

Butler Eagle

Article published December 11, 2010

Golden Tornado squad poised for historic season



Cole Baxter leads an experienced and talented Butler wrestling team into a rearranged section for the 2010-11 season.

The potential is there; now it must be realized.

The Butler wrestling team hits the mats with seasoned veterans Cole Baxter (115-13 career record), Mike Crawford (91-25) and Eric Tuck (80-38). All three are seniors.

The three seniors are joined by 32-match winner Blake Caudill, 26-match winner Matt Pribis, 21-match winners Dakota Collins and Nick Sutton, and 20-

match winner Zach Reges, as well as a number of developed younger wrestlers. The Golden Tornado are poised to make a run at the program's first section title.

"Yeah, that possibility is there," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "That's been the step we're waiting to take. "Our section has been changed around this year, so things will be a little different." Annual nemesis North Allegheny — a team the Golden Tornado has never beaten — was moved to the other side of the section. So was longtime rival Seneca Valley. Shaler has moved into Butler's side and Mars has bumped up to Class AAA to join the mix. "Seneca Valley was a standard we chased for a lot of years," Stoner said. "We've been right with them for the past couple of years and to not be wrestling them this season is disappointing."

Butler Coach: Scott Stoner, 18th season.

Last Year: 20-4

Starters Lost: Chris White at 215 pounds (Lock Haven), Mike Scialabba at 189

Prospective Lineup: **103 pounds**-Cody Houston (Fr.); **112**-Blake Caudill (So., 32-6); **119**-Nick Sutton (Jr., 21-16); **125**-Brandon Bauer (Jr., 10-20) or Zach Reges (Jr., 20-16); **130**-Zach Collins (So, 14-16) or Jesse Spohn (So., 1-3); **135**-Cody Hartman (Sr., 18-7); **140**-Doug DeFrancis (So.); **145**-Eric Tuck (Sr., 27-8) or Dillon Weston (Sr., 3-5); **152**-Mike Crawford (Sr., 30-5); **160**-Dakota Collins (Jr., 21-14) or Matt Pribis (Sr., 26-11); **171**-Cole Baxter (Sr., 37-3); **189**-Carlos Sanchez (Jr., 1-0) or Blaise Wheeler (Sr.); **215**-Sanchez or Wheeler; **275**-Tim Fulks (Jr., 11-14)

Stoner says: "We've got some tough competition for spots at 145 and 160 pounds. ... We've upgraded our tournaments and our goal is to finish among the top three in each."

Butler Eagle

Article published December 16, 2010

Butler wrestling opens with shutout

Butler 77, Shaler 0 — Pins by Cody Houston (112), Xavier Bennett (130), Jesse Spohn (135), Eric Tuck (145), Cole Baxter (215) and Timmy Fulks (285) allowed the Tornado to roll past the Titans. Butler also benefited from five forfeits by Shaler, including four in a row from 152 to 189. Butler will compete in this weekend's Central Mountain Tournament, which has 41 teams taking part.

Butler 77, Shaler 0

Matched started at 112

103 pounds: Cody Houston (B) pinned Kevin Bonicky, 1:52; **112:** Korey Caudill (B) dec. Ted Mazer, 5-0; **119:** Nick Sutton (B) won by forfeit; **125:** Zach Reges (B) major dec. over Zach Grezmicki, 12-3; **130:** Xavier Bennett (B) pinned Chad Schwartz, 3:03 **135:** Jesse Spohn (B) pinned Chris Arensberger, 1:07; **140:** Doug DeFrancis (B) major dec. over Travis Turkalay, 9-0; **145:** Eric Tuck (B) pinned Jeff Nix, 5:07; **152:** Mike Crawford (B) won by forfeit; **160:** Dakota Collins (B) won by forfeit; **171:** Matt Pribis (B) won by forfeit; **189:** Carlos Sanchez (B) won by forfeit; **215:** Cole Baxter (B) pinned Joe Jackson 3:26; **285:** Timmy Fulks (B) pinned Nick Carey 2:23.

Butler Eagle

Article published December 20, 2010

Baxter takes 2nd at mat tournament

Butler 171-pound wrestler Cole Baxter placed second to help the Golden Tornado to a 12th place finish out of 41 teams at the King of the Mountain Tournament at Central Mountain High over the weekend.

Baxter cruised into his finals match against Easton Orr of Highpoint (N.J.) with three pins and a decision.

But Baxter fell 6-0 to Orr in the final match.

Tornado senior Eric Tuck (145 pounds) finished sixth with a 5-3 record in the two-day tournament.

Junior Zach Reges was eighth with a 4-3 record at 125 pounds.

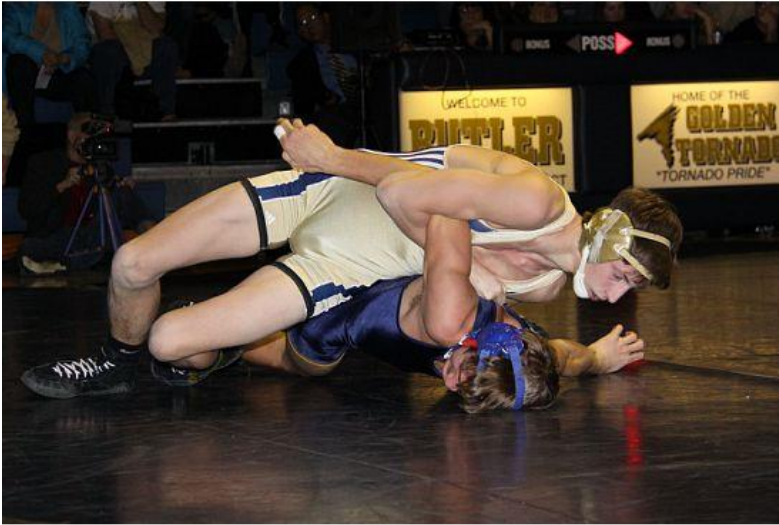
Perry High in Ohio won the tournament, followed by Greater Latrobe and Highpoint.

"This was two days of the most grueling wrestling I've ever put my team in," said Butler coach Scott Stoner. "There were many state championship teams there and I needed to have my guys humbled a little bit, to have no delusions that we are better than we are."

Butler Eagle

Article published December 23, 2010

Butler wrestlers tally 8 pins in beating Mars



Butler's Eric Tuck pins Mars wrestler Ryan McMahon in their 145-pound match Wednesday night. The Golden Tornado defeated the Planets, 70-6.

JUSTIN GUIDO/BUTLER EAGLE

BUTLER TWP — It may be the season of giving, but Butler's wrestling team spent Wednesday night taking away. The Tornado tallied eight pins and won 13 of the 14 bouts in a 70-6 win over visiting Mars.

Ten of those victories featured a Butler takedown in the first 35 seconds.

"We want to be able to do that, no matter

the caliber of team we are facing," said Butler coach Scott Stoner of his wrestlers' dominance early on in matches. "We just got back from the King of the Mountain Tournament and it opened our guys' eyes to what kind of talent is out there."

Butler's pins went to Korey Caudill (112 pounds), Zach Reges (125), Zach Collins (135), Jesse Spohn (140), Eric Tuck (145), Mike Crawford (152), Carlos Sanchez (215) and Tim Fulks (285).

"We made a lot of little mistakes tonight," said Stoner. "I know the score was lopsided, but I'm looking at this from a different point of view from everybody else in this gym."

"I need to challenge myself to make this team better."

The night's best matchup occurred at 130 pounds between Butler's Xavier Bennett and Mars' Andy Selker.

Bennett managed a quick takedown and carried a 4-2 edge into the second period, where an escape and another takedown gave him a 7-2 lead.

Selker, a sophomore, answered in the third period with a reversal, an escape and a takedown of his own to tie the score at seven.

Neither grappler gained an edge in the first two overtimes. Finally, Bennett was awarded three near-fall points to claim a 10-7 victory.

"Xavier has some natural ability, but he also has some habits that can get him in trouble," said Stoner. "We're trying to break those. He's extremely powerful."

Mars coach Don Cooley was impressed with Selker's comeback.

"He's a Selker. Just like his (older) brother Luke, his work ethic is unmatched," Cooley said.

"After that third overtime, he's standing there hardly breathing at all and talking to me about the match. That shows you what kind of shape he's in."

At 171 pounds, Butler's Cole Baxter defeated Ronnie Dakan 10-2.

"It may go unnoticed, but Ronnie battled a very good wrestler tonight," said Cooley. "He's had

trouble in the past against worthy opponents, but I'm proud of his effort tonight.”
Mars' lone win came with Shane Smith's first-period pin of Matt Pribis at 189 pounds.
Smith held a 3-2 lead before the fall.

“Shane put himself in a good position tonight,” said Cooley. “He's come a long way and is starting to believe in himself.”

Both Mars (0-2) and Butler (2-0) will compete at the Wheeling Park Duals Dec. 28-29.

Butler 70, Mars 6

103 pounds: Cody Houston (B) pinned Jimmy Ronczco, 3:02*; 112: Korey Caudill (B) pinned Jake Snyder, :31; 119: Nick Sutton (B) technical fall over Kevin Gannon, 17-1*; 125: Zach Reges (B) pinned Chad McDade, 3:34; 130: Xavier Bennett (B) dec. Andy Selker, 10-7 (3OT); 135: Zach Collins (B) pinned Blake Bernard, 3:15; 140: Jesse Spohn (B) pinned Greg Waslo, 1:11; 145: Eric Tuck (B) pinned Ryan McMahon, 3:21; 152: Mike Crawford (B) pinned Jacob Wright, 1:19; 160: Dakota Collins (B) dec. Chris Boggs, 7-1; 171: Cole Baxter (B) major dec. Ronnie Dakan, 10-2; 189: Shane Smith (M) pinned Matt Pribis, :49; 215: Carlos Sanchez (B) pinned Austin Bitzer, :42; 285: Tim Fulks (B) pinned Cameron Cress, :49.
Notes: Match began at 103 pounds ... Though bouts took place at 103 and 119 pounds, they were officially ruled as exhibitions due to Mars' wrestlers not making weight. Butler was awarded forfeit wins in both instances.

Xavier Bennett of Butler leans back against Knoch's Blaine Elliot during their 125-pound match Wednesday. Bennett took a 7-6 decision.

STEVEN DIETZ/SPECIAL TO THE EAGLE



Butler Eagle

Article published December 31, 2010

Butler 3rd at 40 team WV Tournament

WV State Champion defeats Butler

The trio of Mike Crawford (152 pounds), Dakota Collins (160) and Cole Baxter (171) won all eight of their matches to lead the Butler wrestling team to a 7-1 dual match record at the 40-team Wheeling (W.Va.) Duals Tuesday and Wednesday.

With wins over Cuyahoga Falls (Ohio) 42-21, Northern Marion (W.Va.) 48-22 and Plum 32-18, the Tornado won its pool and advanced to the next round, meeting up against other pool winners.

Butler then dispatched Hedgesville (Ohio) 43-26, Carrollton (Ohio) 59-17 and Marlinton (Ohio) 58-6. In the Pool A finals, Butler lost to last year's West Virginia Class AAA state champion Parkersburg South 50-13.

Butler concluded the tournament by defeating Pool B runner-up Maple Heights (Ohio) 46-24.

Parkersburg South took the title with a 43-15 over Massillon Jackson (Ohio).

Other top performers by the Tornado included Eric Tuck (152, 3-0, all pins), Doug DiFrancisis (135, 6-2), Korey Caudill (119, 6-2), Zach Reges (125, 6-2), Dillon Weston (145, 5-2) Matt Pribis (189, 4-2), Blake Caudill (112, 5-3), Cody Houston (103, 5-3), Zach Collins, 130, 4-3).

Crawford captured his 100th victory during the tournament and his 103 wins tie him with T.J. McCance for second on the all-time wins list behind Baxter (129).

Butler Eagle

Article published January 6, 2011

Improvement Butler's goal

Despite winning big, coach says Tornado wrestlers can do better



Butler's Blake Caudill secures the leg of Knoch's Joel Hixon during their 112-pound bout Wednesday. Caudill won by injury default as the Golden Tornado took a 67-6 victory.

JEFFERSON TWP — It's all about getting better. Butler wrestling coach Scott Stoner carefully critiques his team's performance after every match, including Wednesday night's runaway 67-6 victory at Knoch. "I look at points we give up and how we do it," Stoner said. "Carlos Sanchez got caught in a cradle off the whistle because he wasn't squared up ready to go. The whistle blew and Carlos dropped his head. "That type of stuff is unacceptable. It may not hurt us tonight, but we can't give up six points like that against North Allegheny or Hampton. That's the level I'm trying to elevate us to," the coach added.

Sanchez had a 6-2 lead after one period before being getting caught by Knoch's Steve Mowry, who pinned him 52 seconds into the second frame of their 215-pound match.

That was the Knights' lone win of the evening. Knoch forfeited four weight classes.

"Our team isn't about wins this year," Knoch coach Mark McLaughlin said. "It's about mat time and improvement.

"I saw some improvement in certain areas tonight. The guys we missed due to injuries wouldn't have made a difference in the final score of this match."

Knoch (0-3) wrestled without Evan Merhaut (119 pounds, concussion), Henry Spreng (152, broken hand) and Andrew Holben (160, knee injury). Joel Hixon defaulted his match at 112 after two periods before being helped from the mat with a lower leg injury.

"The injury bug is biting us again this year," McLaughlin said. "I felt like we could have been a little closer tonight. A couple of matches that could have gone our way didn't." Butler (10-1) received pins from Zach Collins at 130 pounds, Dillon Weston at 145, Cole Baxter at 189 and Tim Fulks at heavyweight.

The Golden Tornado claimed a pair of close wins at 125 and 135. Xavier Bennett nipped Blaine Elliot, 7-6, in their 125-pound match. Bennett snapped a 5-all tie with a takedown with 45 seconds left. Elliot received a penalty point when Bennett inadvertently slammed him to the mat with six seconds left, but couldn't score the match-tying escape.

Butler's Jesse Spohn broke a scoreless tie against Col McLaughlin by recording an escape and takedown with 28 seconds left.

"That was a nice win for Jesse against a coach's kid who's been around the sport for a long time,"

Stoner said. "Zach Collins had a nice pin and Dillon Weston did well in his match. He was a little banged up tonight."

Butler will compete in the Kittanning Duals Saturday against host Kittanning, Sharon, Trinity and Forest Hills,.

"I'm trying to get this team to produce some really good stuff this year," Stoner said. "We're very capable. We do need to understand the urgency of situations on the mat better, that's all."

