Stoner said.

Fourth-place finishers for Butler were Brandon Bauer at 103 pounds, Cody Hartman at 130, Dakota Collins at 152 and Chris White at 189.

Eric Tuck at 125, Matt Pribis at 160 and Marino Quercio at 215 finished fifth. Heavyweight Alex Truman claimed sixth.

"From 103 through 160 pounds, all of our wrestlers were freshmen or sophomores," Stoner said. "That's pretty significant. These guys are going to be around for a while."

Crawford is 12-2 on the year while Quercio is 12-4.

"We hadn't competed in 10 days before this tournament," Stoner said. "But a lot of our kids physically out conditioned some of the other kids."

"We've been going hard in the room, but you get tired of going up against the same kid in practice day after day. You start doing a lot of the same stuff all the time."

Butler returns to action Wednesday at Ambridge. The Tornado host Fox Chapel in a key dual match Jan. 8 before competing in the Fort Cherry Duals the following day.

"We're in for a busy week," Stoner said.

Butler Eagle

Article published January 3, 2009

Talented youngsters boost Butler

January means winter and winter means cold.

But things may soon be heating up on the Butler High winter sports scene.

The Golden Tornado basketball and wrestling teams have underclassman athletes who appear destined to leave potentially legendary marks on their respective programs:

- **Cole Baxter, sophomore, wrestling** — By the time he's done, Baxter likely will own the Tornado record book. He had 33 wins and 20 pins as a freshman last year. Butler's career records are 103 and 59, respectively.

Baxter won his weight class at the Brockway Big Dog Tournament last week. He combines stellar wrestling fundamentals with physical strength.

- **Mike Crawford, sophomore, wrestling** — One of the reasons Baxter will keep improving is that Crawford will keep pushing him.



His numbers as a freshman last year were 32 wins and 16 pins. And, like Baxter, Crawford is off to a tremendous start as a sophomore.

All of the athletes listed above have plenty of company on their respective rosters that will be around next year and beyond, in some cases.

The weather outside may get frightful. So might life inside for Butler opponents.

- **Bobby Swartwout, sophomore, boys basketball** — Used sparingly as a freshman, Swartwout is quickly establishing himself as a dominant player inside.

Despite struggles to finish plays underneath consistently, Swartwout approaches a double-double almost every game. His 16-point, eight-rebound performance coming off the bench against Jeannette last week is just a teaser compared to what this kid could develop into.

- **Nate Snodgrass, freshman, boys basketball** — A starting point guard for a Quad-A team as a freshman? He deserves it.

Snodgrass has been well-schooled in AAU ball, playing for the late Howie Ruppert in the summer. During a first-round Butler Christmas Tournament game, he scored 12 points, sank all five of his shots from the field, had six steals and five assists.

In the aforementioned Jeannette game, he sank five of six free throws in the fourth quarter of a tight game. As Snodgrass matures physically, his total game will blossom. But he's already pretty good.

Butler Eagle

Article published January 8, 2009

Butler wrestlers pin down victory over Bridgers

Five Butler wrestlers secured pins Wednesday night as the Golden Tornado wrestling team cruised to a 69-6 nonsection win at Ambridge.

Eric Tuck at 125 pounds, Mike Crawford at 140, Cole Baxter at 145, Dakota Collins at 160 and Chris White at 189 had pins. White's pin occurred just 25 seconds into his match while Collins scored his fall in 56 seconds.

Now 7-1 overall and 2-0 in section competition, Butler hosts Fox Chapel, also unbeaten in section duals, Friday night.

Friday also will be Elementary Recognition Night for the Tornado wrestling program.

Butler 69, Ambridge 6

103 pounds: Brandon Bauer (B)by forfeit; **112:** Nick Sutton (B)by forfeit; **119:** Zach Reges (B)by forfeit; **125:** Eric Tuck (B)pinned Derek Pursuit, 3:37; **130:** Cody Hartman (B)dec. Anthony Tripp, 8-0; **135:** Dillon Weston (B)dec. Nick Gohn, 17-7; **140:** Mike Crawford (B)pinned Joe Baran, 1:18; **145:** Cole Baxter (B)pinned Ross Spinelli, 3:34; **152:** Derek Hays (B)dec. David Fitzpatrick, 9-3; **160:** Dakota Collins (B)pinned Franchesco Aloe, :56; **171:** Josh Petis (A)pinned Matt Pribis, 2:29; **189:** Chris White (B) pinned Nate Schnieder, :25; **215:** Marino Quercio (B)dec. Brent Sutton, 12-2; **285:** Alex Truman (B)dec. Chris Schnieder, 2-0

Mars 42, Jeannette 34 — Domenic Cosentino scored a pin for the Planets at 171 pounds in this Tuesday match.

Mars 42, Jeannette 34

103 pounds: Brendan Frank (M)by forfeit; **112:** Ian Thorn (J)by forfeit; **119:** Nate Nelson (M)dec. Zach Nedley, 11-9; **125:** Dillon Lennen (M)dec. Robert Wolfe, 9-6; **130:** Michael DePalmas (J)pinned James Flinn, 1:44; **135:** Michael Glasgow (J)dec. Billy Matoka, 11-1; **140:** Josh Studeny (M)by forfeit; **145:** Treven Craft (J)pinned Ben Dallatore, 3:11; **152:** Ronnie Dakan (M)by forfeit; **160:** Connor Clyde (M)by forfeit; **171:** Domenic Cosentino (M)pinned Teddy Delgross, :55; **189:** Chris Boggs (M)by forfeit; **215:** Anthony Deni (J)pinned Richard Fallecker, 1:36; **285:** Daniel Peters (J)pinned John Glomb, 4:27

Butler Eagle

Article published January 10, 2009

Forfeit by Foxes helps them take down Tornado



BUTLER TWP— From the opening match, lineup jockeying went on all night.

The turning point of the Fox Chapel-Butler dual wrestling match Friday night occurred when Foxes coach Ron Frank found the perfect opponent for Butler's unbeaten Cole Baxter: no one.

Fox Chapel forfeited to Baxter (15-0) at 145 pounds, putting itself behind 30-12 on the

scoreboard, then closed the night with a decision, two pins and a major decision to snare a 31-30 victory.

By forfeiting to Baxter, Frank was able to close the dual by sending seniors Dave Benedetto (19-4), Nick Letters (23-0), Justin Mahon (18-3) and Aaron Barker (21-1) to the mat.

"We have a pretty good kid at 171 in Stefano Geary," Frank said. "He's got a winning record, but he's young. I wanted to go with my four seniors.

"I've never done anything like that before. Giving up that forfeit ... I would have looked like a fool if this didn't work out."

But it did.

"It crushed us," Butler coach Scott Stoner said of the forfeiture. "It gave us tough matchups the rest of the way."

The one-point victory gave the Foxes (21-2, 4-0) the Section 3-Atitle and the right to host the section championship quadrangular Jan. 21. Butler slipped to 7-2 overall, 2-1 in the section.

The Golden Tornado will be in that section quad if they win at Seneca Valley Wednesday night.

After the Baxter forfeit, Benedetto decisioned Dakoda Collins 12-6 at 152 pounds and Mahon pinned Matt Pribis. When Letters pinned Derek Hays at 171, Butler's lead was 30-27 with one match remaining.

"We put Derek in that match because he has more experience than Mike (Scialabba)," Stoner said. "He just got turned the wrong way. Make one mistake against a kid like Letters and it's trouble."

Neither coach could figure out which team would win the dual match tiebreaker had the night ended in a draw.

Barker ended any such drama when he took down Chris White with seven seconds left in their 189-pound match, enabling Barker to win by a 13-5 major decision.

"I've never been in a dual this tight," Frank said, despite his team edging North

Allegheny 31-30 earlier this season. "We couldn't figure out the tiebreaker, so to be safe, Aaron had to go for that last takedown."

Fox Chapel would have won the tiebreaker had the team score wound up 30-30. It would have come down to the seventh criterion, which is most near-fall points.

"(Greg Severyn) is a veteran official and he didn't know," Stoner said. "We had to look it up in the (rule) book. That's how close this thing was.

"Our kids knew they had to get after it tonight and that's what they did. Big crowd, great atmosphere — this was still a great night for Butler wrestling."

The Tornado received pins from Zach Reges at 119 pounds and Marino Quercio at heavyweight. The dual match started at 215 pounds and Stoner immediately switched Quercio with regular heavyweight Alex Truman.

"People don't realize the mixing and matching coaches do in a match like this," Stoner said. "Fans are cheering and screaming and we're sitting there trying to figure out where the team points are four or five matches down the road."

Butler freshman 103-pounder Brandon Bauer won in double overtime over Conor Whelan, who just returned to action from a broken hand. The Tornado's Cody Hartman won by decision at 130 when he scored a reversal with 17 seconds left.

Sophomore Dillon Weston won a 10-3 decision at 135. Mike Crawford, another sophomore, (13-2) won a 4-2 decision at 140 over Thom Caldwell (19-3).

"We won some close ones against quality kids tonight," Stoner said. "Mike has shown he's made the adjustment to winning at 140 after making the jump from 119.

"Everyone keeps talking about Cole Baxter, but Mike's only a win behind him."

"We've got some young kids and competing in this type of setting will, hopefully, bode well for them down the road," Stoner said.

Fox Chapel 31, Butler 30

103 pounds: Brandon Bauer (B) dec. Conor Whelan, 6-5 in OT; **112:** Sam Molina (FC) pinned Nick Sutton, 3:58; **119:** Zach Reges (B)pinned George Marsico, :46; **125:** Carson Brooks (FC) dec. Eric Tuck, 4-2; **130:** Cody Hartman (B) dec. Mike Dunn. 5-3; **135:** Dillon Weston (B) dec. Shane Bialowas, 10-3; **140:** Mike Crawford (B)dec. Thom Caldwell, 4-2; **145:** Cole Baxter (B)by forfeit; **152:** Dave Benedetto (FC) dec. Dakota Collins, 12-6; **160:** Justin Mahon (FC)pinned Matt Pribis, :48; **171:** Nick Letters (FC)pinned Derek Hays, 3:47; **189:** Aaron Barker (FC) dec. Chris White, 13-5; **215:** Dan Mahon (FC) dec. Alex Truman, 5-0; **285:** Marino Quercio (B)pinned Dan Stabile, 2:54

Butler Eagle

Article published January 15, 2009

Moving on

Tornado grab spot in sectionals with victory vs. SV

JACKSON TWP— Two narrow decisions scored two radically different ways helped produce a critical victory for the Butler wrestling team Wednesday night.

