

Caudill still climbing

By John Enrietto Eagle Sports Editor



BUTLER TWP — In terms of wrestling, Butler senior Blake Caudill keeps reaching new heights.

And he's still climbing.

One of only six Golden Tornado wrestlers to ever qualify for the state tournament and on pace to become the second winningest matman in school history, Caudill signed a letter of intent with Eastern Michigan University this week.

He becomes only the seventh Butler wrestler to receive a Division I scholarship.

"They saw me wrestle up there a couple of years ago and the coach asked for my transcripts," Caudill said.

"When I went to visit, I loved it. It felt like the best fit for me."

A two-time section champion, Caudill takes a 93-20 career record into his senior season at Butler. He has 57 career pins and needs 26 wins to supplant Mike Crawford for the No. 2 spot on the Tornado's all-time win list. Cole Baxter, a sophomore at Kent State, won 160 matches at Butler.

Caudill did not start wrestling until seventh grade. He credits Crawford, Baxter and others like them for developing his work ethic on the mat and in the practice room.

"You don't know how I looked up to them," he said. "Those guys never stopped. They kept going and going and going, always wanting to get better, always working toward that next step."

Now Caudill is doing the same. He qualified for the state tourney last year and wants to win a state title this year. At Eastern Michigan, his goal is to become an NCAA Tournament qualifier and an All-American.

Eastern Michigan's coach is former Slippery Rock University heavyweight Derek DelPorto, who was 116-38 at SRU and was an Eastern regional champion. The Hurons were 3-2 in the Mid American Conference last year, their first winning season in the MAC since 1991.

DelPorto recruited Caudill as a 133-pounder. Caudill wrestled at 113 pounds last season.

"The toughest weights to recruit are 125, 133 and heavyweight," DelPorto said. "You don't see many 22-year-old wrestlers still weighing 133 pounds or so."

"We're planning to red-shirt Blake his freshman year. We'll have to see how his body develops from there in terms of weight class, but we train all of our wrestlers to be ready to compete for a starting spot by that second year. If a kid's not ready by then, we're not doing our job."

DelPorto said Caudill has two elements in his favor prior to his arrival at Eastern Michigan.

"He's a Pennsylvania wrestler and he's being coached by a former college wrestler," DelPorto

said. "He will benefit from both."

Like DelPorto, Butler coach Scott Stoner is a former SRU wrestler.

"Derek and I have developed a good working relationship," Stoner said. "He's got that (Eastern Michigan) program moving in the right direction.

"(Former SRU coach) Fred Powell has worked with Derek and he's worked with our kids. Derek knows the kind of seasoning our kids are getting."

Caudill will get further quality seasoning at Eastern Michigan. One of the Huron assistant coaches is Luke Smith, a four-time national qualifier at Central Michigan in the lighter weights. Smith was 117-2 and a two-time Wisconsin state champion in high school.

"He's a great coach and I know he'll take care of me. I'm going to learn a lot from him," Caudill said.

Eastern Michigan sent four wrestlers to nationals last season for the first time since the 1995-96 season. DelPorto has sent 11 wrestlers to nationals in his first six years as head coach. Carrying a 3.49 grade point average, Caudill plans to major in occupational therapy or sports science.

"It will be something in the medical field," he said.

Caudill looked at the Air Force Academy and Edinboro before deciding on Eastern Michigan. Barring injury, he will become the seventh Butler wrestler to attain 100 career victories early this season.

Plenty of Power

[By John Enrietto](#)

Eagle Sports Editor

Butler's Zack Weaver pins Gateway's Malik Shuman during the 182lb weight class.

BUTLER EAGLE FILE PHOTO



Butler has a senior wrestler headed to Eastern Michigan. Slippery Rock has one headed to Edinboro. Knoch is primed for a breakthrough season and Mars returns nine wrestlers with winning records. It all adds up to a highly competitive

season on the high school mats in 2012-13. The campaign begins with various tournaments this weekend.

"North Allegheny and Seneca Valley are back in our side of the section this year," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "That's the way it should be. We're renewing some old rivalries there."