Knoch competes at the Valley Duals Saturday.

Butler 67, Knoch 6

103 **pounds:** Cody Huston (B) dec. Dillon Holben, 13-0; **112:** Blake Caudill (B) injury default over Joel Hixon, 4:00; **119:** Korey Caudill (B) by forfeit; **125:** Xavier Bennett (B) dec. Blaine Elliot, 7-6; **130:** Zach Collins (B) pinned Justin Grossman, 1:30; **135:** Jesse Spohn (B) dec. Col McLaughlin, 3-0; **140:** Doug DeFrancisis (B) dec. Tyler Hlebiczki, 5-0; **145:** Dillon Weston (B) pinned Trevor Hilliard, 3:39; **152:** Mike Crawford (B) by forfeit; **160:** Dakoda Collins (B) by forfeit; **171:** Matt Pribis (B) by forfeit; **189:** Cole Baxter (B) pinned Joe Hlebiczki, 2:38; **215:** Steve Mowry (K) pinned Carlos Sanchez, 2:52; **285:** Tim Fulks (B) pinned Gaige Topolski, 1:52.

Butler Eagle

Article published January 8, 2011

Trio at top of Tornado heap

Senior wrestlers among best produced by Butler program

BUTLER TWP — Cole Baxter and Mike Crawford have reached the top of the leaderboard.

Eric Tuck wants to join them — but he has to get on the mat first.

The three Butler seniors are primed to leave their mark on the Golden Tornado wrestling program.

"We're the first group to come all the way through, from first grade on up," 171-pounder Baxter said.

"We want to leave here on top in the record books because records are made to be broken.

"Guys will come along behind us and topple what we've done. That's how you want the program to be."

Entering competition at the Kittanning Duals this weekend, Baxter carried a career record of 130-14.

Crawford, wrestling at 152 this season, is 104-27 despite an injury-plagued career. Both have passed

T.J. McCance's previous school record of 103 wins. Alex Evanoff (101) is the only other Butler wrestler to reach the century mark in wins.

"I was there when all four of those guys got No. 100," 145-pounder Tuck said. "I was 9 or 10 years old (and) in the stands when T.J. did it, and I've been a teammate of the other three.

"I really want to get there, too. It's been a goal of mine my entire life."

Tuck began wrestling in first grade. Baxter began when he was 4 and Crawford got started in fourth grade.

Tuck is 86-38 in his career and is on pace to slide into third on the Tornado's all-time victory list before he's done. But he's not in the starting lineup right now.

Dillon Weston, a fellow senior, recently beat him out in wrestleoffs for the 145-pound slot. Tuck will try to win back his starting role in the Butler wrestling room Monday.

"It speaks for where our program is at when a guy with nearly 90 career wins has to fight for his spot on the mat," Butler coach Scott Stoner said.

And Tuck has no choice but to fight.

"I'm not certified at 140 and Mike (Crawford) is at 152. I'm pretty much locked in here," he said.

"That's how wrestling goes. It's part of the sport."

While Baxter and Crawford always have been around the 140 weight class or higher, Tuck was a 103-pounder his freshman year and has steadily grown.

"He was a tall, lean 103-pounder," Stoner said. "He's still tall and he's still filling out. A lot of freshmen and sophomores who have success at 103 or 112 fizzle out as they go up in weight as juniors and seniors." "That hasn't happened to Eric. He's adapted well to the larger weight classes."

Crawford has rebounded well from injuries. He had two shoulder operations as a sophomore and battled knee problems last year.

Yet when he gets on the mat, he wins.

"Mike will be a lifer in this sport," Stoner said. "He loves it that much. A wrestler can overcome a knee injury, but shoulders are tough. He's been able to get through it."

Like Tuck, Crawford hopes his senior season ends with a trip to Hershey and a spot on the podium at the state meet.

"Reaching 100 wins was important to me and kept me coming back," Crawford said. "But, yeah, I want more. I want to get to that state meet."

Tuck and Crawford plan to wrestle in college. Baxter is weighing football and wrestling options and will make his decision after the season.

For now, his sights are set on achieving what he can at the state level.

"I thought I was ready to win a state title last year and it didn't happen," Baxter said. "It's hard to stay focused and on top of your game all the way through, but that's what it takes."

Baxter dropped his WPIAL title match by a point last year and did not place at the PIAA meet. He won a WPIAL crown and finished fifth in the state at 145 pounds as a sophomore.

"Cole is a great wrestler, but there are plenty of other teams across Pennsylvania with a Cole Baxter of their own," Stoner said.

Regardless of what hardware may or may not be coming their way, Baxter, Crawford and Tuck have not fallen short of expectations.

"I knew when they were freshmen they had a chance to be the biggest winners we've had, Stoner said.

He didn't keep such goals much of a secret.

"We've always known what's been expected of us," Crawford said. "Hopefully, we haven't disappointed."

Butler Eagle

Article published January 10, 2011

YOUTH SPORTS

The Butler junior high wrestling team amassed 62 pins to capture the 11-team Brookville Tournament Friday and Saturday.

Ryan Hannon recorded pins in all seven matches and won the award for most pins in the least amount of time.

Austin George pinned all six of his opponents. Those two champions were joined by Connor Foust and Will Bortmas.

Hugh O'Neil, Jared Hinkle, Mason Kauffman, Josh Boozel and Taylor Flick each finished in second place in their respective weight classes while David Slomers and Zach Raible placed third overall. The tournament title came after an 83-12 decision over Knoch on Wednesday improved Butler's record to 7-0.

Kauffman, Boozel, Bortmas, Hannon, Zak Hutchison and Jeremiah Bortmas. each registered pins in the win.

Butler will host Fox Chapel on Wednesday.

Butler Eagle

Article published January 10, 2011

Butler matmen claim tourney

The Butler wrestling team won all five of its matches to capture the Kittanning Duals on Saturday. The Tornado (15-1) dispatched Forest Hills 61-12, Trinity 60-12, Sharon 55-19, Kittanning 64-9 and Berlin-Brothersvalley 60-15.

"This fit into our schedule because we're trying to get a tournament in every two weeks," said Butler coach Scott Stoner. "It was a local tournament, so we didn't have to stay in a hotel. That worked out well."

Cody Houston (103), Mike Crawford (160), Dakota Collins (171) and Cole Baxter (189) won all five of their respective matches while Matt Pribis (215) went 4-0 and Eric Tuck (152) was 2-0.

Blake Caudill (112), Korey Caudill (119), Zach Reges (125) and Jesse Spohn (135) each went 4-1 while Zach Collins (130), Doug DeFrancis (140) and Tim Fulks (285) won three matches each and Dillon Weston (145) went 2-2.

Butler returns to action at home Wednesday against Fox Chapel.

Butler Eagle

Article published January 19, 2011



Butler topples Foxes, faces Talbots tonight

Fox Chapel's Corey Mahon gets his hand in the face of Butler's Zach Collins during their 135-pound match Tuesday. Collins won by a major decision to help the Tornado to a 64-15 victory.

DAVE PRELOSKY/BUTLER EAGLE

BUTLER TWP — The Butler wrestling team earned seven pins — four coming in the first period — and had a major decision as The Golden Tornado dominated Fox Chapel 64-15 Tuesday night.

So why was Butler wrestling coach Scott Stoner unimpressed?

Because Stoner feels his team must do better tonight against Hampton.

"We dominated, but I didn't see a whole lot of exceptional wrestling going on," Stoner said. "Maybe I'm a little bit too critical. I don't know. Hampton is going to be tough. It's going to be a tight one." Tuesday's match against Fox Chapel was anything but.

The Foxes did claim a win in the first bout of the night at 103 pounds when Jared Rice eked out a 4-3 decision over Butler freshman Cody Houston.

But Fox Chapel didn't earn another point until it received a forfeit win at 215.

In fact, no Foxes wrestler scored so much as an escape against a Butler wrestler until the 171-pound bout.

In between, the Golden Tornado claimed six pins, a major decision and two forfeit victories.

Butler's 112-pound wrestler Blake Caudill needed a mere 24 seconds to earn a fall over Kameron Ferguson.

Senior Eric Tuck, returning from an injury, got a quick pin in 1 minute, 21 seconds at 145 pounds, Mike Crawford followed with a fall in 1:37 at 152 pounds and then Dakota Collins needed 23 seconds to take down his opponent at 160 pounds.

Jesse Spohn (130) and Matt Pribis (171) also earned pins for Butler (16-2).

Cole Baxter (189) received a forfeit win, his first of the year after getting seven of them last season.

The dominance was welcome, even over a young Fox Chapel (8-4) team.

Butler was beaten 40-27 Friday by Erie Cathedral Prep and Stoner was pleased that the Golden Tornado had a chance to hit the mat again before tonight's section showdown with Hampton.

"The way it matches up (with Hampton) is we're going to have to win some tight matches and hold off some points in the upper weights where they're really solid," Stoner said. "I'm actually glad it worked out this way. Friday, we took a beating and at least we got a dry run (Tuesday)."

Butler 64, Fox Chapel 15

103 pounds: Jared Rice (FC) dec. Cody Houston, 4-3 **112:** Blake Caudill (B) pinned Kameron Ferguson, :24; **119:** Corey Caudill (B) by forfeit; **125:** Zach Reges (B) by forfeit; **130:** Jesse Spohn (B) pinned Artie Newman, 5:35; **135:** Zach Collins (B) maj. dec. Corey Mahon, 8-0; **140:** Dillon Weston (B) pinned Connor Whalen, 2:27;

145: Eric Tuck (B) pinned Shane Bialowas, 1:21; **152:** Mike Crawford (B) pinned Jonathan Friesmuth, 1:37; **160:** Dakota Collins (B) pinned Shahid Hashman, :23; **171:** Matt Pribis (B) pinned Trevor Weis, 5:08; **189:** Cole Baxter (B) by forfeit; **215:** Anthony Brooks (FC) by forfeit; **285:** Adam Bisnowate (FC) pinned Adam

Butler Eagle

Article published January 20, 2011

Butler wrestlers capture section

HAMPTON TWP — Dakota Collins isn't exactly accustomed to the leadoff spot. He basked in it Wednesday night.

Butler's 160-pound junior began the wrestling match at Hampton with a pin 1:20 into his bout — the first of four Butler first-period pins — in a 41-24 victory.

The win lifted the Tornado to 16-2, knocked the Talbots (10-1) from the unbeaten ranks and gave Butler the Section 3-A championship. It also gave the Tornado the opportunity to host the four-team section quadrangular to determine the league champion next Wednesday.

That competition will be held on two mats in the high school gym. Hampton, Section 3-B champion North Allegheny and Hopewell will be coming to town.

"It's another first for our program, another step," Butler coach Scott Stoner said.

Collins made sure the program took a quick and positive step Wednesday. He improved to 20-3 with 12 pins on the year when he put Ryan Clagett's shoulders to the mat.

"I feel more comfortable having my match occur somewhere in the middle, after we've got some momentum going," Collins said. "But I didn't mind starting out tonight.

"I do think my pin helped fire the guys up. You start out with a pin and everyone else wants to get one, too."

"That first match sets the tempo for the night," Stoner said. "Dakota went out there and took care of business."

Other first-period Tornado pins came from Cole Baxter at 189 pounds, Blake Caudill at 112 and Mike Crawford at 152. Baxter (23-1) pinned Jake Hart, who finished fourth in the WPIAL meet as a freshman last year, in 47 seconds.

"Cole got the quick takedown and went right into his pin move," Stoner said. "That was a big six points for us because the Hart kid is good and we bumped Cole up to take him on.

"We're gonna send our big dog against the other team's best whenever we can, even though he was giving up 18 pounds to him."

Baxter's pin was his team-leading 16th. Caudill has 12 and Crawford eight.

Hampton coach Joe Bursick said the dual match played out pretty much as he anticipated.

"The Baxter kid is tough and we knew that, but I expected a little more out of Ryan there," Bursick said. "I saw the 119, 135 and 171 matches as the swing matches tonight. We had to get all of them to win this."

Instead, the Talbots got none of them.

Butler's Korey Caudill won a 4-2 decision at 119, Zach Collins picked up a major decision (11-3) at 135 and Matt Pribis posted a 7-1 decision at 171.

Crawford's match was the last one of the night. Stoner thought about holding him out since the dual win was clinched earlier. Crawford (21-2) has a dinged shoulder.

"In hindsight, I probably shouldn't have sent him out there because he told me the shoulder was dead after the match," Stoner said. "But when a kid shows the passion and desire and wants to be part of a big team win, it's hard to say no to him."

Butler 41, Hampton 24

103 pounds: Cody Houston (B) dec. Reed O'Shaughnessy, 11-1; **112:** Blake Caudill (B) pinned Carl Wilkinson, 1:06; **119:** Korey Caudill (B) dec. Chris Olszewski, 4-2; **125:** Peter Craig (H) dec. Zach Reges, 7-2; **130:** Jesse Spohn (B) dec. Zach Kocak, 8-5; **135:** Zach Collins (B) dec. Ryan Eckard, 11-3; **140:** Kevin Synan (H) dec. Dillon Weston, 8-3; **145:** Brian Estep (H) pinned Eric Tuck, 4:00; **152:** Mike Crawford (B) pinned Collin Siford, 1:57; **160:** Dakota Collins (B) pinned Ryan Clagett, 1:20; **171:** Matt Pribis (B) dec. Mike Link, 7-1; **189:** Cole Baxter (B) pinned Jake Hart, :47; **215:** Nick Yaroszewski (H) pinned Carlos Sanchez, 2:36; **285:** Jordan Shulman (H) pinned Adam Steiner, 2:34.

Butler Eagle

Article published January 22, 2011

History awaits Tornado wrestling

A historic sporting event will take place Wednesday night in the Butler High gym — and it has nothing to do with basketball.

The Golden Tornado wrestling team will bid for its first section championship when the Tornado host Hampton, North Allegheny and Hopewell.

Butler faces Hopewell while North Allegheny takes on Hampton in dual matches at 6 p.m. Two mats will be on the floor so that the duals can be contested simultaneously.

The two winners meet at 8 for the Section 3 title.

Butler is 16-2 in duals this season and is unbeaten in the WPIAL. The Tornado won their division of the section while North Allegheny won its side.

The Tornado have never defeated NA in a dual meet and the teams could face off for the section title.

What theater that would be, especially in the high school gym. Butler's home gym is at the intermediate high school. For wrestling in Butler, opportunity is knocking — big time.