The Golden Tornado (8-2) defeated Seneca Valley, 33-23, to secure a berth in the section championship quadrangular Jan. 21 at Fox Chapel.

Butler clinched the victory with two individual matches to spare. The host Raiders (2-3) trailed only 18-16 before the Tornado's Zach Reges scored a pin at 119 pounds, Eric Tuck notched a 1-0 decision at 125 and Cody Hartman pinned his foe at 130 to wrap up the win.

The dual meet started with the 145-pound match.

Tuck (11-7) scored an escape on Seneca Valley's Grant Evans (8-6) in the second period for the lone point in their match.

"Eric's still adjusting to being a 125-pound wrestler after being at 103 last year," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "I'd still like to see him get a little more aggressive.

"The Evans kid was a section champion two years ago and lost to Mike (Crawford) in the finals last year. Eric beat a name tonight. Maybe this will give him the confidence he needs."

"We knew we'd be in for a tough fight tonight," said first-year Seneca Valley coach Tim Tomeo. "Butler has an outstanding team and this was a big test for us."

While Tuck won a low-scoring narrow decision, Butler's Marino Quercio won a high-scoring one at 215 pounds.

"That 215-pound match was a crazy one," Tomeo said.

Quercio (15-4) trailed Jordan Williams (9-6) 13-8 after two periods before pulling close with a number of quick third-period takedowns. Quercio tied the match at 17 by being awarded a stalling point with 11 seconds left in regulation.

Quercio won the match 19-17 with a takedown in overtime.

"I couldn't believe that match," Stoner said. "(Quercio) was all over the place, but he got it done in the end."

Reges' (8-8) pin of Schettler was his fourth fall of the season.

"Zach is such a quiet kid that it's hard for me to get a read on him," Stoner said. "I can't even tell if he likes wrestling sometimes, but he's coming on strong and he's been getting some pins for us lately."

Hartman improved to 12-6 with his pin at 130 pounds for the Tornado. Cole Baxter moved to 16-0 with a technical fall over Bart Lalonde (2-1) at 145. Lalonde has been injured much of the year.

Dakota Collins at 152, Derek Hays at 160 and Mike Scialabba at 171 all scored decisions for Butler.

Butler Eagle

Article published January 22, 2009

Butler wrestlers close, but lose to NA

FOX CHAPEL — The gap is getting closer. But North Allegheny maintained its wrestling reign over Butler Wednesday night, defeating the Golden Tornado 36-28 in the first



round of the WPIAL Team Section Championships at Fox Chapel.

The Golden Tornado (8-3) have never defeated the Tigers (9-6) in a dual meet and North Allegheny was gunning for its ninth successive section team crown under coach Jamie Kyriazis — but Butler made it interesting.

When senior Derek Hays nipped NA freshman Austin Coniker 4-2 in overtime at 160 pounds, the berth in the team finals was sent to the final bout of the dual.

"I had no choice. I had to win or we had no chance," Hays said. "I like being in that spot. It motivates me more because it's such a team thing."

Hays (5-2) missed the early part of the season recovering from a neck stinger.

The dual's final bout pitted Butler junior Mike Scialabba (3-7) against NA's Seb Fischer, a talented opponent who entered the night with a 1-1 record.

"He had been injured and out of their lineup," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "We weren't quite sure where he stood health-wise."

Fischer appeared plenty healthy, building an 8-0 first-period lead on Scialabba before pinning him 33 seconds into the second frame to seal the team win for the Tigers.

"It's always a tough match when we wrestle Butler," Kyriazis said. "I didn't know how the first three matches of the night would go and when they jumped on us 16-0 ... It was going to be a fight."

The dual began with the 189-pound match. Butler's Chris White (13-6) scored a pin at 5:03 and Marino Quercio (15-4) won by major decision at 215.

When Alex Truman (11-7) put Alex Panormios' shoulders to the mat 15 seconds into the second period, Butler had its 16-0 lead.

North Allegheny got back in the match through its depth in the lighter and middleweight classes. Ryan Sippel (19-10) won by technical fall at 103, Mike Wanner (19-11) won via pin at 112, Nick Rodgers by major decision at 119.

Kyriazis shuffled his lineup at that point, moving 130-pound senior Joe Waltko to 140 pounds, pitting him against Butler's Mike Crawford (14-3).

Waltko is 27-1 this season, 130-20 in his career.

"Waltko's a stud, but we were hoping Mike could hang in and keep it to a major decision or just a decision," Stoner said. "Had that happened, we might have been tied

at that point."

But Crawford aggravated an ailing shoulder and wound up defaulting to Waltko in the second period. He was trailing 12-4 at the time.

"Mike's hurting pretty bad right now," Stoner said. "I'm not sure what his situation is going to be. That shoulder's been bothering him."

"People are going to wonder why I didn't wrestle Cole (Baxter) straight up against (Dave) Cawley at 145. We could have gone that way, but I was trying to steal a few more points. It didn't work out."

The unbeaten Baxter (16-0) wound up scoring a decision over Adam Powers at 152 pounds. Cawley pinned Dakota Collins with 15 seconds left at 145.

"There was a lot of jockeying going on," Kyriazis said of the lineups. "We had a feeling this might come down to the last match."

"With them having some wrestlers banged up, we thought we might have a shot," Stoner said.

Hays believes NA's mat dominance of Butler is on borrowed time.

"My freshman through senior year, we've gotten closer to them each time," Hays said.

"I don't think you'll see North Allegheny beating Butler next year."

The Tornado wound up third in the section with a 40-24 win over North Hills in the consolation round. Fox Chapel defeated North Hills, 39-21, in the first round.

First Round

North Allegheny 36, Butler 28

103 — Ryan Sippel (NA) tech. fall over Brandon Bauer, 4:00 (16-0); **112** — Mike Wanner (NA) pinned Nick Sutton, 1:44; **119** — Nick Rodgers (NA) dec. Zach Reges, 14-3; **125** — Eric Tuck (B) dec. Kevin Monper, 2-1; **130** — Cody Hartman (B) dec. Bobby Sippel, 7-4; **135** — Andy Candiello (NA) dec. Dillon Weston, 10-3; **140** — Joe Waltko (NA) by injury default over Mike Crawford; **145** — Dave Cawley (NA) pinned Dakota Collins, 5:45; **152** — Cole Baxter (B) dec. Adam Powers, 4-0; **160** — Derek Hays (B) dec. Austin Coniker, 4-2 in OT; **171** — Seb Fischer (NA) pinned Mike Scialabba, 2:33; **189** — Chris White (B) pinned Bill Lenhart, 5:03; **215** — Marino Quercio (B) dec. Jacob Machi, 16-6; **285** — Alex Truman (B) pinned Alex Panormios, 2:15

Consolation Round

Butler 40, North Hills 24

103 — Troy Zangaro (NH) pinned Brandon Bauer :59; **112** — Kraig Esswein (NH) pinned Nick Sutton, 5:00; **119** — Eric Tuck (B) dec. Cane Weber, 4-1; **125** — Zach Reges (B) pinned Ian Neszpaul, 1:42; **130** — Cody Hartman (B) pinned Josh Neuhor, 3:20; **135** — Dillon Weston (B) dec. Ryan Gibson, 10-3; **140** — Mike Crawford (B) won by forfeit; **145** — Cole Baxter (B) won by forfeit; **152** — Dakota Collins (B) dec. Zack Gloekler, 7-4; **160** — Ben Amrhein (NH) dec. Derek Hays, 4-2; **171** — Adam Muehlbauer (NH) pinned Mike Scialabba (B), 1:42; **189** — Chris White (B) dec. Ben Smith, 11-3; **215** — T.J. McElwain (NH) dec. Alex Truman, 11-5; **285** — Marino Quercio (B) dec. Mike Dietrich, 11-6

Butler Eagle

Article published January 27, 2009

Tornado wrestlers advance

Cody Hartman (130 pounds), Dillon Weston (135), Dakota Collins (145), Derek Hays (160) and Mike Scialabba (171) each registered pins as the Butler wrestling team captured a 69-4 preliminary-round victory over South Allegheny in the WPIAL Class AAA team playoffs at Elizabeth-Forward Monday.

Butler (10-4) also saw Cole Baxter improve to 20-0 with a major decision victory at 152. With the win, No. 13 seed Butler will face host Penn-Trafford, the No. 3 seed, at 6 p.m. today.

On Friday, Butler will face Hopewell in a dual match, then go to the Sharon Duals on Saturday.

Butler 69, South Allegheny 4

Match started at 160

103 pounds: Brandon Bauer (B) won by forfeit; **112:** Russ Losteter (SA) major dec. over Nick Sutton, 12-0; **119:** Eric Tuck (B)tech. fall over Anthony Sorrentino, 16-0 (5:17); **125:** Zach Reges (B) won by forfeit; **130:** Cody Hartman (B) pinned Kyle Miller, 2:41; **135:** Dillon Weston (B) pinned Mike Lucas: 58; **140:** Mike Crawford (B) dec. Cheyne Jenkins, 8-1; **145:** Dakota Collins (B) pinned Nick Camponizzi, 3:24; **152:** Cole Baxter (B) major dec. over Ryan Weston, 10-1; **160:** Derek Hays (B) pinned Ryan Felicity, 1:16; **171:** Mike Scialabba (B) pinned Rick James, 2:58; **189:** Chris White (B)dec. over Jesse James, 8-6; **215:** Marino Quercio (B) won by forfeit; **285:** Alex Truman (B) won by forfeit

Butler Eagle

Article published January 30, 2009

Penn-Trafford 51, Butler 15 —

Mike Crawford (140 pounds) and Chris White (189) earned pins for the Tornado in this WPIAL Class AAA first-round team playoff loss at Penn-Trafford High School.

Cole Baxter's 11-4 decision at 145 accounted for Butler's other victory.

"From 140 to 285, we were fairly competitive," said Butler coach Scott Stoner.

"Honestly, we wrestled them fairly well. They were No. 1 for most of the year."

The Warriors closed out the final five bouts of the match with four consecutive pins and a forfeit to pull away.

Butler (10-5) will host Hopewell at 7 p.m. today.

Butler Eagle

Article published January 31, 2009

Baxter beats No. 1 wrestler to aid Butler win

Unbeaten Cole Baxter scored a reversal with two seconds left in his 152-pound match, giving the Golden Tornado wrestlers (11-5) a 31-28 dual match victory over Hopewell Friday night.

Baxter's reversal produced a 2-1 decision over Matt Hundenski (28-1), the top-ranked wrestler in the WPIAL at that weight class.