The Golden Tornado return plenty of talent from a team that was 19-6 in dual matches last year. State qualifier Blake Caudill — who signed early with Eastern Michigan — is back for a senior season at 120 pounds that will likely conclude with him at No. 2 on Butler's all-time victory list. Caudill is 93-20 entering this year.

Other standout Tornado matmen include Corey Caudill at 126, Will Bortmas at 160, Ryan Hannon at 171 and Zach Weaver at 182.

Two of last year's seniors — Zach Reges and Nick Sutton — are wrestling in college at Gannon and Thiel, respectively. Sutton is starting at 133 pounds for the Tomcats.

"We have a lot of potential at other weight classes, including Cody Houston (27-14 as a freshman) who couldn't win in wrestle-offs last year and Damian Wheeler, a first-year senior at heavyweight," Stoner said.

"We're very athletic, but a few guys will have to step up their game if we're going to succeed in duals."

Knoch's program is in its seventh year, all under Mark McLaughlin. The Knights have a full lineup, led by Blaine Elliott (24-11 last year) at 132 pounds.

"Every year, we seem to send a couple of kids to WPIALS," McLaughlin said. "I'd like to get that number to five or six this year. We can definitely do that."

"We want to build off our winning season from last year."

Knoch was 15-12 in dual matches a year ago.

Mars was 13-6 in duals and was anchored by freshman Richie Boeh (25-5). Boeh will be at 126 pounds in this his sophomore season. Ryan McMahon was a 20-win wrestler for the Planets last year and will be at 160 this year.

Zach Maisner, an assistant coach under Ray Machusko last season, takes over the head reins. Machusko will be his assistant.

"All of our guys are coming back and that's huge for us," Maisner said. "We finished third in the section last year and made the WPIAL team playoffs. We definitely want to do that again."

Seneca Valley (4-11 last year) sent five wrestlers to the WPIAL meet and all five were underclassmen. They include Nick Zoria (23-8), Brennen O'Shea (13-8), Austin Leon (22-9), Tyler Schillero (15-12) and Jacob Eaton (10-20).

"We're gaining experience and that's important," second-year Raider coach Kevin Wildrick said. "Our guys who went to WPIALs last year got over the hump that way. The nervousness of being at such a big tournament will be gone now. They've already been there."

Tyler Allen is in his third year at Slippery Rock and has some anchors in heavyweight Forrest Christmann (37-4, 22 pins, signed early with Edinboro), Dave Huselton (27-5) at 113 and Tim Kerr (20-12) at 195.

The Rockets were only 5-9 in duals last season. They lost 30-win wrestler Gordon Bieber, now starting at 125 pounds for Waynesburg University.

"We're still a young team, but we've got some strong individuals," Allen said. "Overall, we've got a group of hard-working athletes who are definitely capable of making good and building up this program."

Marty Ruley is in his 35th year at Grove City and loses Wes Phipps, a state champion who is now at Penn State. The Eagles bring back four regional qualifiers in Kenny Bable at 126, Trey Maher at 145, Chet Simoni at 152 and Luke Walter at 132.

"We've got some inexperience, but we're loaded in the seventh- and eighth-grade classes," Ruley said. "The current group has a good work ethic and I think we'll hold our own."

Summit Academy has a new team annually and veteran coach John McCloud has three matmen — Trent Maffei at 152, Charles Wilbonger at 170 and Zach Aquilina at 125 — who "have some knowledge of wrestling."

McCloud expects to send a few wrestlers past the sectional meet, however.

"The potential is there, but we have to stay injury-free," he said.

Prospective Lineup

106-Matt Stanaker (Fr.); 113-Conor Foust (So.) 25-16; 120-Blake Caudill (Sr.) 35-6; 126-Korey Caudill (Sr.) 35-10; 132-Cody Houston (Jr.) 27-14; 138-Xavier Bennett (Sr.) 2-10; 145-Jeremiah Bortmas (So.) 7-14; 152-David Slomers (Jr.), Zach Schultz (Sr.), Grant Ferrari (Sr.) 2-3, Cyle Covert (Jr.) or Ben Hassler (Jr.); 160-Will Bortmas (Jr.) 27-17, 170-Ryan Hannon (Jr.) 26-11; 182-Zach Weaver (Sr.) 34-10, Nick Gibson (Sr.) 14-17 or Zach Raible (Jr.) 1-3; 195-Same as 182; 220-J.D. Bojanac (So.); HWT-Damian Wheeler (Sr.)