This is the most important high school wrestling event ever hosted in this county, let alone in Butler. Seneca Valley has a long tradition in the sport. Mars, Knoch and Slippery Rock have been building programs.

Wrestling has had its moments around here, certainly. Mars' Dave Pisarcik took an unbeaten record into the state finals a few years back. Cole Baxter became Butler's first state placer two years ago. Seneca Valley has done well in the WPIAL meet and Grove City has produced state champions. But all of those things happened outside the county. In terms of a monumental wrestling achievement happening in a school's own gym, this could be a first.

Butler has enough ability to capture the section title. Baxter is 23-1 with 16 pins, Mike Crawford is 21-2, and Dakota Collins is 20-3. Nine other Tornado wrestlers have more than 10 victories.

The Butler junior high program continues to thrive, posting a perfect dual match record this season. The feeder system under junior high coach Don Geibel has worked wonders.

Korey Caudill, a sophomore 119-pounder in his second year of wrestling, has an 18-5 record.

Coach Scott Stoner has been at this for a while. Now in his 18th season, he's amassed 223 dual match wins against 120 losses.

No coach is more passionate about nor more dedicated to his sport than Stoner. For about five years, he has had Butler wrestling in position to turn the corner.

Two of the roadblocks have been winning a section championship and posting a victory over North Allegheny, a longtime WPIAL power.

Both roadblocks could be smashed Wednesday night.

That would be a sight to see.

Clearfield Wrestlers Edged by Butler, 33-26, in Bison Duals Finals

Jessica Shirey, Team Reporter

January 22, 2011

CLEARFIELD – The Clearfield wrestling team saw the pre-match coin toss favor tournament newcomer Butler, which, in turn, gave the Golden Tornadoes an eight-point swing en route a 33-26 win over the host Bison Saturday night at the Arthur J. Weiss Sr. Gymnasium.

Clearfield won each of the past two years and entered the final undefeated (14-0) at its own tournament. However, Butler stormed in at 16-2 overall, had claimed the Section 3-A Championship days prior and whirled off four-straight wins for a showdown with the Bison.

“The tournament is only as good as the teams [that] are in it. If we are the best team in it every year, then it’s not that good of a tournament,” Clearfield head coach Jeff Aveni said.

“You know, we want to bring in better teams every year. We want to make the tournament tougher every year. I think that we’re doing that.”

Clearfield won six of 14 bouts, including three falls from Shane Peters (103), Christian Stone (112) and Cliff Hill (215), whom all went a perfect 5-0 for the day. Unfortunately for the Bison, the Golden Tornadoes were propelled by two falls, a technical fall and a major decision to win the bonus-point battle, 21-18. The dual meet got under way at 103 pounds, where Clearfield senior Shane Peters pinned Cody Housont with 35 seconds remaining in the first. Sophomore Christian Stone cranked Blake Caudill over at the 3:02 mark in the next bout.

At 119, Bison Dylan Graham tacked on a 6-3 decision of Korey Caudill and pushed his team out in front, 15-0. Up 2-0, Graham kicked free for an escape but wasn’t able to convert for a takedown at the second-period buzzer.

In the third, Caudill was awarded a penalty point, when Graham was called for a full nelson. Caudill evened the bout at three apiece with a reversal; however, Graham quickly escaped for the one-point advantage (4-3). He set the final with a takedown.

Butler narrowed Clearfield’s advantage, when Zach Reges won by fall over Frankie Aveni in 3:59 at 125 pounds. Bison Nolan Barger and Troy Danver scored hard-fought decisions in the next two bouts to raise their team’s lead to 21-6.

Barger (130) led Jesse Spahn by one heading into the final period. From the offensive position, he turned Spahn for three backs. And then at 135, Danver saw his first two periods go scoreless with Cody Hartman.

Hartman popped his head out to reverse Danver in the third. Danver answered with an escape and later tripped Hartman for the winning takedown at the edge of the mat with seven seconds left.

However, Butler ignited its comeback with six straight wins from 140 through 189 pounds, including three bonus-point wins to take a 30-21 favor with two bouts remaining.

Clearfield’s Andrew Hill fell, 3-0, to Dillin Weston at 140 before the Golden Tornadoes pulled within six team points after the next bout, where Eric Tuyck pinned Cody Lansberry in 1:46.

Butler continued its march with Dakota Collins’ 7-1 decision over Shane Harper at 152 before claiming its first lead of the dual meet, 22-21, with an 11-2 major decision from 160-pounder Matt Pribis.

Because Clearfield had to send out first at 171, Aveni couldn’t shuffle his line-up and was forced to send out senior Derek Danver. The Golden Tornadoes responded with returning state fifth placewinner, Cole Baxter, whom finished last season 37-3; he was also 45-2 in 2008-09. Baxter posted a 17-0 technical fall

over Danver at the 5:43 mark.

"We didn't get that coin toss; that was the match. That coin toss was possibly an eight-point swing," Aveni said. "Butler had two 171-pounders, and we had to send out first there. They were going to send out Baxter wherever Danver was. Trust me, we didn't want that matchup."

At 189, Clearfield freshman Jake Verchick trailed 3-1 to Rob Punchur after two periods. In the defensive position, Verchick made repeated attempts to stand for an escape but wasn't able to break the grasp of Punchur, who stretched his team's lead to 30-21.

In the next bout, senior Cliff Hill surrendered two to Carlos Sanchez, when he tripped himself while attempting to take down Sanchez. However, Hill quickly reversed Sanchez, turning him on two occasions for a 9-2 advantage.

In the second, Hill was called for unsportsmanlike conduct, and Sanchez was awarded one point. The Bison reversed Sanchez and turned him for the fall; the end came at 2:26.

Clearfield was penalized one team point for unsportsmanlike conduct following the bout and trailed by four heading into heavyweight. Bison Jordan Lancaster saw two scoreless periods with Adam Steiner.

In the third, Steiner managed an escape and took down Lancaster for the decision, 3-0 and also sealed the team win for Butler, 33-26.

"Butler was a great addition to the tournament. They have a very nice team and a good group of kids who are well-coached," Aveni said. ". . . You can learn more from a loss than you can from a win. We learned a lot about ourselves there. Like I've said, I'm pretty pleased with where we're at."

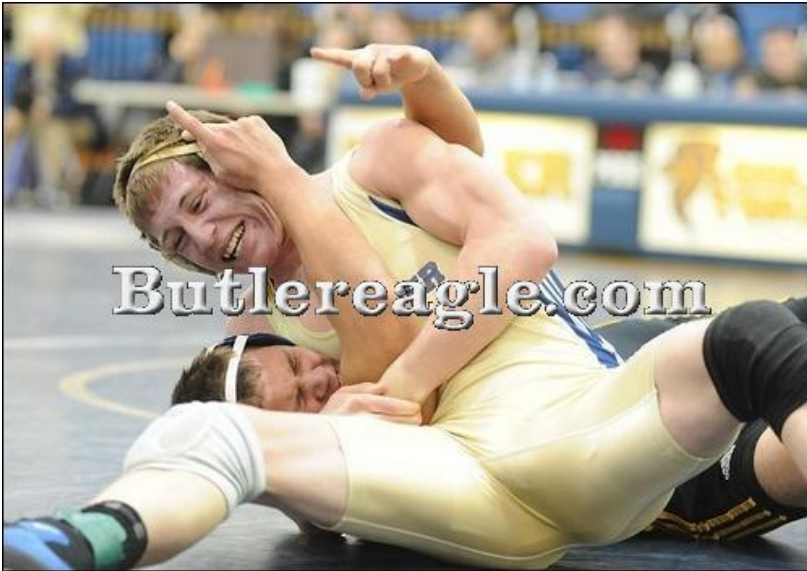
"That was a great team effort. Overall, I think we had a good day. It was a good day with a team effort, as almost all of our guys got matches. We wrestled well all day long, and we wrestled well in the finals."

Clearfield returns to action at home against the St. Marys Flying Dutchmen Tuesday night. The dual meet is scheduled to get under way at 7 p.m. at the Arthur J. Weiss Sr. Gymnasium.

Butler Eagle

Article published January 27, 2011

Butler wrestlers 1 point shy of section title, win over NA



Butler's Mike Crawford tries to pin North Allegheny's Alex DeCiantis in their 160-pound match Wednesday night in the Section 3 team championship dual in the Butler High School gym. DeCiantis is signaling for injury time and received it during his eventual 10-1 loss.
JUSTIN GUIDO/BUTLER EAGLE

BUTLER TWP — When it comes to Section 3 wrestling, there's no taming these Tigers.

But Butler came as close as it gets. North Allegheny (13-2) took advantage of an ill-timed injury to edge the Golden Tornado, 30-29, in the Section 3 championship match Wednesday night in

the Butler High gym.

The win marked the Tigers' 11th consecutive section crown and kept them perfect all-time against Butler.

"A lot of people thought NA was down this year, but they just find a way to win," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "I still want to beat them, but I'll always respect them.

"When a program's been up for that long, it's hard to knock it down."

The Tornado (23-3) gave it their best shot on this night.

Keyed by a major decision from Dakota Collins, a major decision by Mike Crawford against highly regarded Alex DeCiantis (14-4) at 160 pounds and Cole Baxter's decision of Jarred Lux (21-3) at 171, Butler took an 11-3 lead into the 189-pound match.

Matt Pribis had a 3-2 lead on Jake Smith, but was called for stalling with 18 seconds left. Smith then took him down in overtime.

Seldom-used senior Robert Punchur (5-2) was next up for Butler at 215, facing Adam Daud (2-7).

"They're weak at that weight class and Robert can't crack our lineup at 171 or 189, so we bumped him up to 215 for tonight," Stoner said. "He would have pinned that kid. I know he would have."

Not to be. During a scoreless first period, Punchur suddenly crumpled to the mat in pain, clutching his knee.

Butler wrestler Cole Baxter, right, reacts to his team losing the Section 3 title to North Allegheny as coach Scott Stoner watches action on the mat.

JUSTIN GUIDO/BUTLER EAGLE



"There wasn't even any contact or anything. I couldn't figure out what was going on," Stoner said. "He caught his foot the wrong way on the mat and his knee just popped.

"We had to (injury) default. That was a 12-point swing we couldn't afford."

North Allegheny got pins in the next two matches to open a 24-11 lead. Butler got within 24-20 before the Tigers' Drew Landefeld and Jason Monper won close decisions.

When Cody Hartman only won by decision at 135, the Tigers' lead was 30-23 with one

match left. NA forfeited to Dillon Weston at 140 to end the evening.

"You hate to win that way, by an injury," NA coach Jamie Kyriazis said of Punchur's default. "You don't know how that match might have gone, though." Butler won numerous close decisions in a 48-6 semifinal win over Hopewell earlier in the evening. Five of the first seven matches against the Vikings were Tornado decisions of three points or less.

Butler lost four matches to NA by three points or fewer.

"I'm physically exhausted right now," Kyriazis said. "This was a true battle. Almost every match was tight.

"It's been like this the last three years we've faced Butler. They could beat us at any time now. They could have beaten us tonight. This is a very satisfying win for our program."

Hopewell was 12-3 entering the semifinal round, but managed only two decisions against Butler.

"We were flat tonight. We didn't do anything out there," Hopewell coach Jason Martsolf said. "My kids let me down tonight.

"We've been like this the past couple of weeks. I can't figure it out. I look for an excuse and I can't find any. It's almost like we didn't show up."

Hopewell has eight 20-plus win wrestlers in its lineup.

North Allegheny defeated Hampton, 41-19, in the other semifinal. Hampton nipped Hopewell, 37-35, in the third-place dual.

Butler will likely return to action Tuesday in the WPIAL team tournament, site and time to be determined.

"When they do the seeding, I hope they consider that we lost to NA by one point," Stoner said. "I know we lose a lot of seniors this year, but as long as I'm coaching, we're still going to try to beat them."

Baxter improved to 30-1 on the year Wednesday. Crawford moved to 23-2. Other 20-match winners for Butler are Cody Houston (20-10), Korey Caudill (22-8), Zach Reges (24-8) and Dakoda Collins (26-5).

Section 3 Championship

North Allegheny 30, Butler 29

103 pounds: Dom Forys (NA) pinned Cody Houston, 1:13; **112:** Blake Caudill (B) pinned Phil Bachman, 2:51;

119: Korey Caudill (B) dec. Greg Gaus, 6-0; **125:** Drew Landefeld (NA) dec. Zach Reges, 5-2; **130:** Jason Monper (NA) dec. Jesse Spohn, 5-3; **135:** Cody Hartman (B) dec. Ben Schweiger, 4-3; **140:** Dillon Weston (B) by forfeit; **145:** Kevin Monper (NA) dec. Eric Tuck, 1-0; **152:** Dakoda Collins (B) dec. Colton Byerly, 8-0;

160: Mike Crawford (B) dec. Alex DeCiantis, 10-1; **171**: Cole Baxter (B) dec. Jarred Lux, 4-3; **189**: Jake Smith (NA) dec. Matt Pribis, 5-3 in OT; **215**: Adam Daud (NA) by injury default over Robert Puncher; **285**: Seth Marx (NA) pinned Adam Steiner, 4:25.

Section 3 Semifinal

Butler 48, Hopewell 6

103 pounds: Cody Houston (B) dec. Matt Tempalski, 6-5; **112**: Blake Caudill (B) dec. Filippo Crivelli, 5-0; **119**: Tim Dusch (H) dec. Korey Caudill, 4-2; **125**: Zach Reges (B) tech. fall over Dan Santia (16-0), 5:43; **130**: Jesse Spohn (B) pinned Don Bradfield, 5:27; **135**: Cody Hartman (B) dec. Christian Workman, 10-2; **140**: Dillon Weston (B) dec. Cody Mutkus, 2-0; **145**: Eric Tuck (B) pinned Ethan Byrne, 2-0; **152**: Mike Crawford (B) dec. Marco Crivelli, 2-1; **160**: Dakota Collins (B) dec. Damon Drositis, 4-3; **171**: Cole Baxter (B) pinned Jake Trillow, 1:23; **189**: Matt Pribis (B) dec. Mike Tempalski, 6-3; **215**: Robert Puncher (B) dec. Anthony Kashiwsky, 4-2; **285**: Richie Smallwood (H) dec. Adam Steiner, 5-2.



Article published January 25, 2011

Wrestling

Butler won the 12-team Clearfield Duals Saturday, defeating Greenville 41-24, Port Allegany 54-15, Curwensville 75-6 and General McLane 44-21.