"We didn't want Cole to match up with him, but there's a lot of strategy involved in close dual matches and we had to go after Hundenski to win it," Butler coach Scott Stoner said.

"I know a lot of people treat wrestling as an individual sport, but I don't see it that way. I'm coaching a team."

Other key wins for the Tornado occurred at 130 pounds, where Cody Hartman scored a major decision over Cody Mutkas (19-7), at 135 where Dillon Weston decisioned Marco Crivelli (20-8), at 189 where Chris White decisioned Mark Short (23-5) and at 215, where Marino Quercio pinned Bryan Cook (19-2).

Hopewell slipped to 13-4 in dual meets.

"They're very good," Stoner said. "This is a big win for us."

Butler competes in the Sharon Duals Saturday.

Butler 31, Hopewell 28

103 pounds: Tim Dusch (H)tech. fall over Brandon Bauer, 17-2; **112:** Steve Unen (H)dec. Nick Sutton, 6-1; **119:** Rob Tempalski (H)dec. Zach Reges, 6-4; **125:** Eric Tuck (B) pinned Andrew Crisi, 3:51; **130:** Cody Hartman (B)dec. Cody Mutkas, 8-0; **135:** Dillon Weston (B)dec. Marco Crivelli, 4-2; **140:** Mike Carson (H)dec. Mike Crawford, 1-0; **145:** Dakota Collins (B)pinned Dylan Winkle, 2:11; **152:** Cole Baxter (B)dec. Matt Hundenski, 2-1; **160:** Brian Foy (H)dec. Derek Hays, 15-7; **171:** Derhon Towler (H)pinned Mike Scialabba, :50; **189:** Chris White (B)dec. Mark Short, 3-1; **215:** Marino Quercio (B) pinned Bryan Cook, 3:42; **285:** Brandon Fedorka (H)dec. Alex Truman, 14-

Butler Eagle

Article published February 2, 2009

Butler GT Wrestling wins pool at Sharon Duals

Butler went unbeaten in dual meets at Saturday's Sharon Duals, defeating Belle Vernon 51-16, South Side Beaver 55-12, United 51-27, Sharon 48-32 and Elizabeth Forward 35-25.

Eric Tuck, Cody Hartman and Dakoda Collins went 5-0 in the event, the latter two getting three pins each. Marino Quercio went 5-0 with five pins.

Cole Baxter was also 5-0 on the day, improving to 27-0 on the season and breaking Alex Evanoff's school record of 25 consecutive wins.

Baxter defeated the No. 1 ranked wrestler in Class AA from South Side Beaver.

Chris White and Zach Reges put together 4-1 records during the duals.

Butler Eagle

Article published February 5, 2009

A week to remember

Golden Tornado's Baxter topples 5 ranked wrestlers



BUTLER TWP—
Undeclared and getting better. Butler sophomore 145-pound wrestler Cole Baxter fits that description. Baxter, 27-0, recently completed a week that 16th-year coach Scott Stoner described as "the best in Butler wrestling history." Baxter began the week of Jan. 25 by defeating Ryan

Weston of South Allegheny, 11-2. Weston was ranked seventh in the WPIAL at his weight class.

He defeated fifth-ranked Jake Matthews of Penn-Trafford, 11-4, three days later.

The following night, Baxter scored a 2-1 decision over Hopewell's Matt Hundenski, top-ranked at 152 pounds.

At the Sharon Duals the next day, Baxter decisioned Corey Checken of South Side Beaver — ranked No. 1 at 145 pounds, Class AA— by a 5-1 count and pinned Josh Etzel of Elizabeth Forward — ranked No. 6 at 135 pounds — in the first period.

It adds up to five wins over five ranked opponents in six days.

Baxter has become the top-ranked 145-pound wrestler in the WPIAL by Wrestling Report.

"I know there's a target on my back," he said. "If you're going to be No. 1, that's going to be there.

"I also know that I haven't accomplished anything yet. I still haven't won a section title. I haven't won the WPIAL and I haven't been to the state meet."

All of those items are on his agenda before his sophomore season is over.

Baxter is 27-0 and he leads or shares his team's lead in wins, team points, decisions, major decisions and near-fall points.

He finished 33-8 his freshman year, with most of his losses coming against seniors who have since graduated.

"Six of his eight losses were to seniors," Stoner said. "He had to get better on the bottom this year, and he's done that.

"You're talking about a kid who didn't lose a match all through junior high, pinning most of the opposition in the first or second period. He didn't gain much experience wrestling from the bottom.

"Wrestling from the bottom last year, he was laid back and waited for the other guy to make a mistake. That didn't happen very often," Stoner added.

Butler varsity assistant coach Bill Mylan said Baxter changed his mind-set this year.

"He just mentally told himself he was going to find a way to get out," Mylan said of the bottom position. "As soon as that whistle blows, he begins working on it."

Baxter has been taken down only twice this season. A tall, lanky 145-pounder, he admittedly gives up strength to stockier opponents.

"But that's OK," Baxter said. "With my body, I get deeper shots and better holds. I know my body's awkward for a lot of guys and I try to take advantage of it."

Baxter already has 60 career wins with much of his sophomore season remaining. T.J. McCance with 103 and Alex Evanoff with 101 are the only Butler wrestlers to reach the 100-victory plateau.

Baxter recently broke Evanoff's school record of 25 consecutive victories.

Baxter already ranks among the top 15 in wins in Butler wrestling history. He will soon become the third Tornado wrestler — Josh Pascazi and Ian McLaughlin the others — to win 30 matches in a season twice. No one has done it three times.

No Butler wrestler has ever placed at the state meet, nor has any even reached the state meet since 2000.

Baxter plans to change all of that as well.

"If I don't reach the state meet this year, I'll be extremely disappointed," Baxter said. "I don't know about the records. My goal is to win the section, the WPIAL and the state meet. That's what's out there."

Such statements aren't made by Baxter every day. In fact, they're rarely made at all.

"Cole is a humble and quiet kid who just goes about his business," Stoner said. "He's a leader in the room by example."

"Other kids see his work ethic. They know he's good and they know how he got there." Stoner said Baxter has the rare combination of natural athleticism and psychological drive.

"We try to schedule tough kids for him because he thrives on the competition and on pressure situations," Stoner said.

Baxter has been wrestling since the age of 5, when his parents took him to watch his cousin, Josh Saul, wrestle for Northwestern University.

"I got started in it and never stopped," Baxter said.

NEARING THE TOP

Only two wrestlers in Butler history, T.J. McCance and Alex Evanoff, have attained 100 career wins. Four current Golden Tornado sophomores could reach that mark:

Wrestler W L

Cole Baxter 60 8

Mike Crawford 51 16

Derek Hayes 53 40

Eric Tuck 44 26

Butler Eagle

Article published February 9, 2009

Butler wrestlers go 5-0 at Fox Chapel dual event

Eric Tuck (119), Cole Baxter (145/152), Dakota Collins (145/152), Chris White (189) and Marino Quercio (215) each went 5-0 as the Butler wrestling team won all five of its matches at the Fox Chapel Duals on Saturday.

Butler, however, finished second due to the tie breaking criteria for fewest unsportsmanlike conduct calls committed.

The Tornado defeated North Hills 49-23, Pine-Richland 66-9, Shaler 78-0, McGuffey 63-18 and Franklin Regional 40-27.

(Franklin Regional) was the one I was looking at," said Butler coach Scott Stoner.

"That's why we wanted to go there. We've wrestled everyone pretty much right above us.

"I watched Franklin Regional wrestle and their kids were physical. I didn't know if we'd be able to compete with them, but we went out and went at them. It was one of those times where the team rises to the occasion," Stoner added.

Brandon Bauer (103), Dillon Weston (135) and Mike Crawford (140) went 4-0 and Cody Hartman (130) and Alex Truman (285) went 4-1.

Quercio finished with three pins while Weston, Baxter, Collins and White recorded two pins apiece. Baxter stayed undefeated this season, improving to 33-0.

Butler will host Waynesburg on Wednesday, where seniors Hays, Quercio and Truman will be honored.



Butler Eagle

Article published February 20, 2009

Section looking good

Butler, Raiders optimistic about their chances

Butler and Seneca Valley have plenty of reasons for optimism entering Saturday's Section 3-AAA



wrestling tournament at Fox Chapel High.

The top four placers in each weight class advance to next weekend's WPIAL Tournament at Canon-McMillan.

The section meet begins at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, with the championship and consolation finals slated for 6:15 p.m.

Eleven of Butler's 13 wrestlers enter Saturday's action with winning records. Seven of them — Eric Tuck at 119 pounds, Cody Hartman at 130, Mike Crawford at 140, Cole Baxter at 145, Dakota Collins at 160,

Chris White at 189 and Marino Quercio at 215 — have more than 20 wins.

Yet only three Golden Tornado wrestlers are among the top two seeds in their respective weight classes.

"I'm a little disappointed at that," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "I don't think some of our guys were given enough credit for the caliber of schedule we wrestled this year."

Tuck (27-10) and Baxter (34-0) are No. 1 seeds, with Quercio (31-6) seeded No. 2 at 215. White has 27 wins and Hartman 26.

"Hartman's a 4-seed and I thought he'd be higher," Stoner said. "Chris White is probably our most improved wrestler from beginning to end this year, though he lost his last couple of matches to highly ranked opponents."

Seneca Valley has eight of its 14 wrestlers sporting winning records and has five seeded No. 2: Jake Perri at 103, Grant Evans at 119, Dan Papst at 135, Nate Cully at 140 and Dave Bonetti at heavyweight.

"I'm pleased just having a full, healthy lineup at this time of year," Raiders coach Tom Tomeo said. "We're looking to get at least half of our team through to WPIALS."

Papst and Cully have posted 20-plus victory seasons for the Raiders.

Butler and Knoch have been battling injuries this year. Crawford is 23-8 at 140 pounds for the Tornado, but has been bothered by a bad shoulder in recent weeks.

Crawford has not wrestled since defaulting against Waynesburg during a Feb. 11 dual match.

"He's been on limited duty since and Mike will return to drills today (Thursday)," Stoner said.

"He won't be 100 percent and I'm not sure how long he'll be able to go.

"Hopefully, he can gut his way through this weekend, earn a spot in the WPIAL, then we'll make a decision on him from there."