The Golden Tornado edged Clearfield, 33-27, in the championship match, winning seven of the final eight weight classes. Dillon Weston, Eric Tuck, Dakota Collins, Matt Pribis, Cole Baxter and Robert Puncher all won before heavyweight Adam Steiner clinched the victory with a 3-0 decision.

Butler (22-2) hosts Hopewell, North Allegheny and Hampton in the Section 3 Championships at 6 p.m. Wednesday in the high school gym.

Latrobe takes down Tornado at WPIAL team tourney

Jesse Spohn and Cole Baxter won a pair of matches for Butler, but the Golden Tornado wrestling team suffered a 35-18 loss to host Latrobe at the WPIAL Team Dual Match Tournament Wednesday night.

Butler (24-4) earned the right to face Latrobe by defeating Central Catholic, 42-23, earlier in the evening.

"The scores pretty much reflect what we did on the mats tonight," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "I thought we were flat for the most part.

"We couldn't practice the past two days. I know that played a factor. We looked sluggish."

Spohn pinned both of his opponents at 130 pounds. Baxter scored decisions of 5-2 and 5-0.

"These were high-caliber teams we faced and their wrestlers know how to counter some of Cole's offensive moves," Stoner said.

Mike Crawford faced Central's Lorenzo Thomas, a state finalist last year, at 152 pounds and dropped a 15-3 decision.

"Mike showed him way too much respect," Stoner said. "When you're up against a kid that tough, you have to go get it, go after him and try to beat him."

The Tornado are scheduled to host Franklin Regional — a 33-30 winner over North Allegheny — next Wednesday.

Latrobe 35, Butler 18

103 pounds: Cody Houston (B) dec. Eric Mills, 7-4; **112:** Chase Small (L) dec. Blake Caudill, 3-0; **119:** Dominic Scalise (L) dec. Korey Caudill, 1-0; **125:** Zach Reges (B) dec. Tyler Heydorn, 2-0; **130:** Jesse Spohn (B) pinned Mitch Lesko, 1:39; **135:** Ty Lydic (L) pinned Zach Collins, 1:11; **140:** Bryan Fletcher (L) dec. Dillon Weston, 14-2; **145:** Derek Davatsky (L) dec. Eric Tuck, 3-0; **152:** Noah Kail (L) by forfeit; **160:** Zach Davatsky dec. Dakota Collins, 10-4; **171:** Cole Baxter (B) dec. Richie Hall, 5-0; **189:** S. Mohring (L) dec. Matt Pribis, 10-1; **215:** J. Ritenour (L) dec. Carlos Sanchez, 3-0; **285:** Tim Fulks (B) dec. Dylan Cooucci, 10-4.

Butler 42, Central Catholic 23

103 pounds: Cody Houston (B) pinned Brandon Kusick, 47; **112:** Blake Caudill (B) dec. Justin Alexander, 8-3 in OT; **119:** Ron Seibert (CC) dec. Korey Caudill, 3-2; **125:** Zach Reges (B) by forfeit; **130:** Jesse Spohn (B) pinned Corey Loeffler, 3:14; **135:** Cody Hartman (B) pinned J. Cole, 3:18; **140:** Tyler Manion (CC) dec. Dillon Weston, 4-0; **145:** Eric Nutter (CC) dec. Eric Tuck, 14-5; **152:** Lorenzo Thomas (CC) dec. Mike Crawford, 15-3; **160:** Jason Luster (CC) dec. Dakota Collins, 17-6; **171:** Cole Baxter (B) dec. Austin Toniker, 5-2; **189:** Perry Hills (CC) pinned Matt Pribis, 5:00; **215:** Carlos Sanchez (B) pinned S. Hall, 3:01; **285:** Adam Steiner (B) by forfeit.

Tornado's technical fall

Butler loses tiebreaker with Franklin Regional

Cody Houston of Butler works on Franklin Regional's Adam Shorthouse before later pinning him in their 103- pound match Wednesday.

DAVE PRELOSKY/BUTLER EAGLE



BUTLER TWP — Three consecutive pins provided late fireworks for Butler. The three consecutive close decisions preceding them spoiled the party. Franklin Regional (25-6), which was fourth in the WPIAL wrestling team tournament, survived match-closing pins by Golden Tornado wrestlers Dakoda Collins, Matt Pribis and Cole Baxter Wednesday night. The Panthers escaped with a dual-match win by criterion after a 31-31 deadlock with Butler. Franklin Regional got the nod by winning eight individual matches to Butler's six.

"It's disappointing. It's frustrating," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "I really wanted to

see us beat a top-level team. We just didn't do what we needed to do."

Franklin Regional has nine wrestlers with more than 20 wins, including two-time state champion Nico Megaludis (39-0) at 125 pounds.

The match result swung in the 140-, 145- and 152-pound weight classes.

"Coming in here, I knew we had to hold our own there to win tonight," Franklin Regional coach Eric Mausser said.

The Panthers won all three of those bouts:

- Butler's Dillon Weston (15-10) had a 4-0 lead in the third period at 140, but surrendered a reversal and three back points in the final minute of an 8-5 loss to the Panthers' Chris Little (33-6).
- The Tornado's Eric Tuck (17-10) had a 5-3 lead at 145 before being taken down by Kevin Wilhelm (28-10) with eight seconds left. Wilhelm scored another takedown in overtime for the win.
- Butler's Mike Crawford (23-4) scored an escape against Ben Johnson (29-4, ranked No. 2 in WPIAL) with 47 seconds left to pull within 3-2, but allowed a takedown with one second left in a 5-2 loss.

"Mike's got a bad shoulder and was up against a premier kid," Stoner said. "Dillon got too aggressive going for a pin and got caught instead of settling for the decision.

"Eric left himself open at the end. The other kid went after it and got it."

The two teams combined to put 17 20-win wrestlers on the mat. Jesse Spohn got his 20th win of the year at 130 pounds for Butler. The junior was 1-3 last year.

"It's just experience," Spohn said. "I'm thinking about moves a lot less this year because everything's become more natural."

Butler (24-5) has eight 20-win wrestlers this season, and Pribis (18) and Tuck (17) are knocking on the door.

"It's helpful having such a deep lineup because we all have good workout partners in the room," Spohn said. "You look at guys with good records on our team. The guys in the weight classes surrounding them have good records, too."

Cody Houston at 103 pounds joined Collins, Pribis and Baxter in getting pins for the Tornado Wednesday.

Collins is 26-7 and pinned his foe in just 46 seconds at 160 pounds.

"Kudos to Dakota because he turned momentum there," Stoner said. "Everyone was down, shoulders were slumping on our bench and he went out there and lit it up.

"I see him being a real leader next year."

Butler honored its 10 seniors: Lee DiMichele, Weston, Cody Hartman, Tuck, Crawford, Pribis, Rob Punchur, Baxter, Blaise Wheeler and Adam Steiner before the match.

Baxter is 148-14 while Crawford is 114-29 in their respective careers. Tuck is 97-48.

Franklin Regional 31, Butler 31

(match started at 215 pounds)

103 pounds: Cody Houston (B) pinned Adam Shorthouse, 2:48; **112:** Blake Caudill (B) dec. Connor Medlang, 8-0; **119:** Tyler Smith (FR) dec. Nick Sutton, 11-2; **125:** Nico Megaludis (FR) tech. fall (23-8) over Zach Reges, 5:49; **130:** Jesse Spohn (B) dec. Evan Thompson, 7-0; **135:** Trevor Medlang (FR) dec. Zach Collins, 13-4; **140:** Chris Little (FR) dec. Dillon Weston, 8-5; **145:** Kevin Wilhelm (FR) dec. Eric Tuck, 7-5 in OT; **152:** Ben Johnson (FR) dec. Mike Crawford, 5-2; **160:** Dakota Collins (B) pinned Anthony Petrarca, :46; **171:** Matt Pribis (B) pinned Jon Farbarik, 1:46; **189:** Cole Baxter (B) pinned Adam Lis, 1:12; **215:** Josh Hull (FR) pinned Blaise Wheeler, 2:55; **285:** Luke Fleck (FR) dec. Tim Fulks, 4-0.

Article published February 12, 2011

Caudill twins hard to pin down



Blake Caudill (112 pounds), left, and twin brother Korey (119 pounds) have found success with the Butler wrestling team.

DAVE PRELOSKY/BUTLER EAGLE

BUTLER TWP — Blake and Korey Caudill are identical twins.

Even if they weren't, it would be hard to tell them apart on the wrestling mat. The Butler sophomores are all go, all of the time.

"Their minds are on wrestling from the time they get up in the morning until the time they go to bed," Golden Tornado junior high coach Don Geibel

said.

Blake, Butler's starting 112-pounder, began wrestling in eighth grade. Korey, the Tornado's 119-pounder, didn't get started until last year.

"I gave it a try because a couple of my friends were doing it and wanted me to go with them," Blake said. "I broke down my first day on the mat.

"It was a lot harder than I thought. I wasn't going to go back," he added. "Those guys talked me into it and I began liking it as I caught on to it."

Korey wasn't so quick to get on board. But he said his brother's positive experience made him curious.

Geibel said Korey Caudill "was on the fence" as an eighth-grader when the program brought the mats to the junior high gym for its annual junior high recruiting day.

"Once he was on the mat for 10 minutes, we had him," Geibel added.

The Caudill brothers haven't been wrestling long, but they're quick learners.

Blake went 32-6 as Butler's 103-pounder last year and qualified for the WPIAL tournament. Korey is 22-10 this season, beating out junior Nick Sutton for the starting spot at 119. Sutton won 21 matches and was a section qualifier last season.

"The Caudill brothers wrestle year-round. They competed in a dual tournament at Lock Haven last summer and Korey beat a defending Maryland state champion," said Butler High wrestling coach Scott Stoner said. "That's how quickly he's caught on to this sport."

Barring injury, the Caudills are on their way to becoming the most productive brother act in the history of Butler wrestling. They are the third set of twins, following Jason and Tim Parker, and Ken and James McDeavitt, in the program's history.

The Parker brothers combined for 154 career wins. Both wrestled at Gannon University.

The Caudill brothers already have 75 career victories and both have two full years ahead of them.

The Parkers compiled 72 pins between them. Blake Caudill already has 35 pins himself.

"Effort and determination are one and the same between them," Stoner said. "They're similar in mat skills to the Parkers, but they're more assertive in personality.

"Blake wants to know everything in detail, what might happen with every move on the mat with every little variation," Stoner added. "Korey just sits there and absorbs everything. Sometimes, as a coach, I wonder if he's paying attention, then he goes into a match and he's got it."

Fred Powell, retired Slippery Rock University and Slippery Rock High wrestling coach, helps out in Butler's wrestling room, and "the Caudills won't let him leave. They just want to pick his brain," Stoner said.

"We love having Coach Powell there," Blake said. "It's like having another coach and learning another style. It's another way of looking at things."

Cole Baxter and Mike Crawford will graduate this spring as the top two wrestlers on Butler's all-time victory list.

The Caudills want to leave their own mark.

"I've met the Parkers and I know of their achievements," Blake said. "But I've seen what Cole Baxter has been through at the WPIAL tournament and the state meet.

"I want to match and surpass what he's done. I want to know what it feels like to win a WPIAL championship."

His brother has similar thoughts.

"Both of us standing on the podium at Hershey. That's what I want to see," Korey said.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Here is a comparison of Butler sophomore wrestling twins Blake and Korey Caudill and ex- Golden Tornado twins Jason and Tim Parker:

Name - Wins - Pins - Takedowns

Jason Parker - 87 - 44 - 139

Tim Parker - 67 - 28 - 174

Blake Caudil - 53 - 35 - 68

Korey Caudill - 22 - 6 - 23

Butler Eagle

Article published February 19, 2011

Tornado Wrestlers run up two more wins

The Tornado concluded their dual meet season with a pair of victories Friday at Gateway. Cole Baxter earned two victories to improve to 36-1 and give him 150 for his varsity career. Butler (26-5) had been scheduled to face Latrobe, but the teams competed against each other less than two weeks ago. Latrobe had made a run in the WPIAL Class AAA team tournament and both teams felt it was too soon to wrestle each other again.

"This time of year we're trying to accomplish things and you're wrestling the same guys every day," said Tornado coach Scott Stoner. "We found out about these two teams and headed down there." The Tornado had nine starters out of the lineup due to weight designations, so several junior varsity wrestlers took part in the matches.

"Some guys had a great opportunity to start and we got some JV guys in there. They got to be a part of the team. Gateway has some nice wrestlers," Stoner said.

Butler will appear in the WPIAL sectional competition Feb. 26 at Fox Chapel. The top five place-winners there advance to the WPIAL Championships the following week.

Butler 74, McKeesport 0

103 pounds: Cody Houston (B) won by forfeit; **112:** No match; **119:** Nick Sutton (B) pinned Zach Argyle, 2:43; **125:** Xavier Bennett (B) pinned Keith Bervach, 5:15; **130:** Nathan Boy (B) pinned Ray Berta, 3:12; **135:** Lee DiMichele (B) pinned Colin Paige, 4:57; **140:** Brandon Bauer (B) pinned Antonio Graziano, 3:15; **145:** Zach Schultz (B) pinned Izure Massey, 3:15; **152:** Dakota Collins (B) pinned Zach Sellers, :49; **160:** Matt Pribis (B) dec. Eban Williams, 8-1; **171:** Zach Weaver (B) pinned Darray Robinson, 1:03 **189:** Cole Baxter (B) won by forfeit; **215:** Carlos Sanchez (B) pinned England Gatewood, 3:10 **285:** Adam Steiner (B) won by forfeit.