Butler Eagle

Article published February 12, 2009

Seniors Quercio, Truman pins spark Butler matmen to 22nd win

BUTLER TWP— Senior Night turned into Drama Night for the Butler varsity wrestling team Wednesday evening. The Golden Tornado fell behind Waynesburg 27-18 before winning the final five matches — two by pin, three by one-point decisions — to score a 39-27 dual match triumph. The victory marked a program-record 22nd dual match win of the season for Butler (22-6).

Butler seniors Derek Hays, **Marino Quercio (pictured)** and Alex Truman were recognized before the match. Quercio and Truman got the pins at 215 pounds and



heavyweight, respectively, to give Butler the lead for good.

"It wasn't the most important match of my career, but it was one of the most emotional," Quercio said. "Senior Night, my final home match, we were down on the scoreboard ... I wanted that pin." The scoreboard said Quercio (31-6) pinned Robert Simpson(2-4) in nine seconds, but the match clock started late. The fall actually occurred in about 30 seconds.

Truman (19-15) followed by putting Mike Weidner's (8-12) shoulders to the mat 1:41 into the first period.

While Quercio's win was the 80th of his career, Truman is only 21-19 as a varsity matman, losing most of his junior year to a broken leg.

Truman was a Pennsylvania power-lifting state champion in 2007 and has qualified for the Strongman nationals this year.

"I know I'm going to be physically stronger than pretty much every wrestler I face," Truman said. "What I have to do is listen to Coach (Scott) Stoner, every match, and do what he tells me to do."

His team now leading 30-27 with three matches remaining, Stoner sent freshman Nick Sutton (2-17) to the mat at 103 pounds to face Nate Ribar (13-14).

The improving Sutton defeated teammate Brandon Bauer (17-15) in the practice room to get the nod Wednesday night.

"Nick is a first-year wrestler and he's been taking a pounding at 112 just to get some varsity matches for us," Stoner said. "He earned this spot (at 103) tonight and he took advantage of it."

Sutton gave up a go-ahead takedown to Ribar with 26 seconds left, then scored a reversal with two seconds on the clock for a 7-6 decision.

Butler's Zach Reges (19-15) followed that up by taking down Eric Jones (5-4) with five seconds left, securing a 6-5 decision at 112 pounds.

Eric Tuck (26-10) scored an escape with 34 seconds left in his 119-pound match against Jesse Perrots (1-5), getting a 1-0 decision.

Waynesburg (13-10) had five starters out of its lineup because of illness or injury, including Zach McGinnis (24-4) at 112 and Derrick Nelson (24-4) at 119.

"It might have been different if we had those guys, "Raiders coach Joe Throckmorton said. "We didn't have Kyle Gray (12-13) at 189, either, which kept us from moving Jake Butcher (24-7) to 215 and maybe saving some points there.

"That's how it goes, though. Injuries happen. I thought the matches that turned things tonight were at 152 and 103."

Sutton's decision at 103 was preceded by Tornado freshman Dakota Collins (25-12) getting an 8-5 decision over Alex Teagarden (19-12) at 152.

Waynesburg forfeited to unbeaten Cole Baxter (34-0) at 145.

"We were hoping to get Baxter against Teagarden, "Stoner said. "But they weighed (John) Dibuono (22-9) in at 160 pounds. We weren't expecting that.

"He (Throckmorton) did his homework on us. He was trying to win the dual, too."

Butler travels to Plum for a dual Friday night before getting ready for the section meet Feb. 21 at Fox Chapel. Mike Crawford, 23-8 at 140, won't wrestle Friday after aggravating an injured right shoulder Wednesday night and defaulting his match in the second period.

Cody Hartman (26-9) won by technical fall at 130 pounds and Dillon Weston (17-8) won by major decision at 135 for the Tornado.

Butler will have nine wrestlers returning next season with winning records.

"North Allegheny is the only other program around that can say that," Stoner said. "I like where we're headed."

Notes: Hays is 57-43 in his career for Butler. ... Prior to the match, John Conklin was introduced to the crowd. A resident of Unionville Road, Conklin wrestled on Waynesburg High School's first team in 1936. His deceased brother, James Conklin, was Pennsylvania's first four-time WPIAL and PIAA champion.

Butler 39, Waynesburg 27

103 — Nick Sutton (B)dec. Nate Ribar, 7-6; **112** — Zach Reges (B)dec. Eric Jones, 6-5;

119 — Eric Tuck (B)dec. Jesse Perrots, 1-0; **125** — Tom Henderson (W)pinned Lee DiMichele, 1:23; **130** — Cody Hartman (B)tech. fall over Brian Bennett, 18-2 (4:47);

135 — Dillon Weston (B)dec. John Remsing, 8-0; **140** — Vincent Camps (W)by injury default over Mike Crawford; **145** — Cole Baxter (B)by forfeit; **152** — Dakota Collins (B)dec. Alex Teagarden, 8-5; **160** — John Dibuono (W)pinned Derek Hays, 1:14; **171**

— Jeremy Ellis (W)pinned Matt Pribis, 1:40; **189** — Jake Butcher (W)dec. Chris White, 9-4; **215** — Marino Quercio (B)pinned Robert Simpson, :30; **285** — Alex Truman (B)pinned Mike Weidner, 1:41

Butler Eagle

Article published February 17, 2009

Butler pair help Waynesburg onmat



WAYNESBURG— With plans to help turn around the Waynesburg College wrestling program, Butler graduates Alex Evanoff and Jon Sanko opted to join the Yellowjackets.

They didn't have to wait long to see that improvement.

First-year coach Ron Headlee inherited a program that had won one dual match in two seasons.

"There were only seven wrestlers on the team when we got here," Headlee said of himself and assistant coach John Yates, a Seneca Valley graduate.

Now there are 24 wrestlers on the roster, including 18 freshmen, and Waynesburg is 10-4 overall, 7-0 against Division III opponents and ranked 28th in the nation by the National

Wrestling Coaches Association.

"We wanted to find a way to win a match this year," Headlee said. "Then we began the year 3-0, our guys got comfortable with each other and away we went."

Evanoff became the second Butler High wrestler to reach 100 career wins last year, his 39-3 record as a senior giving him 101 career triumphs.

He began this season at 157 pounds before taking over the starting spot at 165.

Evanoff is 7-3 at 165 pounds and won the Presidents' Athletic Conference championship last weekend.

"Alex had a hand injury that cost him some time early in the year," Headlee said. "He missed three weeks.

"Our 165-pounder was struggling, so when Alex came up, we decided to bump him up a weight class and give him a shot."

Evanoff won the starting 165-pound spot in a wrestle off.

"I'm wrestling guys about 15 pounds stronger than me, but it hasn't been as tough as I thought it would be," Evanoff said. "I haven't had to watch my weight at all, which has been nice. "The sudden success of Waynesburg's wrestling program has caused Evanoff to up his goals a bit.

"Some of the kids on this team have a chance to be among the best in the nation this year," he said. "I'm confident, but I'm realistic, too.

"I want to win the PAC Tournament and I'd like to be a national champion someday. But that's down the road."

Headlee said he's hopeful of getting three wrestlers to the national meet this year.

Sanko won 60 matches in his high school career at Butler and is a backup at 157 pounds right now. He is 7-7 overall this season: 4-4 at 149 pounds, 2-3 at 157 and 1-0 at 165.

Jesse Byerly, Waynesburg's freshman 149-pounder, took a 14-3 record into the PAC

Tournament before getting injured.

"He was a Double-A state champion at Keystone Oaks and working out with him in the room has been a definite plus," Sanko said. "I've learned a lot.

"I still want to crack the lineup here and I'd love to become a PAC champion. My goals are more team-oriented. This program is going to take off."

Evanoff and Sanko have been wrestling together since elementary school.

"Jon was a big help to me, especially during our first couple of weeks here," Evanoff said. "It was a plus having someone I know come here with me."

They might see another familiar face next year. Headlee is recruiting Butler senior 215-pounder Marino Quercio.

"Butler wrestlers are hard-working guys and that's what builds programs," Sanko said.



Butler Eagle

Article published February 23, 2009

Butler sends 12 wrestlers to WPIALs

Tornado set program record



FOX CHAPEL— Excuse Scott Stoner if he's a little busier than usual this week.

His Butler wrestling team qualified a school-record 12 matmen to the WPIAL Tournament during the Section 3-AAAtourney Saturday at Fox Chapel High School. The previous mark was seven in 2006.

"I'm going to have to make additional travel arrangements, get more hotel rooms, but that's OK," Stoner said. "I wouldn't mind getting

used to this." He may have to. Of the Golden Tornado's 12 WPIAL qualifiers, nine are freshmen or sophomores.

"That's pretty impressive," Stoner said. "I'm thrilled by that."

Butler qualified the most wrestlers out of the section. North Allegheny and Fox Chapel qualified nine each. "They have more section champions than we do, but we lost a few third-place matches here because of our inexperience," Stoner said. "We're going to get better."

While NA and Fox Chapel had four section champions each, Butler's Cole Baxter was the Tornado's lone champion. The sophomore improved to 37-0 by winning the 145-pound title. Baxter and NA's Dave Cawley (14-0 at 140 pounds) are the section's only unbeaten wrestlers. "I'm surprised I'm still undefeated by now," Baxter admitted. "You usually stumble at some point, get hurt or some match just doesn't go your way.

"There's going to be a lot of good wrestlers at WPIALs. Nothing's a given."

Butler's 112-pound freshman, **Zach Reges (pictured)**, made the finals in his weight class, but lost a 5-0 decision there. Tornado 140-pounder Mike Crawford might have made the finals, but defaulted to Seneca Valley's Nate Cully in the semifinals. Crawford placed third in the tournament.

"My shoulder's maybe 70 to 80 percent," Crawford said. "It's really weak. We had to pick a match somewhere down here to default to save it a little bit."

"Live to fight another day," Stoner said. "We just wanted to get him through this thing. Cully beat him when he was healthy, so that was the time."

Other WPIAL qualifiers for Butler are Nick Sutton at 103 pounds, Eric Tuck at 119, Cody Hartman at 130, Dillon Weston at 135, Derek Hays at 152, Dakota Collins at 160, Matt

Pribis at 171, Chris White at 189 and Alex Truman at 285.