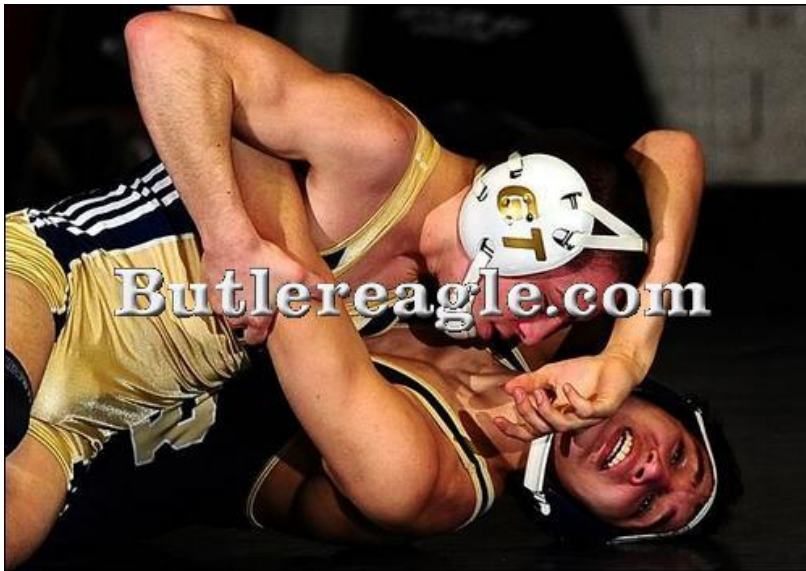
Butler 46, Gateway 21

103 pounds: A.J. Wilkins (G) dec. Cody Houston, 6-3; **112:** Thayer Shouman (G) won by forfeit; **119:** Nick Sutton (B) dec. Tarek Hashimi, 7-3; **125:** Xavier Bennett (B) dec. Cody Crone, 5-3; **130:** Nathan Boy (B) pinned Tyler Boehm 1:15; **135:** Zach Collins (B) won by forfeit; **140:** Grant Ferrari (B) won by forfeit; **145:** Jonny McGuire (G) dec. Brandon Bauer, 9-3; **152:** Dakota Collins (B) pinned Jason Toner, :28; **160:** Matt Pribis (B) pinned Austin Davidson, 3:30; **171:** Zach Weaver (B) pinned Jesse DeFazio, 1:07; **189:** Cole Baxter (B) major dec. over Shane Carpenter, 10-2; **215:** Jamar Parrish (G) dec. Carlos Sanchez, 7-2; **285:** R.J. Hughes (G) pinned Adam Steiner, 3:45

Butler Eagle

Article published February 23, 2011

Tourney takedowns County wrestlers gear up for section meet



Butler's Blake Caudill, top, seen here in a Feb. 9 match with Franklin Regional, is the top seed in the 112-pound weight class at Saturday's WPIAL section tournament.

DAVE PRELOSKY/BUTLER EAGLE

Butler County wrestlers begin battling to extend their seasons this weekend and they have a little more breathing room to do it.

Butler, Seneca Valley, Knoch and Mars will compete in the Section 3-AAA meet Saturday at Fox Chapel High.

The top five placers advance to the WPIAL championships next weekend.

Only the top four placers in each weight class advanced last year.

"The WPIAL cut down to four sections and added two teams (Hopewell and Mars) to ours this year," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "An extra kid goes, but the field is a little deeper, too."

The Golden Tornado have three No. 1 seeds in Blake Caudill (21-6) at 112 pounds, Dakota Collins (28-7) at 152 and Cole Baxter (35-1) at 171.

Dillon Weston (15-10) at 140 and Matt Pribis (20-8) at 160 are No. 2 seeds for Butler, which wrapped up its dual meet season with a 26-5 record.

"Matt wrestled up (at 189 pounds) most of the season for the good of his team," Stoner said. "I'm looking forward to seeing how he does finally getting to compete at his true weight class.

"I'm thinking we can get 10 kids through to the WPIAL meet. Anything above that would be a nice surprise."

Butler has eight 20-win wrestlers: 103-pounder Cody Houston (24-11), 125-pound Zach Reges (26-9), 130-pound Jesse Spohn (20-12), 145-pound Mike Crawford (23-4), Caudill, Collins, Pribis and Baxter.

Reges and Crawford are seeded third in their respective weight classes.

"We've taken it easy with Mike down the stretch because he's been battling some nagging injuries," Stoner said. "He's in good shape right now.

"He and Cole Baxter are trying to become three-time section champions. We've never had a kid do that."

No Seneca Valley wrestler is a first or second seed. Three Raiders have at least 20 wins: Nick Zoria (22-7) at 103 pounds, Jake Perri (20-9) at 119 and Aaron Schettler (22-7) at 125.

Knoch has the No. 2 seed at 135 pounds in freshman Col McLaughlin (17-12). The Knights have two 20-win wrestlers: Blaine Elliott (25-7) at 125 and Steven Mowry (23-7) at 215.

"Col's got a real shot for a freshman at that high a weight class," said his father and Knoch coach

Mark McLaughlin. "He's been at 130 most of the year and we bumped him up to 135. "Blaine is having an outstanding year after suffering a horribly dislocated elbow last year. And Steven Mowry's work ethic and dedication are showing for a second-year wrestler," the coach added. McLaughlin said Joel Hixon (14-15) at 112 stands a solid chance at reaching the WPIAL meet as a first-year wrestler.

"My goal is to send more kids to the WPIAL than we ever have," McLaughlin said. "We've never sent more than two before and we have a good shot at surpassing that."

Mars' top-seeded wrestler is Ronnie Dakan (26-3), who is seeded third at 171 pounds. "Ronnie's our best wrestler in terms of record, but we've got a few others we can get through," Mars coach Don Cooley said. "I'll be disappointed if at least four of our guys don't get there."

Dakan is tied with Steve Perri and Adam Smetana on Mars' career victory list with 93. His next victory will break the school record.

Ryan McMahon (17-9) at 145 pounds, Chris Boggs (20-8) at 160, Shane Smith (20-7) at 189 and Cameron Cress (17-10) at heavyweight are other top wrestlers for the Planets.

"This is our version of March Madness," Cooley said. "All you have to do is beat the other guy once. Every year, a Princeton beats a Duke. I ask our guys, 'Who's going to be our Princeton this year?'"

The section tournament gets begins at 9:30 a.m. The consolation and championship finals are slated for 6 p.m.

WPIAL SECTION TOP SEEDS

Here are the top seeded wrestlers in each weight class for Saturday's Section 3-AA meet at Fox Chapel High:

- 103 pounds:** Dom Fays (27-4), North Allegheny
- 112:** Blake Caudill (21-6), Butler
- 119:** Tim Dusch (28-5), Hopewell
- 125:** Peter Craig (28-5), Hampton
- 130:** Kevin Synan (28-6), Hampton
- 135:** Kraig Esswein (31-6), North Hills
- 140:** Jonathan Avon (22-11), North Hills
- 145:** Kevin Monper (25-7), North Allegheny
- 152:** Dakota Collins (28-7), Butler
- 160:** Damon Drositis (24-9), Hopewell
- 171:** Cole Baxter (35-1), Butler
- 189:** Brenton Sutton (29-5), Ambridge
- 215:** Jordan Shulman (25-2), Hampton
- 285:** Seth Marx (13-4), North Allegheny



Butler Eagle

Article published February 28, 2011

Butler enjoys big day on mats



Butler's Zach Reges tries to pin Hampton's Peter Craig during their 125-pound title match at the Section 3-AAA individuals championships Saturday night at Fox Chapel High School. Reges won the match, 22-12.

JUSTIN GUIDO/BUTLER EAGLE

FOX CHAPEL — Butler wrestling coach Scott Stoner took his team into the Section 3-AAA Championships Saturday looking for productivity.

He found it.

The Golden Tornado produced four section champions — including two three-time champs — for the first time in the program's history and are sending 10 wrestlers to this week's WPIAL Tournament.

"This has been an outstanding day for us," Stoner said.

Blake Caudill (24-6) at 112 pounds, Zach Reges (29-9) at 125, Mike Crawford (26-4) at 145 and Cole Baxter (38-1) at 171 won section titles for Butler. Zach Collins at 135 and Dakota Collins at 152 were runner-ups.

Cody Houston at 103, Nick Sutton at 119, Jesse Spohn at 130 and Matt Pribis at 160 are also moving on for Butler.

Reges and Crawford were seeded third in their respective weight classes before reaching the top of the podium.

"If I had to name our outstanding wrestler for the tournament, it'd be Zach," Stoner said. "He beat two kids who beat him during the season. His overall performance surprised me."

Reges decisioned Drew Landefeld of North Allegheny in the semifinals and top-seeded Peter Craig in the title match.

"I was more determined this year," Reges said. "I was ready for this."

Caudill scored a reversal with four seconds left in the 112-pound finale to avoid overtime and grab a 4-2 victory.

"It was the Coach (Fred) Powell roll," Caudill said. "Coach Powell has been working on that move with us in the room. It's a hip and elbow roll for a reversal.

"With a few seconds left, I just decided to go for it and it worked. He deserves the credit for that one."

Crawford was not given an escape point in the final seconds against North Allegheny's Kevin Monper that would have given him a 1-0 win in regulation of their 145-pound title bout. Crawford rolled up on top of Monper.

"Maybe that wasn't a reversal, but I figured I had the escape for sure," Crawford said. "It didn't matter. I stayed focused and was in good condition."

"Going into overtime, a lot of wrestlers are tired. I wasn't."

Crawford took down Monper in OT to score the win and become Butler's first three-time section champion. Baxter joined him later with a 5-0 win over Jarred Lux of NA at 171.

"It's a good feeling," Crawford said. "We're setting the bar and having a lot of fun doing it." But the work's not done.

"We have a lot more to do," Baxter cautioned. "These section championships are nice to get, but our program's reached the point where we have to look beyond this."

Mars advanced six wrestlers to the WPIAL meet, including 171-pound Ronnie Dakan, who won two matches Saturday to give him a school-record 95 career victories.

"Ronnie didn't wrestle his best meet down here, but he's earned that record," Mars coach Don Cooley said. "He's our leader."

Andy Selker at 130, James Flinn at 140, Ryan McMahon at 145, Chris Boggs at 160 and Shane Smith at 189 are other Planet wrestlers to advance.

"Selker and McMahon are sophomores. Flinn entered the tournament with a .500 record.

"All three of them wrestled better here than they have all year. That was great to see," Cooley said. Seneca Valley advanced three wrestlers: Nick Zoria at 103, Andy Latess at 112 and Aaron Schettler at 125.

"Aaron wrestled great all weekend," Raiders coach Tom Tomeo said. "He lost to the No. 1 seed (Craig) in overtime. Our other two guys are freshmen.

"Getting young kids to the WPIAL meet is planting a seed. That's important to do."

Knoch qualified two wrestlers — Joel Hixon at 112 and Steven Mowry at 215 — both getting pins in their fifth-place matches to extend their seasons.

The Knights have never sent three wrestlers to the WPIAL meet. That opportunity was lost Saturday when freshman Col McLaughlin injury defaulted his fifth-place match at 135.

"Joel's a first-year wrestler and Mowry's in his second year," Knoch coach Mark McLaughlin said.

"Their accomplishments in getting this far are impressive.

"Still, we've (Knoch wrestling) been around five years now and I'm tired of baby steps. As a program, we need to pickup the pace and start running."

Section 3-AAA Finals Championship; consolation; 5th (top 5 to WPIAL meet)

103 pounds-Dom Forys (North Allegheny) dec. Anton Martinez (North Hills) 10-0; Cody Houston (Butler) dec. Jared Rice (Fox Chapel) 4-2; Nick Zoria (Seneca Valley) dec. Reed O'Shaughnessy (Hampton) 4-2

112-Blake Caudill (Butler) dec. Filippo Crivelli (Hopewell) 4-2; Phil Bachman (North Allegheny) pinned Anthony Latess (Seneca Valley) 2:33; Joel Hixon (Knoch) pinned Kevin Bonicky (Shaler) 2:14

119-Tyler Walker (North Hills) injury default over Jesse Rodgers (North Allegheny); Tim Dusch (Hopewell) pinned Chris Olszewski (Hampton) :38; Nick Sutton (Butler) dec. Jake Perri (Seneca Valley) 8-0

125-Zach Reges (Butler) dec. Peter Craig (Hampton) 22-12; Drew Walker (North Hills) dec. Aaron Schettler (Seneca Valley), 7-5; Drew Landefeld (North Allegheny) pinned Danny Santia (Hopewell) 2:33

130-Kevin Synan (Hampton) dec. Troy Zangaro (North Hills) 6-5; Jesse Spohn (Butler) pinned Andy Selker (Mars), 4:01; Don Bradfield (Hopewell) pinned Trent Munk (Ambridge) :26

135-Kraig Esswein (North Hills) tech. fall (15-0) over Zach Collins (Butler), 3:08; Ben Schweiger (North Allegheny) pinned Jimmy Davis (Hampton) 2:03; Corey Mahon (Fox Chapel) injury default over Col McLaughlin (Knoch)

140-Cody Mutkus (Hopewell) pinned Ryan Sippel (North Allegheny) 1:03; Jonathan Avon (North Hills) dec. James Flinn (Mars) 10-2; Artie Newman (Fox Chapel) dec. Justin Shuttleworth (Ambridge) 14-0

145-Mike Crawford (Butler) dec. Kevin Monper (North Allegheny) 2-0 in OT; Ryan McMahon (Mars) pinned

Brian Estep (Hampton) 3:40; Willie Palombo (Ambridge) pinned Matt King (Seneca Valley) 4:24
152-Marco Crivelli (Hopewell) dec. Dakota Collins (Butler) 7-4; Collin Siford (Hampton) dec. Colton Byerly (North Allegheny) 5-0; Josef Baran (Ambridge) pinned Brad Good (Shaler) 2:18
160-Alex DeCiantis (North Allegheny) dec. Damon Drositis (Hopewell) 4-3; Matt Pribis (Butler) injury default over Jake Campbell (North Hills); Chris Boggs (Mars) dec. Ian Strawser (Pine-Richland) 10-0
171-Cole Baxter (Butler) dec. Jarred Lux (North Allegheny) 5-0; David Fitzpatrick (Ambridge) pinned Ronnie Dakan (Mars) 1:39; Andrew Wood (Pine-Richland) dec. Trevor Weis (Fox Chapel) 8-1
189-Jacob Hart (Hampton) dec. Anthony Brooks (Fox Chapel) 11-3; Allen Turcinhodzic (North Hills) dec. Shane Smith (Mars) 2-1; Brenton Sutton (Ambridge) dec. Jake Trillow (Hopewell) 2-0
215-Jordan Shulman (Hampton) dec. Jake Smith (North Allegheny) 5-0; Ben Balish (Pine-Richland) dec. Anthony Kashiwsky (Hopewell) 7-3; Steven Mowry (Knoch) pinned Joe Jackson (Shaler) 1:31
285-Seth Marx (North Allegheny) dec. Richie Smallwood (Hopewell) 8-4; Adam Bisnowaty (Fox Chapel) dec. Noah Shulman (Hampton) 9-5; Luke Heilig (Ambridge) dec. Cameron Cress (Mars) 5-3

Butler Eagle

Article published March 2, 2011

No. 2 SEEKS No. 1

Baxter wants eventual battle with top seed



Butler's Cole Baxter, right, is the No. 2 seed in the 171-pound weight class at the WPIAL/Southwest Class AAA Wrestling Championships, which begin Thursday. JUSTIN GUIDO/BUTLER EAGLE

Having captured a WPIAL championship two years ago, Butler's Cole Baxter came up short in the title bout in 2010.