SECTION 3-AAA Wrestling (all 4 advance to WPIAL meet)

Finals; Consolation Finals

103 pounds — Troy Zangaro (North Hills) dec. Greg Gaus (North Allegheny) 7-1; Conner Whelan (Fox Chapel) dec. Nick Sutton (Butler) 6-3

112 — Kraig Eswein (North Hills) dec. Zach Reges (Butler) 5-0; Mike Wanner (North Allegheny) dec. Colton Schiever (Seneca Valley) 5-0

119 — Nick Rodgers (North Allegheny) dec. Grant Evans (Seneca Valley) 5-0; Eric Tuck (Butler) dec. Grayson Hixon (Knoch) 7-3

125 — Carson Brooks (Fox Chapel) dec. Kevin Monper (North Allegheny) 5-2; Cameron Weber (North Hills) dec. Peter Craig (Hampton) 5-1

130 — Joe Waltko (North Allegheny) pinned Ryan Craig (Hampton) 3:44; Bryan Brown (Avonworth) dec. Cody Hartman (Butler) 3-1

135 — Andy Candiello (North Allegheny) pinned Tom Caldwell (Fox Chapel) 3:54; Dillon Weston (Butler) dec. Jared Steinmetz (Hampton) 3-1

140 — Dave Cawley (North Allegheny) dec. Nate Cully (Seneca Valley) 4-0; Mike Crawford (Butler) dec. Jordan Brennan (Pine-Richland) 9-0

145 — Cole Baxter (Butler) dec. Zach Gloekler (North Hills) 6-2; Rick Peluso (North Allegheny) dec. Dave DiBenedetto (Fox Chapel) 5-3

152 — Justin Mahon (Fox Chapel) dec. Harrison Maxwell (Pine-Richland) 7-1; Derek Hays (Butler) dec. Jared Psensky (Avonworth) 3-1 in OT

160 — Nick Letters (Fox Chapel) dec. Ben Amrhein (North Hills) 5-0; Ben Kramer (Avonworth) tech. fall over Dakota Collins (Butler) 21-6

171 — Josh Fleming (Shaler) dec. Seb Fischer (North Allegheny) 15-7; Stefano Geary (Fox Chapel) pinned Matt Pribis (Butler) 3:36

189 — Aaron Barker (Fox Chapel) dec. Nick Yaroszewski (Hampton) 6-3; Chris White (Butler) by injury default over Justin Okinski (Avonworth)

215 — Jordan Shulman (Hampton) dec. Doug Rodgers (Shaler) 3-2; Jordan Williams (Seneca Valley) dec. Dan Mahon (Fox Chapel) 1-0

285 — Joe Raimondi (Hampton) pinned Adam Harvey (Avonworth) 2:29; Jamal Conroy (Shaler) pinned Alex Truman (Butler) 2:33

Butler Eagle

Article published February 25, 2009

Tornado's Baxter is top seed at 145 pounds

Butler sophomore Cole Baxter is the No. 1 seed at 145 pounds in this week's WPIAL Class AAA wrestling tournament.

Baxter (37-0) will face the winner of the pigtail match between Trinity freshman Brandon Lesko (14-13) and Waynesburg sophomore Alex Teagarden (22-13).

The Golden Tornado have 12 wrestlers in the WPIAL field. Seneca Valley has four and Knoch has one.

Seven of Butler's WPIAL qualifiers are wrestling pigtail matches Thursday.

Seneca Valley 140-pound junior Nate Cully (25-4) wrestles the winner of a pigtail match as well: Hopewell's Ryan Carson (25-10) or Franklin Regional's Chris Little (17-20).

Baxter and North Allegheny 130-pounder Joe Waltko (33-1) are the only top-seeded wrestlers out of Section 3.

Canon-McMillan High School is hosting the three-day tournament, which begins at 5:30 p.m. Thursday.

Bouts continue at 6 p.m. Friday and 10:30 a.m. Saturday.

First-round pairings for all Butler County wrestlers in the tournament follow:

103 pounds: Nick Sutton (Butler, 5-19) vs. Schuyler Moncheck (Albert Gallatin, 26-10)

112 pounds: Zach Reges (Butler, 21-19) vs. Jerry Cramer (Connellsville, 20-16); Colton Schiever (Seneca Valley, 11-10) vs. Michael Kostas (Mount Lebanon, 19-16)

119 pounds: Eric Tuck (Butler, 29-11) vs. Ron Schram (Canon McMillan, 29-5); Grayson Hixon (Knoch, 19-9) vs. Dante DeCario (Derry, 16-11); Grant Evans (Seneca Valley, 17-9) vs. Jake Diana (Elizabeth Forward, 26-7)

130 pounds: Cody Hartman (Butler, 29-11) vs. Stetson Keedy (Connellsville, 16-17)

135 pounds: Dillon Weston (Butler, 20-9) vs. Stewart Owens (Penn-Trafford, 27-13)

140 pounds: Mike Crawford (Butler, 26-9) vs. Christopher Kostas (Mount Lebanon, 8-10); Nate Cully (Seneca Valley, 25-4) vs. Ryan Carson-Chris Little winner

145 pounds: Cole Baxter (Butler, 37-0) vs. Brandon Lesko-Alex Teagarden winner

152 pounds: Derek Hays (Butler, 16-11) vs. Austin Van Horn (Mount Lebanon, 11-12)

160 pounds: Dakota Collins (Butler, 28-14) vs. John DiBuono (Waynesburg, 26-10)

171 pounds: Matt Pribis (Butler, 13-15) vs. Bobby Haraczy (Central Catholic, 23-8)

189 pounds: Chris White (Butler) 30-12) vs. Travis Kuhn (Plum) 30-8)

215 pounds: Jordan Williams (Seneca Valley, 17-9) vs. Cody Klempay (Canon McMillan, 22-13)

285 pounds: Alex Truman (Butler, 22-17) vs. Tim Hall (West Mifflin, 22-13).

PG North: Butler sophomore could gain fame at WPIAL Class AAA wrestling finals

Thursday, February 26, 2009

By Ken Wunderley, Tri-State Sports & News Service

Butler Area wrestler Cole Baxter may be a relative unknown at the WPIAL level, but that's not the case in Section 3-AAA. "Cole may not be known well in the rest of the WPIAL, but the coaches in Section 3 know him well," Fox Chapel coach Ron Frank said. "Butler has one of the best junior high programs in the WPIAL and coaches from this area knew about him a couple years before he made his varsity debut last season."

Baxter, a 145-pound sophomore, is one of only five wrestlers who enter this weekend's Class AAA WPIAL/Southwest Region tournament with an unblemished record. Baxter improved to 38-0 with three victories in the Section 3-AAA tournament Saturday at Fox Chapel Area High School.

"We've never had a WPIAL champion before," said Butler coach Scott Stoner, after watching Baxter record a 6-2 victory against Zach Gloekler of North Hills in the section title match. "We've had two kids lose in the finals. Cole has a chance to become our first WPIAL champion."

North Allegheny's Dave Cawley also has an unblemished record. Cawley, a 140-pound senior who got a late start due to academic problems, has a 14-0 record. "My goal is to win another WPIAL title and make it back to Hershey," said Cawley, who won a WPIAL title at 135 in 2007, but finished fifth at 140 last year. "I want to show everybody that my sophomore year was no fluke.

It was the third Section 3-AAA title in four years for Cawley, one of four North Allegheny wrestlers to win titles. Also winning section crowns for the Tigers were Joe Waltko, Andy Candiello and Nick Rodgers.

Waltko won his fourth section title with a pin in the 130-pound final against Hampton's Ryan Craig. Candiello won his third consecutive title with a pin of Fox Chapel's Tom Caldwell in the 135-pound final. Rodgers won his second section title in three years with a 5-0 win against Seneca Valley's Grant Evans in the 119-pound final.

"I expect our section to do well in the WPIAL tournament," Frank said. "We have quite a few kids in this section who have a legitimate shot of qualifying for a trip to Hershey."

Fox Chapel also had four wrestlers win Section 3-AAA titles. Carson Brooks won his second straight title, while Justin Mahon, Nick Letters and Aaron Barker won for the first time. All four were making their second consecutive appearance in the section finals, as Mahon, Letters and Barker were runners-up last season.

"Letters, Mahon, Barker and Caldwell are seniors who have been wrestling in our system for a long time," Frank said. "This is their last chance to qualify for the [PIAA] tournament. All four are looking forward to the ultimate challenge."

Mahon won the 152-pound title with a 7-1 win against Pine-Richland's Harrison Maxwell. Letters captured the title at 160 with a 5-0 win against North Hills' Ben Amrhein. Barker claimed the 189-pound crown with a 6-3 win against Hampton's Nick Yaroszewski.

Hampton and North Hills each had two champions. Jordan Shulman and Joe Raimondi won titles for the Talbots, while Troy Zangaro and Kraig Esswein were title-winners for the Indians.

Shulman won the 215-pound weight class with a 3-2 win against Shaler's Doug Harvey. Raimondi claimed his second title by pinning Avonworth's Adam Harvey in the 285-pound final.

Zangaro captured the title at 103 with a 7-1 win against North Allegheny's Greg Gaus. Esswein beat Butler's Zach Reges, 5-0, in the 112-pound final.

Josh Fleming claimed a title for Shaler Area at 171. Fleming recorded a 15-7 win against North Allegheny's Seb Fischer in the section final.

Butler set a school record for WPIAL qualifiers. Twelve of the Golden Tornado's 13 entries finished among the top four in their weight classes. Ten of the 12 qualifiers finished third or fourth in the section. "We're so excited to have that many kids going to the WPIAL tournament and 10 will be coming back next year," Stoner said. "Our program is ready to start turning the corner."

Stoner realizes that most of his athletes will be fighting heavy odds at the WPIAL tournament, considering they placed third and fourth in the section. "We will have a bunch of kids wrestling pigtail matches in the preliminary round," Stoner said. "I like that because those matches are winnable. I know the winner will face one of the top four seeds in the next round, but the experience of winning a WPIAL match is something they will never forget.

North Allegheny and Fox Chapel each had nine qualifiers. Hampton had six and North Hills and Avonworth each had five.

Butler Eagle

Article published February 27, 2009

Mat title hopes stay alive Baxter, Weston Cully winners in wrestling



CANONSBURG — It wasn't as good as it could have been, but Butler coach Scott Stoner would prefer to chalk it up to experience.

In Thursday's WPIAL Class AAA Wrestling Championships at Canon-McMillan High School, the Tornado had two wrestlers reach the quarterfinal round while five of their teammates will have to work themselves through the consolation brackets.

Butler's **Dillon Weston 135**

(pictured), and Cole Baxter (145) along with Seneca Valley's Nate Cully each picked up a first-round win to advance to Friday's quarterfinals, which will begin at 6 p.m. along with the first-round consolation rounds.

"I wanted to get the kids through pigtails and win a match," said Stoner, who had just two of seven wrestlers — Mike Crawford (140) and Derek Hays (152) — win a preliminary match, but lost in the first round.

"We had some that were out-experienced and some that gave up. So many coaches look at who's the up-and-coming teams and they tap you on the shoulder and tell you your program is coming along.

"From here, we're getting 10 (out of 12) guys back next year. The only one with more than that is Mt. Lebanon," Stoner added.

That includes sophomores Baxter (38-0), who pinned Waynesburg's Alex Teagarden (22-14) in 42 seconds, and Weston, who knocked off Penn-Trafford senior Stewart Owens 4-2.

"When I saw the bracket, I wanted to see where we were strong and see how he was going to wrestle," said Stoner. "(Baxter) went from one thing to another. That's what he has to do the next couple of matches."

At the WPIAL team playoffs on Jan. 29, Owens (27-14) scored an 11-0 major decision over Weston (21-9) in the Warriors' 51-15 triumph.

"That was a big win," said Stoner. "Stewart's an explosive kind of kid ... That was Dillon's best match mentally all year. He has the skill you need, he just needs to believe in himself. His challenge is getting control of the mental aspect."

Cully (26-4), a junior for the Raiders, recorded a 15-0 technical fall over Franklin Regional's Chris Little (18-21) in 4:51 to also move onto the quarterfinals.

"(Cully's) got a tough quarterfinal match (against Penn-Trafford's Jake Mathews)," said Raiders coach Tom Tomeo. "I don't know a lot of these guys, but it should be a great, great match. Nate's really focused right now.

"The goal is to get into the semis, but Cully's obviously a favorite to get there," Tomeo added.

Butler's Mike Crawford (140) pinned Mt. Lebanon's Christopher Kostas in 1:25, then injury defaulted to No. 1 seed Jack Bachman of Hempfield (40-1) at 1:53.

The hope is to give Crawford a little time to rest his injured shoulder and not inflict any more damage to it.

The Tornado's Derek Hays (152) edged Mt. Lebanon's Austin Van Horn 4-3, but lost a tough 5-0 decision to No. 2 seed Dan Karpency of Albert Gallatin (33-2).

"He wrestled (Karpency) really well," said Stoner. "He's a mental wrestler. We'll see how he reacts."

In some competitive first-round matches, Butler freshman Zach Reges (112) lost a 2-1 decision to Connellsville's Jerry Cramer, Eric Tuck (119) 6-0 to Canon-McMillan's Ron Schram and Seneca Valley's Grant Evans (119) fell to Elizabeth-Forward's Jake Diana 7-5 in overtime.

Pigtail Matches

103: Schuyler Mencheck (Albert Gallatin) major dec. over **Nick Sutton (Butler)**, 13-1

112: Colton Schiever (Seneca Valley) dec. Michael Kostas (Mt. Lebanon), 5-2

119:Dante DeCario (Derry) dec. **Grayson Hixon (Knoch)**, 12-11

130: Stetson Keedy (Connellsville) pinned Cody Hartman (Butler), 5:13

140:Mike Crawford (Butler) pinned Christopher Kostas (Mt. Lebanon), 1:25

152:Derek Hays (Butler) dec. Austin Van Horn (Mt. Lebanon), 4-3

160:John Dibugno (Waynesburg) pinned **Dakoda Collins (Butler)**, 3:15

171: Bobby Haraczy (Central Catholic) dec. **Matt Pribis (Butler)**, 8-3

285: Tim Hall (West Mifflin) pinned **Alex Truman (Butler)**, 5:30

First-Round Matches

112:Derrick Nelson (Waynesburg) pinned **Colton Schiever (Seneca Valley)**, :57;
Jerry Cramer (Connellsville) dec. **Zach Reges (Butler)**, 2-1

119: Ron Schram (Canon-McMillan) dec. **Eric Tuck (Butler)**, 6-0; Jake Diana (Elizabeth-Forward) dec. **Grant Evans (Seneca Valley)**, 7-5 (OT)

135: Dillon Weston (Butler) dec. Stewart Owens (Penn-Trafford), 4-2

140: Nate Cully (Seneca Valley) tech. fall over Chris Little (Franklin Regional), 15-0 (4:51); Jack Bachman (Hempfield) injury default over **Mike Crawford (Butler)**, 1:53

145:Cole Baxter (Butler) pinned Alex Teagarden (Waynesburg), :42

152:Dan Karpency (Albert Gallatin) dec. **Derek Hays (Butler)**, 5-0

189: Travis Kuhn (Plum) pinned **Chris White (Butler)**, :52

215: Cody Klempay (Canon-McMillan) dec. **Jordan Williams (Seneca Valley)**, 8-4



Butler's Baxter moves to 40-0, reaches WPIAL mat semifinals

CANONSBURG — Survival!

That's what Friday was all about for Butler and Seneca Valley wrestlers at the Southwestern Regional Class AAA Wrestling Championships at Canon McMillan High School.

Some did. Others didn't.

Count Cole Baxter among the living.

Butler's 140-pound sophomore kept rolling with a 7-2 decision over Justin Harold of Kiski Area.

Baxter, the No. 1 seed in his weight class and now 40-0 this season, jumped out to a 5-0 lead and cruised the rest of the way in his quarterfinal match.

Baxter is now just two wins shy of a WPIAL title.

"Two more wins," Baxter said. "The hardest two."

Baxter is the only unbeaten wrestler in his weight class and one of only five in the tournament.

With that kind of reputation preceding him, one would think Baxter has a big target on his back.

Well, maybe not, said Butler coach Scott Stoner.

"There are people who have that theory," Stoner said. "Some people outside the sport may say that, and to a degree I agree, but at the same time, when you are 38-, 39-,

40-and-0, there's a reason. You keep wrestling and do what you do best." Baxter also shook off his unblemished record and the attention it is getting him. "Even if I wasn't undefeated, I'd probably have a bull's eye on my back," Baxter said. Baxter was the only one of three local wrestlers still alive for a WPIAL title. Dillon Weston, Butler's 135-pound sophomore, fell to Andy Candiello of North Allegheny by a 4-1 decision in his quarterfinal match. Seneca Valley junior Nate Cully dropped a 6-2 decision to Jake Mathews of Penn-Trafford in his quarterfinal tilt. Both Weston and Cully still have a shot at finishing third Saturday. Only the top three in each weight class advance to the state championships. "Cully's was a disappointing match," said Seneca Valley coach Tom Tomeo. "It was like a teeter-totter. He took most of the action and most of the aggression, but he lost a couple of scrambles that could have gone either way." Cully was visibly disappointed after his loss. Tomeo, though, isn't concerned about Cully's frame of mind heading into Saturday, even though his wrestler faces an uphill climb. Cully has to win four matches to get to the state championships. "He's a competitor," Tomeo said. "He was a little frustrated, but champions show themselves after something frustrating happens." Cully and Weston won't be alone in that fate. Butler's Zach Reges (112), Mike Crawford (140) and Derek Hays (152) and Seneca Valley's Grant Evans (119) and Jordan Williams (215) won their first-round consolation matches to stay alive for a third-place finish. Crawford overcame a deficit and injury to stay alive. After two periods, Crawford was down and his right shoulder aching. But he eked out a 5-4 win. "Mike has a real bad shoulder, and honestly when we went out there for injury time, Mike looked at me like 'Call it coach,'" Stoner said. "I told him, 'let's go out there and see,' and honestly, that's why you don't stop wrestling until the end."

PIAA Southwestern Regional

Class AAA

Championship Bracket

135 — Andy Candiello (North Allegheny) d. Dillon Weston (Butler), 4-1

140 — Jake Mathews (Penn Trafford) d. Nate Cully (Seneca Valley), 6-2

145 — Cole Baxter (Butler) d. Justin Harold (Kiski Area), 7-2

Consolation Bracket

112 — Zach Reges (Butler) maj. d. Colton Schiever (Seneca Valley) 9-1

119 — Grant Evans (Seneca Valley) d. Austin Wilding (Upper St. Clair), 2-1; Jake Vitolo (Hempfield) d. Eric Tuck (Butler), 1-0

140 — Mike Crawford (Butler) d. Chris Milligan (Albert Gallatin) 5-4

152 — Derek Hays (Butler) d. Josh Ricciuti (Bethel Park), 2-1 (OT)

189 — Justin Okinski (Avonworth) d. Chris White (Butler), 7-6

215 — Jordan Williams (Seneca Valley) d. Jordan Zito (Kiski Area), 3-1

Butler Eagle

Article published March 2, 2009

King at last!

Undefeated Baxter gives Butler school's first WPIAL wrestling title

CANONSBURG — In two seasons, Cole Baxter has been scaling new heights for the Butler wrestling program.

On Saturday, standing atop the awards podium, he reached the pinnacle.

The sophomore became the Golden Tornado's first WPIAL Class AAA champion by earning a 3-1 decision over Penn-Trafford's Devan Jones in the 145-pound title match. Baxter, who also kept his undefeated record intact by improving to 42-0, will advance to the PIAA Championships, scheduled Thursday through Saturday in Hershey.

"It is meaningful, even if it was not the first," said Baxter, who improved to 75-8 in his career. "It's something for the guys to shoot for years to come.

"I didn't need people to talk to me about being undefeated ... I'd feel pressure even if I was not undefeated. Just the pressure of being undefeated puts a bull's-eye on your back for everyone," Baxter added.

Baxter earned a takedown with 44 second left in the first period to take control of the match early.

"(Jones) is the No. 2 seed and going out and getting that first takedown was big," said Baxter.

"To come into the match, I get the adrenaline going, but Cole's calm and cool," said Butler coach Scott Stoner. "He was more aggressive than his opponent."

Jones got an escape with 15 seconds left in the second period to make it 2-1. Jones allowed Baxter to escape unhindered to start the third period for a 3-1 lead and assume the neutral position.

Jones, however, could not get anything going offensively against Baxter to force a tie in the match.

"I was confident on my feet, but it was only 2-1 and if he got a takedown it would have been 3-2 and I didn't want that," quipped Baxter.

Baxter is the first Butler County wrestler to win a WPIAL Class AAA title since Seneca Valley's Shawn Cully in 2001. Butler has had a pair of runner-ups in Lyneil Mitchell (1998) and Don Geibel (2000).

Stoner, now in his 16th year as the Tornado wrestling coach, has seen Baxter's rise through the program and knew it was apparent he could reach this point.

"Cole, coming up, was always a competitor," said Stoner. "He does not want to lose. He's very humbling, unassuming and works hard every day.

"He's a bright kid, a straight- A student who definitely deserves it. He's worked hard and it's come to fruition. I would hate to see him lose to some very good wrestlers," Stoner added.