At the WPIAL/Southwest Class AAA Wrestling Championships, which begin Thursday, he's the No. 2 seed in the 171-pound class.

But Baxter is eyeing a possible championship battle with top-seeded Nick Bonaccorsi of Bethel Park. "Cole's been No. 2 all year," said Butler coach Scott Stoner, who will have 10 wrestlers taking part in the WPIAL finals. "Bonaccorsi has placed two times at state and won at the Powerade Tournament.

"Cole wrestled him in elementary school, but they're no longer in elementary school," the coach added. "Cole has a lot of respect for him, but it's a (bracket) we feel he can win out."

Of course, for the two to meet, they'll have to win three matches apiece to reach the finals.

Bonaccorsi has an unblemished 35-0 mark while Baxter is 38-1, with the lone loss to a New Jersey wrestler.

Having won the Tornado's first WPIAL crown at 145 pounds in 2009, Baxter lost in the finals at 171 a year ago. That's something Stoner believes will drive Baxter.

"Any good wrestler will want to be somewhere else than where he was last year," the coach said.

Cody Houston (103), Blake Caudill (112), Zach Reges (125), Jesse Spohn (130), Zach Collins (135), Mike Crawford (145), Dakota Collins (152) and Matt Pribis (160) all have first-round matches while Nick Sutton (119) will have a pigtail match.

Any pigtail match winner will advance to the first-round. Any wrestler that drops a pigtail match is eliminated.

Butler's big three of Mike Crawford (145), Dakota Collins (152) and Baxter have a combined 95-13 record this year while Matt Pribis (160) is a three-time WPIAL qualifier as well.

Mars will have six wrestlers, led by Ronnie Dakan (171) and Shane Smith (189), who will open in the first round. "If I were a betting man, those two would have the best chance," said Mars coach Don Cooley.

Andy Selker (130), James Flinn (140), Ryan McMahon (145) and Chris Boggs (160) all have pigtail matches for the Planets.

Cooley, however, doesn't believe wrestlers should just give in, even if the odds are stacked against

them.

“The cool part is, even though only three are going (to the PIAA Championships), there's always a chance,” said Cooley. “The pin is the great equalizer.”

Seneca Valley will be represented by three wrestlers, Nick Zoria (103), Anthony Latess (112) and Aaron Schettler (125), who are slated for pigtail matches.

If that wasn't tough enough, all three, should they win, will square off against the top seeds in their respective divisions, who are a combined 125-3: Colt Shorts of Canon McMillan (103, 42-1), Connor Schram of Canon McMillan (112, 40-2) and Nico Megaludis (125, 43-0) of Franklin Regional.

Knoch has two wrestlers — Joel Hixon (112, in his first season), and Steven Mowery (215, his second season) — who are both making their first trip to the WPIAL finals.

WPIAL AAA WRESTLING

Pigtail matches

103: Nick Zoria (Seneca Valley, 24-9) vs. John Bernardinelli (Connellsville, 6-23)

112: Anthony Latess (Seneca Valley, 18-12) vs. Will Valentine (Albert Gallatin, 15-15); Joel Hixon (Knoch, 16-17) vs. Michael Heasley (Waynesburg, 15-21)

119: Nick Sutton (Butler, 7-5) vs. Josh Gudenburr (Ringgold, 23-15)

125: Aaron Schettler (Seneca Valley, 24-9) vs. Aaron Layhue (West Mifflin, 6-14)

130: Andy Selker (Mars, 17-16) vs. Deane Fiasco (Penn-Trafford, 14-20)

140: James Flinn (Mars, 12-12) vs. Michael Ardeno (Trinity, 26-8)

145: Ryan McMahan (Mars, 20-10) vs. Erik Rayman (Norwin, 22-14)

160: Chris Boggs (Mars, 22-10) vs. Jordan Roberts (Trinity, 22-7)

215: Steven Mowery (Knoch, 26-9) vs. Jaymar Parrish (Gateway, 23-13)

First-round matches

103: Cody Houston (Butler, 27-12) vs. James Harrison (West Mifflin, 24-4)

112: Blake Caudill (Butler), 24-6) vs. Justin Alexander (Central Catholic, 24-1)

125: Zach Reges (Butler, 29-9) vs. Christian Whipkey (McGuffey, 22-12)-Keith Berbach (McKeesport, 12-15) pigtail winner

130: Jesse Spohn (Butler, 23-13) vs. Jake Vitolo (Hempfield, 30-7)

135: Zach Collins (Butler, 16-11) vs. Patrick Slovonic (Thomas Jefferson, 30-6)

145: Mike Crawford (Butler, 26-4) vs. Kyle Skelly (Kiski Area, 27-10)-Giancarlo Lies (Mount Lebanon, 20-13) pigtail winner

152: Dakota Collins (Butler, 30-8) vs. Zan Kail (Peters Township, 27-6)

160: Matt Pribis (Butler, 23-9) vs. Tyler Haines (Albert Gallatin, 30-6)

171: Cole Baxter (Butler, 38-1) vs. Craig Slepsky (Penn-Trafford, 13-19)-Don McWreath (Trinity, 20-11) pigtail winner; Ronnie Dakan (Mars, 28-5) vs. Austin Coniker (Central Catholic, 34-1)

189: Shane Smith (Mars, 23-9) vs. Dylan Martin (Plum, 29-4)

Butler Eagle

Article published March 4, 2011

Tornado put 4 in quarters

CANONSBURG — For at least one day, the Big Three became the Big Four.

At the first day of the WPIAL/Southwest Region Class AA Wrestling Championships Thursday, only four Butler County wrestlers — Butler's Blake Caudill (112 pounds), Mike Crawford (145), Dakota

Collins (152) and Cole Baxter (171) — advanced to today's quarterfinal round.

Crawford, Collins and Baxter, who have been a dominant force for the Tornado this season, compiling a 94-13 composite dual-meet record, picked up victories in the preliminary round.

"You expected them to get through," said Butler coach Scott Stoner. "It wasn't pretty, but they got through."

Caudill, a sophomore, trailed Central Catholic's Justin Alexander 2-0 after two periods, but he earned a pair of escapes, the latter with 39 seconds left to force overtime. Caudill (25-6) then earned a takedown in each overtime period to pull out the 6-2 triumph.

Crawford, who was nursing an injured shoulder, which has bothered him since last year, injured his other shoulder after completing a reverse in the third period to erase a 1-0 deficit against Kiski Area's Kyle Skelly.

Skelly escaped with one minute remaining, but Crawford (27-4) earned a takedown in overtime for the win.

"Mike shoulder was suspect as usual," said Stoner. "He's not at 100 percent and then he hurt the good one. He's going out there with limited offensive ability."

Collins (31-8), a junior, decisioned Zan Kail of Peters Township 7-1 and Baxter had little trouble in earning a 16-0 technical fall over Penn-Trafford's Craig Slepisky.

Baxter (39-1) earned a takedown four seconds into the match and turned a 6-0 first-period lead into 14-0 after two periods.

"We wanted Cole to go out and get the early takedown," Stoner said.

In all, 20 Butler County wrestlers — Mars' Shane Smith was scratched before the tournament — took part, but 16 suffered a loss, which means they'll have to wrestle back through the consolation rounds and must win five matches to grab the third and final state tournament berth.

Seven of the 10 wrestlers in pigtail matches lost, eliminating them from the rest of the tournament.

The only competitors to advance were Seneca Valley's Nick Zoria (103) and Aaron Schettler (125), and Butler's Nick Sutton (119).

Zoria pinned Connellsville's John Bernrdinelli in 3:25, Schettler pinned West Mifflin's Aaron Layhue in 30 seconds and Sutton picked up a 9-4 decision over Ringgold's Josh Gudenburr.

Unfortunately, the Raiders' duo then had face their respective weight divisions' No. 1 seeds.

Zoria lost to Canon-McMillan's Colt Shorts by a pin and Schettler fell to Franklin Regional's Nico Megaludis in a technical fall.

Penn-Trafford's Tim Connelly beat Sutton in a major decision.

Butler's Zach Reges, who entered the tournament as a No. 4 seed with a 29-9 record, suffered a tough loss to McGuffey's Christian Whipkey, who won a pigtail match, then pinned Reges.

Butler had 10 wrestlers qualify for the WPIAL Championships, including Section 3 champions in Baxter, Crawford, Caudill and Reges.

Now, it's up to the those who lost to try and battle their way back and pick up one or two wins.

"I'll have to read the riot act (Thursday night)," Stoner said. "Most of these guys had winnable matches. If you're going to come (to the WPIAL tournament), you have to go out there with guns blazing."

Notes: Friday's quarterfinals and first-round consolations will begin at 6 p.m. On Saturday, the second-round consolations will begin at 10:30 a.m., the semifinals and third-round consolations at noon and fourth-round consolations at 2 p.m. The consolation finals will begin at 5:30 p.m., followed by the Parade of Champions at 6:50 p.m. and the championship finals at 7.**WPIAL WRESTLING**
Results of Butler County competitors at Thursday's WPIAL/Southwest Region Class AAA Wrestling

Championships:

Pigtail Matches

- 103 pounds: Nick Zoria (Seneca Valley) pinned John Bernardinelli (Connellsville), 3:25
112: Will Valentine (Albert Gallatin) pinned Anthony Latess (Seneca Valley), 2:38; Michael Heasley (Waynesburg) pinned Joel Hixon (Knoch), 1:35
119: Nick Sutton (Butler) dec. Josh Gudenburr (Ringgold), 9-4
125: Aaron Schettler (Seneca Valley) pinned Aaron Layhue (West Mifflin), 0:30
130: Deane Fiasco (Penn-Trafford) pinned Andy Selker (Mars), 1:28
140: Michael Ardeno (Trinity) tech. fall over James Flinn (Mars), 20-5 (4:42)
145: Erik Rayman (Norwin) pinned Ryan McMahon (Mars), 3:22
160: Jordan Roberts (Trinity) tech. fall over Chris Boggs (Mars), 17-0 (2:48)
215: Jaymar Parrish (Gateway) pinned Steven Mowery (Knoch), 4:44

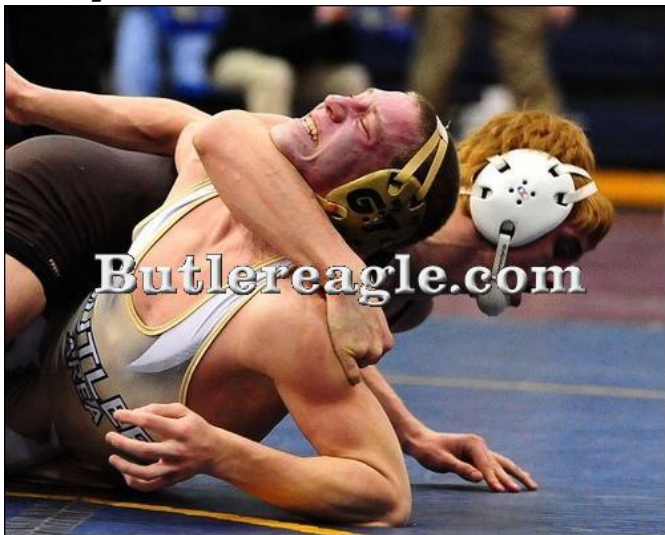
Preliminary Matches

- 103: Colt Shorts (Canon McMillan) pinned Nick Zoria (Seneca Valley), 0:40; James Harrison (West Mifflin) major dec. over Cody Houston (Butler), 12-0
112: Blake Caudill (Butler) dec. Justin Alexander (Central Catholic), 6-2 (2 OT)
119: Tim Connelly (Penn-Trafford) major dec. over Nick Sutton (Butler), 15-4
125: Nico Megaludis (Franklin Regional) tech. fall over Aaron Schettler (Seneca Valley), 16-1 (2:53); Christian Whipkey (McGuffey) pinned Zach Reges (Butler), 5:09
130: Jake Vitolo (Hempfield) dec. Jesse Spohn (Butler), 6-1
135: Patrick Slovonik (Thomas Jefferson) dec. Zach Collins (Butler), 7-3
145: Mike Crawford (Butler) dec. Kyle Skelly (Kiski Area), 4-2 (OT)
152: Dakota Collins (Butler) dec. Zan Kail (Peters Township), 7-1
160: Tyler Haines (Albert Gallatin) dec. Matt Pribis (Butler), 4-2
171: Cole Baxter (Butler) tech. fall over Craig Slepsky (Penn-Trafford), 16-0 (4:12); Austin Coniker (Central Catholic) dec. Ronnie Dakan (Mars), 4-1

Butler Eagle

Article published March 5, 2011

Only Tornado's Baxter makes it to semifinals



Mike Crawford of Butler tries to escape from the grip of Greensburg Salem's Zach Voytek in the 145-pound match at the WPIAL meet Friday. A knee injury forced Crawford to retire from the match.

DAVE PRELOSKY/BUTLER EAGLE

CANONSBURG — Cole Baxter was ready to wrestle, but his opponent wasn't.

Baxter never got a chance to take part in his WPIAL Class AAA quarterfinal match against Belle Vernon's Adam Nickelson Friday as Baxter picked up the win by injury default in the 171-pound division.

Baxter was the lone Butler County wrestler to advance to Saturday's semifinals while six others will

try to work their way back through the consolation rounds.

"I talked to (Belle Vernon coach Jack Jolley) earlier and he was going to save him for the consolation rounds," said Butler coach Scott Stoner. "(Nickelson) had a bad shoulder and didn't want it to get worse going against Cole."

The day off is nice, but Baxter (40-1) wouldn't have minded the work.

"I feel like I'm in top gear going in," said Baxter, who is trying to capture his second WPIAL title in three years. "The extra time off won't affect me.

"But you never know what might happen out there. You could get beat or get hurt," he added.

Speaking of injury, Butler's Mike Crawford, who has two bad shoulders, injured his knee in the 145-pound quarterfinal bout against Greensburg Salem's Zach Voytek.

Voytek scored a takedown with 1:27 left in the first period before an injury timeout. Crawford did return, but with 12 second left in the period he reinjured the knee and defaulted to Voytek.

It seems unlikely Crawford will return to the tournament.

"It's definitely an MCL sprain and possibly a torn meniscus," Stoner said. "It's a shame. ... I don't think it's sunk in yet. That's one of the best kids we've ever had."