Baxter certainly had to earn his trip to the WPIAL finals when he edged West Allegheny's Aaron McKinney 3-1 in overtime in the semifinals earlier Saturday.

McKinney, hampered by an ankle injury, was taking a defensive approach, which allowed Baxter to receive a stalling point during the match. In overtime, Baxter earned

a takedown to advance to the championship bout.

"I was taking all the shots and he was on the edge," said Baxter. "I wanted to keep the pressure on."

"They both wrestled cautiously," said Stoner. "McKinney didn't push it and Cole also stayed back. McKinney knew he had to back off.

"Cole attacked him on the edge and McKinney was out of bounds, but Cole hung on. The ref allowed it to go on and he got the two," Stoner added.

From there, Baxter used that aggressiveness to seize the championship match.

"I feel like every tournament is my tournament," said Baxter. "I feel you have to go out and win. If you think you'll get beat, your chances of losing are a lot better."

Elsewhere, Seneca Valley junior Nate Cully (140) fell one match shy of reaching the consolation finals, where he would have had the chance to battle for the third and final PIAA qualifying berth out of the WPIAL.

Cully defeated Vincent Camps of Waynesburg 3-1 in overtime, then defeated Mike Crawford of Butler 4-2 before dropping a 7-1 decision to Robert Blotzer of South Allegheny in the fourth-round consolations.

Crawford had defeated Jordan Bonham of Bethel Park by major decision 8-0 in the second-round consolations before his loss to Cully.

Butler had two other wrestlers win second-round consolations.

Dillon Weston (135) decisioned Andy Hawley of Norwin 4-0 before losing to Nicholas Whipkey of McGuffey by major decision 11-0 while Zach Reges (112) decisioned Tanner Cogar of West Allegheny 4-2, then was pinned by Mike Wanner of North Allegheny in 1:49 in the third-round consolations.

Seneca Valley's Grant Evans (119) and Jordan Williams (215) and Butler's Derek Hays (152) lost in their second-round consolations Saturday morning and were eliminated.

Baxter's title Saturday was fueled not only by the support of family and friends, but just as important was a large contingent of former Tornado wrestlers who came back to watch a little history in the making.

Stoner, grateful for all, also wanted to see Baxter finally reach the top.

"He was destined to get to this level," said Stoner. "This is an emotional rush for me. I didn't want to fail him."

Championship Finals

145 — Cole Baxter (Butler) dec. Devan Jones (Penn-Trafford), 3-1

Semifinals

145 — Cole Baxter (Butler) dec. Aaron McKinney (West Allegheny), 3-1 (OT)

Third-Round Consolations

112 — Mike Wanner (North Allegheny) pinned **Zach Reges (Butler)**, 1:49; **135** — Nicholas Whipkey (McGuffey) major decision over **Dillon Weston (Butler)**, 11-0; **140** — **Nate Cully (Seneca Valley)** dec. **Mike Crawford (Butler)**, 4-2

Second-Round Consolations

112 — Zach Reges (Butler) dec. Tanner Cogar (West Allegheny), 4-2; **135 — Dillon Weston (Butler)** dec. Andy Hawley (Norwin), 4-0; **Mike Crawford (Butler)** major dec. over Jordan Bonham (Bethel Park), 8-0; **152** — Darin Lyles (Elizabeth-Forward) dec. **Derek Hays (Butler)**, 3-1 (OT);

Butler Eagle

Article published March 5, 2009

No stranger to the spotlight

Baxter heads to states with plenty of accomplishments



BUTLER TWP — Entering the PIAA Class AAA Wrestling Tournament, Cole Baxter already is among exclusive company.

Butler's 145-pound WPIAL champion is:

- the Golden Tornado's first wrestler to reach the state tournament since Don Geibel, Garrett Boarts and T.J. McCance in 2000.
 - the only sophomore among the 16-wrestler 145-pound field in the state meet.
 - one of 13 undefeated wrestlers in PIAA Class AAA.
 - one of three wrestlers, Franklin Regional 112-pounder Nico Megaludis and Hempfield 160-pound Jack Kemerer are the others, to emerge from the WPIAL Tournament still unbeaten.
- "Those things are a solid indicator of just how special this kid

is," Butler wrestling coach Scott Stoner said.

He will have to be extra special to emerge from this weekend's competition in Hershey unbeaten.

Baxter (42-0) is one of three wrestlers in the 145-pound field with perfect records. The other two are defending state champions.

Joey Napoli (42-0) of Cumberland Valley won the 145-pound title last year. Dylan Alton (43-0) of Central Mountain won the 135-pound title a year ago.

Only one other weight class in PIAA Class AAA — heavyweight — has three unbeaten wrestlers.

"The brackets are pre-slotted for the state meet," Stoner said. "When they were originally posted, Napoli and Alton were in the same bracket, opposite of Cole's.

"The state reserves the right to change that when two returning state champions are in the same weight class. I didn't like it at first, but it's fair for the sport."

Napoli was placed in Baxter's side of the bracket, though the two wouldn't meet until the semifinal round.

"I have a lot of work to do before I can even worry about that," Baxter said.

Baxter begins his quest for a state title today against Matt Dugan (30-4), a Northeast Catholic senior who placed third in the Southeast district tournament.

"He's out of District 12, which is the district we were hoping to draw a kid from early," Stoner said. "If Cole wins there, he'll face a kid with either six losses (Shane Fenningham of Northampton) or eight losses (Mike English of Lower Dauphin).

Both of them are seniors as well. Of the 16 wrestlers in the 145-pound field, 12 are seniors, three are juniors and Baxter's the sophomore.

"I know I'm still growing as a varsity wrestler, but I'm not going out there with the idea of losing," he said. "Everybody's going to be hard to beat and I believe I will be, too."

Only one wrestler in Butler history — Lyneil Mitchell in 1998 — has won a state tournament match. None has placed.

"Cole gets frustrated if he doesn't get a pin or score early," Stoner said. "But at this level, it's about working your opponent and being the smarter wrestler, knowing the situation."

Baxter has proven adept at that as well, winning close matches in the WPIAL semifinals and finals.

Baxter has been taken down only once all season: at the Brockway Tournament over Christmas break. His record is 75-8 over two years and all but one of his losses last season was against a senior.

"The atmosphere out there won't get to him," Stoner said. "Cole knows how to maintain focus."

While Baxter is the area's lone Class AAA wrestler, four Grove City High School wrestlers will compete in the Class AA tournament

Senior Johnny Pas (31-4) at 112 pounds, freshman Wesley Phipps (30-8) at 160, senior Caleb Kolb (35-0) at 171 and senior Nuick Miller (28-3) at 189 are in the tournament.

Phipps and Kolb are coming off regional championships.

Class AAA preliminaries at Hershey's Giant Center begin at 4 p.m. today. Quarterfinals are at 1 p.m. Friday, semifinals at 8 a.m. and finals at 8 p.m. Saturday.

Class AA preliminaries are at 9 a.m. today, quarterfinals at 8 a.m. and semifinals at 6:30 p.m. Friday, finals at 2:30 p.m. Saturday.

Butler Eagle

PIAA wrestling pairings set

HERSHEY — Five Butler County area athletes will be taking part in the PIAA Wrestling Championships, which will be held Thursday through Saturday at the Giant Center. The following are first-round match-ups with region, seed, year and record in parentheses:

In Class AAA, Butler's Cole Baxter (SW-1, So., 42-0) will face Matt Dugan of Northeast Council (SE-3, Sr., 30-4) in the 145-pound division.

In Class AA, four Grove City wrestlers will compete: Johnny Pas (NW-2, Sr., 31-4) vs. David White of Schuylkill Valley (NE-3, Jr. 40-2) in the 112-pound weight class; Wesley Phipps (NW-1, Fr., 30-8) vs. Tommy Thorpe of Charleroi (SW-5, So., 27-11) at 160; Caleb Cole (NW-1, Sr., 35-0) vs. Cody Catalina of Beth-Center (SW-4, Sr., 33-9) at 171 and Nick Miller (NW-3, Sr., 28-3) vs. Pat Leavitt of Schuylkill Valley (SE-2, Sr., 45-5) at 189.

Butler Eagle

Article published March 7, 2009

Man with a medal

HERSHEY — Things just keep getting better and better for Butler's Cole Baxter. The sophomore, who won the WPIAL Class AAA title Feb. 28, the first in school history, has positioned himself to become the Golden Tornado's first state medalist. Thanks to Friday's 9-4 decision over Northampton's Shane Fenningham in the PIAA quarterfinals at 145 pounds, Baxter advanced to Saturday morning's semifinals and can finish no worse than sixth place.

"Cole went into a real nice scramble and really kept his composure in a situation where he could have given up a takedown," said Butler coach Scott Stoner.

"Even though it's great if you score the first points, you know that things still won't be easy," said Baxter. "It just puts more pressure on the other guy."

With Baxter starting the second period in the down position, he was able to work a reverse for two points, then Fenningham turned the tables for a reverse of his own. Baxter answered with another reverse and took a 6-4 lead into the third period.

"Yes, winning by two points is better than being tied," said Baxter. "Just being up in the third period is pretty important."

Baxter (44-0) will have his hands full when he faces Cumberland Valley's Joey Napoli, the defending state champion who sports the same record as Baxter.

"Obviously, everyone is good in the tournament. He's a state champion," said Baxter. "I have to focus on him and beating him in the semis, and I look forward to going on to the finals if I beat him."

The other side of the bracket will pit Crestwood's Jake O'Hara (36-1) against Central Mountain's Dylan Alton (45-0) in what arguably is the toughest weight division at the championships this year.

Baxter is set to come home with the first state medal in the program's history. While it isn't the ultimate goal, it does put a different perspective on the rest of the tournament. "It won't sink in now," said Baxter. "But, after the tournament's over, I'm sure I'll have time to think about it."

"I think it does take some of the pressure off," said Stoner. "We've watched good kids get beat and not take anything home. ... I think it takes some of the pressure off, but now it's 'Hey, we've got this far and we got a medal, but let's keep going.'"

"It's a real big deal," Stoner added.

Saturday's semifinals and third- and fourth-round consolations were slated to start at 8 a.m. while the consolation finals will be at 6 p.m. and the championships finals at 8.

Kolb in Class AA final

Not to be overlooked is the performance of Grove City High senior Caleb Kolb, who reached the finals in Class AA at 171 pounds.