The Tornado's Blake Caudill (112) and Dakoda Collins (135) also wrestled in the quarterfinals, but neither reached the semifinals.

Caudill lost by a 13-0 major decision to Franklin Regional's Tyler Smith while Collins fell in a 3-2 decision to Aaron McKinney of West Allegheny.

"Blake got beat up" said Stoner. He didn't wrestle well and (Smith) had dropped down from 119. Smith did what I'd like to see our kids do: come out hard.

"Blake's a good wrestler and I don't doubt he won't come back and battle."

As for Collins (31-9), the junior allowed an escape and takedown in the second period to fall behind 3-0 before earning a pair of third-period escapes, the latter with 10 seconds left.

Now, Caudill and Collins must win four bouts to capture the third and final PIAA berth.

Three other Butler County wrestlers kept their hopes alive by winning their first-round consolation matches, which allowed them to advance Saturday's final day.

Seneca Valley's Aaron Schettler (125) earned a 2-0 decision over Albert Gallatin's Schuyler Moncheck while Butler's Jesse Spohn (130) registered a 12-0 major decision against Elizabeth Forward's John Lukart and the Tornado's Zach Collins (135) decisioned Mount Lebanon's Adam Kemerer, 3-2.

Butler's Cody Houston (103), Nick Sutton (119), Zach Reges (125) and Matt Pribis (160), Seneca Valley's Nick Zoria (103) and Mars' Ronnie Dakan (171) each lost their first-round consolations and were eliminated.

In the Planets' first appearance at the Class AAA meet, only Dakan was able to wrestle Friday and lost to Moon's Ben Barcaskey 3-2 after Barcaskey recorded a takedown in the final seconds of overtime.

"I'm disappointed and hurting for him." said Mars coach Don Cooley. "For our program, we had good team leaders. Our first year and we had six qualifiers. For some it's not a lot, but you have to crawl before you can walk."**WPIAL WRESTLING**

Quarterfinals

112: Tyler Smith (Franklin Regional) major dec. over Blake Caudill (Butler), 13-0

145: Zach Voytek (Greensburg Salem) injury default over Mike Crawford (Butler), 1:48

152: Aaron McKinney (West Allegheny) dec. Dakoda Collins (Butler), 3-2

171: Cole Baxter (Butler) injury default over Adam Nickelson (Belle Vernon)

First-Round Consolations

103: Anton Martinez (North Hills) major dec. over Nick Zoria (Seneca Valley), 11-2; Jared Rice (Fox Chapel) dec. Cody Houston (Butler), 4-2

119: Tyler Walker (North Hills) major dec. over Nick Sutton (Butler), 9-1

125: Aaron Schettler (Seneca Valley) dec. Schuyler Moncheck (Albert Gallatin), 2-0

125: Tyler Heydorn (Latrobe) dec. Zach Reges (Butler), 3-2

130: Jesse Spohn (Butler) major dec. over John Lukart (Elizabeth-Forward), 12-0

135: Zach Collins (Butler) dec. Adam Kemerer (Mount Lebanon), 3-2

160: Mitch Posel (West Allegheny) dec. Matt Pribis (Butler), 4-2 (OT)

171: Ben Barcaskey (Moon) dec. Ronnie Dakan (Mars), 6-4 (OT)

Butler Eagle

Article published March 7, 2011

Saddled in second



CANONSBURG — Scoring first was critical and Cole Baxter knew it.

That's why the Butler senior 171-pounder lunged at Bethel Park's Nick Bonaccorsi right off the opening whistle of their WPIAL Class AAA championship match Saturday night at Canon McMillan High School.

"Cole wanted to be the aggressor. Score first and dictate the tempo and pace of the match," Butler coach Scott Stoner said.

Bonaccorsi was not surprised, however, did not surrender the takedown and turned the tables on Baxter for a 5-0 victory.

Bonaccorsi (39-0) and Baxter (41-2) stayed tied up for most of the first period. When the Bethel Park wrestler rolled on top prior to the pair going out of bounds, he was awarded a takedown with 13 seconds left in the period.

Those were the first — and most critical — points in the match.

"I knew I had to score first," Bonaccorsi said. "That kid is a great defensive wrestler and you can't fall behind against him.

"Once I got the lead, I was able to relax a little bit. I felt comfortable out there."

Bonaccorsi added an escape 22 seconds into the second period and a takedown with 55 seconds left. He rode Baxter for the remainder of the match.

"He's not used to being ridden like that," Stoner said of Baxter. "That kid was strong. He's No. 2 or 3 in the state rankings, Cole No. 4 or 5. It's not like we lost to someone who's not going to do anything (in Hershey). That kid might win the state title.

"I was surprised they gave (Bonaccorsi) the takedown there. They were locked up, nothing changed, all of a sudden they're on the edge of the mat and he gets two points."

Baxter was unsure of how the points were awarded as well.

"I don't know ... He did get on top of me, but we were rolling around," he said.

"I never think I'm going to have trouble with anyone on the mat. I had to escape (later in the match) and I couldn't get out. What can you say?"

Bonaccorsi was the WPIAL runner up at 160 pounds last year. He is 153-27 in his career. Baxter is a three-time WPIAL finalist and is 156-15.

They were two of four wrestlers in the finals — Franklin Regional's Nico Megaludis (166 at 125 pounds) and Central Catholic's Lorenzo Thomas (153 at 152) — with more than 150 career wins.

The Golden Tornado had two wrestlers reach the third round of consolations, but no farther. Blake Caudill dropped a 6-1 decision at 112 pounds and Dakoda Collins bowed by a 4-3 count at 152.

"We have to get more aggressive earlier in the matches down here," Stoner said. "That's a trend I'm seeing with our guys. We're not generating much offense in this tournament.

"You only have six minutes out there. You have to get busy right away."

Butler 145-pound senior Mike Crawford, injuring a knee and shoulder Friday night, returned for his second-round consolation Saturday, losing 1-0 by allowing a second-period escape.

Crawford ended his career at 118-31, second all-time to Baxter on the Tornado win list.

"I wasn't going to sit out my last chance," Crawford said. "I had to give it a try."

Seneca Valley senior 125-pounder Aaron Schettler was the Raiders' lone competitor Saturday. He dropped a 5-0 decision in the second round of consolations to end his season at 25-11.

WPIAL AAA Wrestling Local Results

Championship Finals

171 pounds — Nick Bonaccorsi (Bethel Park) dec. Cole Baxter (Butler), 5-0

Championship Semifinals

171 pounds — Cole Baxter (Butler) dec. David Fitzpatrick (Ambridge), 11-2

3rd-Round Consolations

112 pounds — Lukas Etzel (Elizabeth Forward) dec. Blake Caudill (Butler), 6-1

152 pounds — Patrick Palmer (Albert Gallatin) dec. Dakoda Collins (Butler), 4-3

2nd-Round Consolations

112 pounds — Blake Caudill (Butler) dec. John Fafalios (Ringgold), 6-1

125 pounds — Phil Kail (Bethel Park) dec. Aaron Schettler (Seneca Valley), 5-0

130 pounds — Kevin Synan (Hampton) dec. Jesse Spohn (Butler), 6-0

135 pounds — John Marotto (Plum) dec. Zach Collins (Butler), 7-2

145 pounds — Erik Rayman (Norwin) dec. Mike Crawford (Butler), 1-0

152 pounds — Dakoda Collins (Butler) pinned Chris Vayo (Mt. Lebanon), :37

Butler Eagle

Article published March 8, 2011

It's not hard to pin down why he loves wrestling



Having attended a high school synonymous with wrestling, it's not hard to admit that I enjoy covering the WPIAL championships.

Maybe it's because at alma mater Trinity High WPIAL championships (28 in all) and a tremendous wrestling history always made for an exciting winter.

Trinity doesn't have much history of success in other sports. There are no basketball or football glory days from decades past.

But wrestling always made fans sit up and take notice. Plus, my older brother wrestled at the 98-pound division, and that was great to see.

So fast forward to this season, which was the 15th year I've covered at least one round for the Eagle. Wrestling definitely is different from any other high school sport. It's the ultimate individual sport. The wear and tear placed on the human body is amazing. A bloody nose? Shove in some cotton and get back out there. Shoulder popped out? Pop it back in.

Butler's Mike Crawford is a prime example of the iron men of the mats.

Crawford entered the tournament with a bad shoulder, injured the other one in the opening round Thursday, then injured his knee twice in Friday's quarterfinals.

He defaulted, and it didn't look as if he would return for Saturday's consolation rounds.

But Crawford did return and battled to a 1-0 loss, which eliminated him from the tournament, but as a senior, Crawford was going to go out on his terms.

Wrestlers are a different breed. There is a lot of tradition in the sport, and the bloodlines definitely run deep.

It's a sport of honor. You shake your opponent's hand before and after the match, and the opposing coach's as well.

The vision of five mats laid out at the WPIAL finals and matches going on at a frantic pace is a sight to see. If you attend all four sessions, you will witness 420 bouts.

I used to run into friends, coaches and former committee members I knew from years past, which was great, and now that recent championships have been held at Canon McMillan High, it's nice to get back to Washington County.

I remember when my dad used to listen to the Trinity wrestling matches, as well as the WPIAL and PIAA matches, on WJPA radio when I was a kid. They're still broadcasting them today.

There's a lot of memories there, although I don't run into the same people I used to anymore. I understand things change, times change, but wrestling doesn't. It still takes a huge commitment to win it all.

Loyalty. Attitude. Guts. That's a sign posted in the wrestling room at Trinity. If you don't bring all three to the mat, you certainly can't appreciate this sport.

Sam Talarico is a staff writer for the Butler Eagle.

Butler Eagle

Article published March 9, 2011

FAREWELL TOUR

Last dance for Baxter

Butler senior seeks PIAA wrestling crown



Senior 171-pound wrestler Cole Baxter of Butler, right, begins his quest for a state championship Thursday in Hershey.

JUSTIN GUIDO/BUTLER EAGLE

BUTLER TWP — The face of Butler High wrestling wants to end his career there in only one place: on top. Golden Tornado senior 171-pounder Cole Baxter (41-2) begins his final quest for a state championship Thursday when he takes on Dustin Taubert (27-6) of Corry in a first-round match at Hershey's Giant Center.

"I want to finish my career

on the top of the podium," Baxter said. "This may be the last weekend I ever wear a wrestling uniform and I want to go out with a bang."

Undecided about his collegiate future, Baxter is weighing opportunities in football and wrestling. Baxter is 156-15 in his high school career — posting 38 more wins than any other Tornado wrestler — and owns team records in nearly every category.

"I get attached to every wrestler who comes through here," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "We form lifelong bonds.

"But when you have a guy like Cole, a stud you can count on for four years to go up against almost anybody and come out a winner — saying goodbye will really be tough," he added.

Baxter is a three-time WPIAL finalist and was a WPIAL champion and state placer as a sophomore.

"Looking at the draw, being in the bottom bracket may work out well for Cole," Stoner said. "The two unbeaten are in the top bracket and one will knock the other off.

"The bottom bracket has a bunch of guys with a few losses on their record."

Baxter dropped a 6-0 decision to Ethan Orr — a defending New Jersey state champion — at the King of the Mountain Tournament in December. His only other loss this year was 5-0 to unbeaten Nick

Bonaccorsi (39-0) of Bethel Park in the WPIAL finals.

If Bonaccorsi wins his first-round match Thursday, he likely will face Jim Staudenmayer (38-0) of Plymouth Whitemarsh in the second round.

Taubert lost by technical fall to Zach Towers of Meadville during the regular season. Baxter scored a 6-1 decision over Towers this year.

"Maybe we drew an opening opponent Cole has a decided advantage over," Stoner said.

Baxter isn't buying it.

"Just because A beat C doesn't mean B will beat C," he said. "This is the top 16 wrestlers in the state. Every match is tough. Every opponent can beat you.

"The fact this may be my last tournament won't change how I wrestle. I'll stay aggressive and look to score early."

A wrestler needs at least two wins in the PIAA Tournament to be a state placer.

Baxter said he knows nothing about Taubert right now, "but I'll know plenty about him before we take the mat."

If Baxter wins his first match, he likely will face Neal Grudi (31-4) of Spring Grove in the second round. Grudi faces Nick Burns (46-6) of LaSalle in the first round.

"Burns is a fourth-place qualifier from a comparatively weaker region," Stoner said.

Even if Baxter opts for football in college, he said this likely won't be the last weekend he's involved in wrestling.

"I've been wrestling since I was 5. It's been a big part of my life," he said. "I may have a kid wrestling someday or I may help coach at some level.

"If this is goodbye, I'm sure it will be a short goodbye."

Butler Eagle

Article published March 11, 2011

Baxter picks up victory

Competing in his final PIAA Class AAA Wrestling Championship, Butler's Cole Baxter wasn't looking to waste any time chasing a title.

At the Giant Center in Hershey, Baxter scored an early takedown in Thursday's 171-pound preliminary-round match against Corry's Dustin Taubert and wrapped it up with a pin at 1:22.

"Honestly, (Taubert) never looked to be a threat," said Butler coach Scott Stoner. "Cole took him down right away. The kid bailed on the takedown."

By the time Taubert, the No. 2 seed from the Northwest region, worked himself off the mat, Baxter held a 4-0 advantage before a pin shortly thereafter put him in today's quarterfinals.

Baxter (42-2), the WPIAL runner-up, will face Spring Grove's Neal Grudi (32-4), who knocked off 46-match winner Nick Burns of LaSalle.

In the Class AA finals, Grove City's Wes Phipps scored a 16-2 major decision over Pequea Valley's Mitchell Ball in the preliminary round at 171 pounds.

Phipps (27-0), the Northwest No. 1 seed, will face Wyalusing's Mike Cobb in today's quarterfinals.

Butler Eagle

Article published March 12, 2011

Crawford stands tall

Butler wrestler finds success despite injuries



Injuries couldn't stop Mike Crawford, top, from winning three section championships or from becoming one of only four Butler wrestlers to win at least 100 matches. BUTLER EAGLE FILE PHOTO

Mike Crawford has left his legacy in Butler wrestling in more ways than one. The Golden Tornado senior leaves the program as a three-time section champion. Fellow senior Cole Baxter is the only other Butler wrestler who can make that claim.

Crawford also has 118 career wins, one of only four Tornado wrestlers to record at least 100 victories. Only Baxter (156) has more.

Yet Crawford will be remembered by Butler coach Scott Stoner more for his final match — a 1-0 loss — than for any of his wins.