Kolb, who finished third at states last season, earned a 25-10 technical fall in just 3:41 over Lancaster Catholic's Michael Blaszczyk to reach the semifinals, then followed up with an 8-3 decision over Lewisburg's Nathaniel Brown to advance to Saturday's championship finals.

Kolb (38-0) will face Octorara's Josh Smith (36-3) for the gold medal.

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Baxter makes history, reaches Class AAA semis

By Paul Schofield

TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Saturday, March 7, 2009

HERSHEY — Butler sophomore Cole Baxter made history Friday afternoon at the PIAA Class AAA Individual Wrestling Championships. With his 9-4 victory over Shane Fenningham of Northampton in the 145-pound quarterfinals at the Giant Center, Baxter became the first wrestler from the school to earn a medal at the state tournament.

Baxter is one of 19 wrestlers from the WPIAL to advance to the 8 a.m. semifinals today. The finals are slated for 8 p.m. with the top eight wrestlers in each weight class earn all-state honors and medals. Returning PIAA champions Shane Young of Penn-Trafford and Jake Kemerer of Hempfield are among the group.

Baxter (44-0, 77-8) controlled his match from the start and led 6-4 in the third period when he tilted the Northampton senior over to his back over a three-point nearfall. "Becoming the school's first placewinner hasn't hit me yet. Probably not until I'm on the podium," Baxter said. "I'd like to win it, though."

Baxter, however, knows he's not favored to win the 145-pound title because there were two returning state champions in the weight class. Dylan Alton of Central Mountain won the 135-pound title, and Joey Napoli of Cumberland Valley won at 145. Baxter gets Napoli in the semifinals. "No one expects me to win, but I'm approaching it that anything can happen," Baxter said.

Butler coach Scott Stoner said Baxter has set the goals high at the school now. "He has a tough task ahead of him, but he's where we expected him," Stoner said. "He understands what he has to do. "It's been awhile since we brought a wrestler here (2000). He was a little nervous the first day, but he's loosened up."

Baxter is the nephew of former NFL players Rich and Ron Saul.

Paul Schofield can be reached at pschofield@tribweb.com or 724-853-2109

Butler Eagle

Article published March 9, 2009

5th OK, but Baxter wants more

HERSHEY — Cole Baxter isn't happy.

But becoming Butler's first WPIAL wrestling champion and state tournament placer while turning in a school-record 45-2 won-loss record?

The Golden Tornado's sophomore 145-pounder will just have to live with it.

"I know it's an important accomplishment for the program and I'm proud of it and all that ... I just wanted more," Baxter said.

Baxter wound up placing fifth at the PIAA Class AAA Wrestling Championships Saturday at the Giant Center.

"I love Cole's attitude," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "He's hungry. He's not satisfied with fifth place. I love that."

Baxter began Saturday with a semifinal match against fellow unbeaten and defending 145-pound state champion Joey Napoli (44-0) of Cumberland Valley.

Baxter had a 2-1 lead on Napoli after the first period.

"Cole got a lot of people's attention in this place when he got the first takedown," Stoner said. "Here's a sophomore who just took down a senior defending state champ. That put a lot of eyes on that match."

Baxter got taken down twice himself — only the second and third times he'd been taken down all season — and trailed 8-4 after two periods.

Baxter got a reversal midway through the final period, but got no closer in dropping an 8-6 decision.

"He tried to turn him, but just couldn't," Stoner said after the reversal.

"The kid was tall like me and I got caught underneath him when I tried shooting," Baxter said of the second period, when he fell behind. "I had to be aggressive against him."

In the consolation semifinals, Baxter dropped a 4-0 decision to Bo Candelaria of Middletown. The match was scoreless through two periods before Candelaria scored three points with a near-fall.

Baxter's nose was bloodied during the match, but he bounced back to decision Brandon Loro of Springfield Delco 11-7 in the fifth-place match.

"The Candelaria kid had been in the consolation bracket and Cole had to wrestle him shortly after his semifinal loss," Stoner said. "Emotionally, he just wasn't into that match."

Baxter had a 9-7 lead in the third period against Loro and sealed the victory with a reversal.

Through two seasons, Baxter is 78-10 as a varsity wrestler.

"This was a great atmosphere to wrestle in," he said. "There were so many people here into the sport like I am. The atmosphere didn't bother me at all."

If anything, he thrived on it.

"We got 12 kids to the WPIALs this year," Stoner said. "We don't want to stop there. We want to get those kids out here in position to succeed."

Butler Eagle

Article published March 24, 2009

Support appreciated

I would like to thank the Butler community for the tremendous show of support throughout this year's wrestling season.

I want to say thanks to everyone who sent cards, made phone calls or sent e-mails or text messages to my family or myself. It meant so much to see many of those people at the WPIALs.

I especially want to thank my teammates. Without them this season would not have been possible. All of them have a great work ethic and continue to work toward reaching our goals as a team.

Thanks, too, to the Butler Eagle and other local media for publicizing and reporting on our matches and events.

Most importantly, I would like to thank Coaches Scott Stoner and Bill Mylan. The time and efforts our coaches put into the program are outstanding. They go above and beyond all expectations.

Their commitment and dedication has elevated our program to a highly competitive level.

Butler Eagle

Article published March 6, 2009

Baxter passes 1st test Butler star, 2 others advance

HERSHEY — Butler's Cole Baxter and Grove City's Wesley Phipps and Caleb Kolb each recorded first-round victories in their respective classifications at the PIAA Wrestling Championships at the Giant Center Thursday.

Baxter, the WPIAL Class AAA champion, improved to 43-0 by earning a 5-1 decision over Northeast Catholic's Matt Dugan.

"Cole rode (Dugan) for about 48 seconds in the second period, then he escaped on the restart to go up 1-0, then Cole took him down with five seconds left," said Butler coach Scott Stoner.

"Cole took some shots but got another shot in with about 40 seconds left in the third. Toward the end it looked like Cole was going to turn him, but he just rode it out," Stoner added.

Baxter will square off against Northampton's Shane Fenningham (23-6) in Friday's quarterfinals.

"(Fenningham) finished fifth at 135 last year," said Stoner. "He's a big, strong, physical kid. ... We're right where we want to be. Cole was a little tight. We talked after the first period and, as the match went along, he got better."

In Class AA, Phipps, a freshman, posted a 9-0 major decision over Charleroi's Tommy Thorpe in the 160-pound class. Phipps will move on to face Lewisburg's Eric Hummel (32-4).

Kolb (36-0) pinned Beth-Center's Cody Catalina in 3:08 in the 171-pound bout to advance to the quarterfinals as well. He will face Lancaster Catholic's Michael Blaszczyk (39-2).

The Eagles also had Nick Miller (189) and Johnny Pas (112) competing in the tournament.

Miller (29-4) was pinned by Schuylkill Valley's Pat Leavitt in 1:14, but avoided elimination by taking an 11-10 overtime tie breaking decision over Tamaqua's Garth Latitsky in the first-round consolation.

Miller will face the loser of Friday's quarterfinal match between Commodore Perry's Tim DeFrances (33-6) and Line Mountain's Jon Fausey (41-0).

Pas (31-6) was eliminated when he was pinned by Athens' David White in 5:15, then was pinned by Milton Hershey's Nick Lamoreaux at 1:46 in the first-round consolations. Today's quarterfinals and second-round consolations will begin at 1 p.m.

Butler Eagle

Article published May 11, 2009

Butler wrestler Quercio opts for Gannon

By John Enrietto

Eagle Sports Editor

BUTLER TWP — Marino Quercio didn't have a freshman year in wrestling worth writing home about.

Wrestling career? Different story.

The Butler senior — 8-23 as a freshman with the Golden Tornado — is headed to Gannon University to continue his academic and mat career.

"We brought him up and threw him into the fire at 215 pounds," Butler wrestling coach Scott Stoner recalled of Quercio's freshman year. "Marino was kind of a roly-poly kid back then. I think 22 of those losses were by pin. "That 215-pound class is tough to fill sometimes in high school."

Quercio went on to fill the bill rather well. He wound up with an 82-57 career record in high school, including 33-8 his senior year. The 33 wins rank third on Butler's all-time single-season list, the 82 career wins seventh overall. Quercio had 18 pins and 57 takedowns last season. He is one of 11 four-year lettermen in the history of Butler wrestling.

Another former Butler wrestling standout, Lyneil Mitchell, played a major role in turning Quercio's career around.

"I stayed with Lyneil for about a month last summer," Quercio said. "He showed me the value of working hard and staying nutritional with my diet. "He helped me push my body to its physical limits."

Mitchell was a state qualifier for Butler in 1998, went on to Gannon and became a NCAA Division II national finalist.

He has since gone into the field of training athletes toward peak performance. Mitchell is living in the Erie area and Quercio plans to work with him further.

"Without Lyneil Mitchell, I don't think we get Marino Quercio," Gannon coach Don Henry said. "And I'm glad he's coming."

"Lyneil never knew how good he could be in high school," Stoner said. "I mean, he believed in himself, but it wasn't until college when he realized just what he was capable of."

Stoner figures Quercio to be a similar late-bloomer.

"His best wrestling years are ahead of him, no doubt," Stoner said.

Quercio will wrestle at 197 pounds at Gannon, which finished 10-2 in the PSAC and had three wrestlers become Division II All-Americans by placing among the top six at the national tournament.

Gannon had a 37-year-old man finish 6-2 at 197 last year. That man is staying with the program as an assistant coach next year, leaving that spot

in the Knights' lineup vacant.

Quercio will be battling Chris Boyd, a high school state champion from Virginia, along others for varsity time. Boyd could also wrestle at 184 pounds.

"If he comes in here and works hard, the opportunity is there for him," Henry said of Quercio cracking the lineup right away. "Whether Marino is redshirted or not is in many ways up to him."

Despite his successful senior year, Quercio was knocked out of the section tournament and did not make it to the WPIAL Tournament.

He plans to make up for that in college, while majoring in criminal justice.

"My goal is to win a national championship someday," Quercio said.

Quercio also considered Thiel and Seton Hill before deciding upon Gannon.

"Lyneil being up there means a lot," he admitted. "I got to meet all the guys on the team when I visited there. The more I found out about the program, the more I felt like I could excel there.

"I've always dreamed about wrestling in college. It's high intensity. I can't wait to get back on the mat."

Quercio has maintained a solid workout regimen since his high school season ended.

"I credit him with changing his lifestyle," Stoner said. "Regular workouts and fitness are a big part of Marino's life now.

"A lot of people lose weight, look good for a while, but don't sustain it. Only a rare few make it a life-changing event and he's doing that."