"I can't believe he even went out there," Stoner said. "But that's Mike. He's as gutsy a kid as I've ever coached.

"No matter what I or anyone else was going to say to him, he wasn't going to let his high school career end without being on that mat."

Crawford suffered a 1-0 loss to Erik Rayman of Norwin in the second round of the 145-pound consolation at the WPIAL meet last weekend.

In his quarterfinal match the night before, he suffered a knee injury and had to default to Greensburg Salem's Zach Voytek.

He already was wrestling with two bad shoulders. Crawford was denied a chance to repeat as a section champion his sophomore year by suffering a shoulder injury that required two off-season surgeries.

Without that injury, he likely would be Butler's lone four-time section champion.

"Injuries come with the sport. You never know when one might occur," Crawford said. "I was never hurt until my sophomore year.

"Now it seems like I've never been healthy."

Riddled by shoulder and knee injuries the past three seasons, Crawford still won section titles at 119, 140 and 145 pounds.

But the ailments denied him a chance to reach the state tournament.

"I feel a little empty because of that," Crawford said, fighting back tears. "I feel like I was robbed of something."

Stoner believes he was.

"If he stays healthy, Mike's probably right there with Cole, right around those same career numbers," Stoner said.

Stoner compared Crawford's career to that of T.J. McCance, a Butler graduate who stands third on the Tornado career win list with 103 despite several injuries.

"Those two guys just gutted it out. They overcame so much," the coach said. "To see a kid so determined to succeed and overcome everything like Mike Crawford did — I get emotional thinking about it because you don't see many kids like him anymore."

Crawford couldn't hide his emotions when discussing the last few matches of his career.

"I had to completely alter my style. With that knee not holding up, I couldn't be aggressive, I wasn't as quick or sturdy. ... I couldn't wrestle the way I wanted to wrestle," he said, his voice trailing off.

Then again, his career isn't over.

Crawford is exploring continuing in the sport at a Division II school.

"I love it too much to give it up, he admitted.

THE CRAWFORD FILE

Here is Mike Crawford's wrestling record at Butler High:

Season W L

2007-08 32 9

2008-09 29 11

2009-10 30 5

2010-11 27 6

Totals 118 31

Butler Eagle

Article published March 12, 2011

Baxter battles his way back

HERSHEY — If Butler's Cole Baxter is going to make a run through the PIAA Class AAA Wrestling Championships, he'll have to battle his way back.

Baxter dropped a 9-3 decision to Spring Grove's Neal Grudi in Friday's quarterfinals at 171 pounds, but he did earn a 6-3 decision over Bald Eagle's Jacob Taylor in the second-round consolations at the Giant Center.

Baxter (43-3) was slated to meet Hazelton Area's Chad Hoffman (34-11) in Saturday morning's third-round consolations.

In Class AA, Grove City's Wes Phipps decisioned Wyalusing's Mike Cobb 9-5 in the 171-pound quarterfinals.

Phipps (28-0) will move on the Saturday's semifinals, where he will face Northern Lehigh's Colin Hedash (32-2).

By reaching the semifinals, Phipps is guaranteed to medal and finish in the top six places.

Butler Eagle

Article published March 14, 2011

Baxter 4th in state wrestling

No one in Butler has ever enjoyed more success on a wrestling mat than Cole Baxter.

The Golden Tornado's senior 171-pounder ended his storied prep career Saturday with a fourth-place finish in the PIAA Class AAA Championships at Hershey's Giant Center.

Baxter (45-4) dropped the consolation final by a 3-0 decision to Bethel Park's Nick Bonaccorsi. It was Bonaccorsi who defeated Baxter 5-0 in their WPIAL title match a week ago.

"This match was similar to that one in a lot of ways," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "Cole couldn't get out from under him in the third period."

The two battled to a scoreless first period. Bonaccorsi — who lost his only match of the year earlier in the tournament — scored an escape and takedown in the second period.

Baxter wound up winning four matches at the PIAA event. Two were by pin, including a fall in 2:11 over Chad Hoffman of Hazelton in the consolation bracket.

The four wrestlers Baxter defeated — Dustin Taubert of Corry (fall in 1:22), Jacob Taylor of Bald Eagle (6-3 decision), Hoffman and Connor Moran of Solanco (6-3 decision) — were a combined 133-20 this season.

"He had quality opponents throughout, but that's how this state tournament is," Stoner said. "There were defending state finalists who didn't make it back."

Baxter wound up his career with a 160-18 record. He has 42 more wins than any other Tornado matman ever, was a WPIAL champion, three-time WPIAL finalist and two-time state placer.

"I'm still trying to figure out how these last four years are gone," Stoner said. "Cole became the face of our program."

"You always strive to develop others, but he is a once-in-a-lifetime kind of performer. That combination of talent and effort just doesn't come by very often."

- Grove City's Wes Phipps lost a 4-2 decision to Lewisburg's Nathaniel Brown (38-0) in the 171-pound championship bout Saturday.

Phipps (29-1) had defeated No. 2 seed Colin Hedash of Northern Lehigh 7-4 in the semifinal earlier Saturday.

The second-place medal gives Phipps three state medals in as many years. He placed fifth in 2009, then finished third last year.

Butler Eagle

Article published March 29, 2011

Coach believes in leaving it on mat



Butler junior high wrestling coach Don Geibel demonstrates a move.
DAVE PRELOSKY/BUTLER EAGLE

BUTLER TWP — There was a time when wrestling was the furthest thing from Don Geibel's mind.

Now he can't imagine his life without it.

Butler's junior high wrestling coach for the past six seasons, Geibel passes along the knowledge he has gained from 12 years experience as a wrestler and a coach.

"Wrestling is a sport that's hard to describe," said Geibel, 29. "Practices are not really fun, they are more like work. But in a match you go out on that mat and if you get your hand raised, there's no feeling like it.

"There's a warrior mentality to wrestling," he added. "I really push the team aspect of the sport, but when you're out there on the mat, it's just you and the other guy. If you lose, there are no excuses."

Butler High varsity coach Scott Stoner offered the junior high job to Geibel, a 2000 Butler graduate, before the 2005-06 season.

"I really didn't have to think about it, I jumped at the opportunity right away," said Geibel, who coached this year's team to a 12-1 record. In six seasons, his teams have an overall mark of 81-12. But wins and losses are not the only measure of Geibel's success.

"I like seeing the kids become not only better wrestlers, but better people as well," he said.

Geibel is employed by Butler Health System as a nuclear medicine technologist and administers exams such as stress tests and bone scans on a daily basis.

"We deal with people who have everything from blood clots to bone cancer to a person who is experiencing chest pains.

"The satisfying aspect of my job is helping to diagnose a person and hopefully, getting them on the path to recovery."

Before finding his place on the mat, Geibel was involved in other sports.

"I played baseball in the East Butler system through Pony League, and I tried out for the boys basketball team in eighth and ninth grade," he said. "They made me a team manager and statistician instead.

"I was a small kid, less than 100 pounds at the time," he added.

By his sophomore year, Geibel was ready to give wrestling a shot.

"A few of my friends were involved with it, and I knew that Scott was looking for a light weight the year before," he said.

Geibel's first year was a struggle as he went 2-9, with his two victories coming from forfeits.

Through hours of practice, he made a huge improvement, going 17-2 in his junior year.

"Then in my senior year, I was 31-4, placed second in the WPIAL and earned a berth in the state tournament," he said.

Geibel went on to wrestle two years at Gannon University and one at Edinboro, after switching majors.

"In those three years, I think I won 10 matches," he said. "I struggled."

The ups and downs of his wrestling career now help Geibel in his role as a coach.

"I can relate to the guys on the team no matter what level they are," he said. "I've been one of the best guys on a team and I've also been one of the worst."

"I also learned a lot from Coach Stoner," he added. "He taught me that wrestling is not a sport for the timid. It takes hard work and discipline to succeed."

The junior high program's numbers continue to grow.

"We actually had to let a few kids go at the beginning of this past season and it broke my heart," Geibel said. "We still ended up with 47 kids. It's tough to get everything done that you want to when there's that many kids."

His coaching duties take up much of his time during the season, but Geibel has received some help.

"Tim Mahoney has been my assistant coach for two years, and I have to mention Houman Firouzi. He's the lead technologist at the hospital and switches with me during the season so I can be free for practices and matches. I couldn't be as involved with the team if it wasn't for him."

When he's not coaching grapplers, Geibel enjoys playing softball and golf. He is an avid fan of the Steelers and Penguins, and is involved with St. Paul Roman Catholic in Butler.

Geibel also has close family ties. "I'm pretty lucky in that my parents, brother and the cousins who I'm really close with all live within about 10 miles of Butler," he said.

"That's one of the reasons I stayed in the area. It would take something pretty drastic for me to leave."

Don Geibel

Age: 29

Address: Butler

Family: Father, David; mother, Karen; brother, Jeff

Employment: Nuclear medicine technologist for Butler Health System

Education: Butler High School Class of 2000; bachelor's degree from Edinboro University in 2005

Interests: Family, church and sports

Quote: "I can relate to the guys on the team no matter what level they are. I've been one of the best guys on a team and I've also been one of the worst."

Butler Eagle

Article published March 24, 2011

Geibel is wrestling coach of year

BUTLER TWP — Butler Junior High wrestling coach Don Geibel was named WPIAL Junior High Coach of the Year.

The Golden Tornado were 12-1 this year and were ranked fourth in Pennsylvania. Butler won the Norwin, Brookville, Butler and North Allegheny tournaments.

Seven Tornado junior high wrestlers — Hugh O'Neil, Mason Kauffman, Jeremiah Bortmas, Kirk Gibson, Will Bortmas, Ryan Hannon and Austin George — won 20 or more matches this season.

Butler Eagle

Article published April 28, 2011

Butler's Baxter joining Kent State wrestling



Butler's Cole Baxter, securing a pin during the WPIAL Championships earlier this year, is taking his 160-17 career wrestling record to Kent State University next year. Baxter may try to play football for the Golden Flashes as well.

BUTLER EAGLE FILE PHOTO

BUTLER TWP — Ultimately, it came down to money. Torn between playing college football or wrestling, Butler senior Cole Baxter has accepted a wrestling scholarship to Kent State University in Ohio.

He opted for the Golden Flashes while turning down a wrestling offer from West Virginia and a chance to walk on

and play football at Michigan State.

"Going to Michigan State would have cost \$37,000 a year and Kent State's offer was better than West Virginia's," Baxter said. "Basically, money, I guess, made the final decision. "But I love where I'm going."

Matt Hill, a Freedom High School graduate, former Seneca Valley assistant coach and now an assistant at Kent State, heavily recruited Baxter.

Carrying a 3.8 grade point average, Baxter will be a pre-dental major. His 160 high school wins were 42 more than any other Butler wrestler ever. His 86 pins were 28 more than the next matman on the Golden Tornado's all-time list.

Baxter also led Butler's football team in overall tackles and tackles for loss last fall. The linebacker was the only Tornado gridder to make the All-Northern Seven Conference first team.

"I'm considering walking on the football team next spring," he said. "I'm 90 percent sure I'm going to do it.

"Not too many Division I athletes play two sports. I'd love to get the chance to be one of them."

For now, however, wrestling is his game. Baxter is headed to one of the more consistent mat programs in the country.

Jim Andrassy has been Kent State's wrestling coach for eight years. His teams are 85-26-1 in dual meets while finishing no worse than second in the Mid-American Conference over the past five years. The Golden Flashes have sent at least five wrestlers to the national tournament in each of the past five years and have produced five All-Americans over the past three seasons.

Redshirt junior Dustin Kilgore won the NCAA title at 197 pounds this year, becoming the first MAC wrestler since 1999 to win a national crown. He is Kent State's first-ever national wrestling champion.

"Kilgore may opt for an Olympic Development redshirt and pursue a spot on the Olympic team," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "If that happens, he would still be practicing with the team and would be one of Cole's workout partners."

Baxter is being looked at as a 184 of 197-pound wrestler by Kent. He currently weighs 190. He will likely redshirt next year.

"We've had three true freshmen start here in the past eight years," Andrassy said. "But if he's good enough to make our lineup right away, he'll be in there."

"He's going to have to make a transition here," Stoner said. "Cole is used to being the beater, not the beatee. A dethronement, so to speak, is something every college freshman wrestler has to deal with.

"He's no longer the big fish in a little sea."

Baxter recognizes the physical challenges ahead.

"I know the guys I'll be working with in the room are going to be bigger and physically stronger than me," he said. "I'm pounding the weight room now. I definitely have to get stronger."

Andrassy agreed.

"He's pretty thin right now," the coach said. "The bigger you get in this sport, the easier it gets. How hard he hits the weights will help dictate how quickly he progresses.

"We've taken a number of small high school kids, diamonds in the rough, and turned them into pretty darn good wrestlers here. We think Cole will be one of those."

Baxter will become the third Butler wrestler actively in a Division I program. Josh Pascazi is wrestling at Pitt and Chris White is at Lock Haven.

"I'm 0-0 now, starting over," Baxter said. "My goal is to become a four-time All-American. I want to be on the podium four years in a row."

Lyneil Mitchell was a Division II All-American wrestler at Gannon in 2002 and 2003 — the only Butler graduate to achieve that honor in collegiate wrestling.

"I'm proud of the fact that I was able to coach that kid," Stoner said of Baxter. "The natural talent he's always had, coupled with the coaching he'll receive at the next level, I'm anxious to see where it all takes him.

"For Cole to still love (wrestling) after all these years, knowing how physically and emotionally demanding the sport can be, I'm ecstatic about it."

BAXTER'S BOUNTY

Butler senior Cole Baxter has signed a wrestling scholarship with Kent State University. Here is where he stands in the Golden Tornado record book:

- Only three-year captain in program's history
- One of two three-time section champions in program's history (Mike Crawford)
- Only PIAA state champion, placer in program's history
- Only three-time winner of Butler's Outstanding Wrestler Award
- 1st, wins in a career with 160
- 1st, wins in a season with 45
- 1st, winning percentage in a career at 90.395 (160-17)
- 1st, winning percentage in a season at 95.745 (45-2)
- 1st, most pins in a career with 86
- 1st, most pins in a season with 26 (tied with Ian McLaughlin)
- 2nd, career 3-point near falls with 72 (1st-Alex Evanoff 103)
- 2nd, most takedowns in a career with 229 (1st-Garrett Boarts 231)

Butler  **Eagle**

2010-11

Butler Area

Wrestling

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