Butler Eagle

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Foust, Hannon pace Butler wrestling to 1st

Butler High's Connor Foust (113 pounds) and Ryan Hannon (182) both went 3-0 and won the championship of their respective weight classes over the weekend to help the Golden Tornado place first out of 25 teams at the Chartiers-Houston Wrestling Invitational.

Blake Caudill earned a third-place finish at 120 pounds.

Fourth-place performances came from Korey Caudill (126), Xavier Bennett (138), Zach Weaver (195) and Damian Wheeler (HWT). Cody Houston was fifth at 132 pounds.

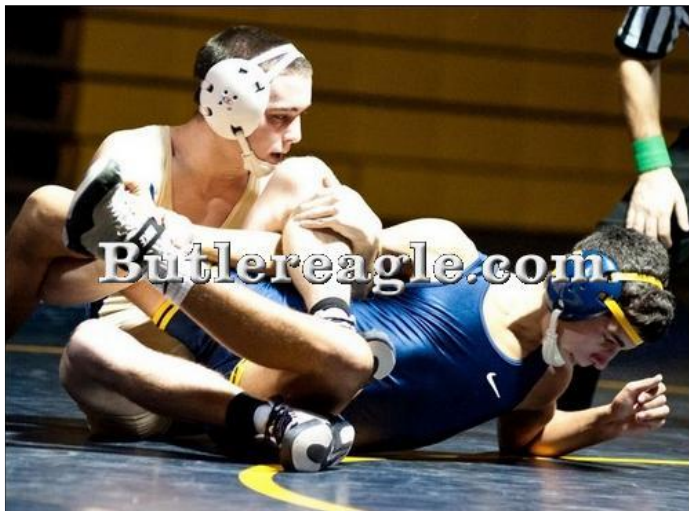
Though they did not place, solid efforts were turned in by David Slomers (152), Will Bortmas (160) and Zach Raible (170).

Last season the Golden Tornado placed second to Peters Township by ½ point, but turned the tables winning the 25 team tournament this season by that very same margin. Butler edged AA top 5 ranked South Fayette 183points to 182.5.

Butler will open its dual-match slate Wednesday at Mars. The Golden Tornado's first home match is Dec. 19 against Pine-Richland.

Golden effort

By John Enrietto Eagle Sports Editor



Butler's Korey Caudill attempts to lock up Mars' Richie Boeh in the 126 weight Class at Mars High School.

STEVEN DALTON/SPECIAL TO THE EAGLE

ADAMS TWP — Talk about riding momentum.

Butler's wrestling team feasted off it Wednesday night while posting a 62-9 dual match victory at Mars in a mutual section opener.

The Golden Tornado produced six pins and a technical fall while building a 62-0 lead on the Planets. Mars avoided the shutout by getting wins from seniors Andy Selker

and Ryan McMahon in the night's final two matches.

"Those wins were huge for us," Mars coach Zach Maisner said. "When you're down 53-0 or whatever, the team is going to feel down. Those guys showed they're capable of picking us back up.

"Butler is a terrific program that puts a good team on the mat every year. This is no exception."

The Tornado won the 25-team Chartiers-Houston tournament last weekend, edging runner-up South Park by half a point, before venturing to Mars.

"Our kids are excited right now and it showed tonight," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "We were aggressive in most cases and I'm particularly pleased with how our inexperienced kids did in the upper weight classes."

Zach Raible at 170 pounds, J.D. Boganac at 220 and Damian Wheeler at heavyweight — none of whom were in the Tornado lineup a year ago — won by pin. Also gaining pins for Butler were Cody Houston at 132, Jeremiah Bortmas at 145 and Zach Weaver at 195.

Blake Caudill won via technical fall midway through the second period at 120.

"J.D. is pitting in a lot of work and we coaches have been pleasantly surprised by Damian Wheeler's athleticism," Stoner said. "He's been a wrestler for all of 17 days and we only have him for this year, but we're excited about what he can bring to this team.

"Cody Houston was a starter for us at 106 two years ago and we expect him to have a nice year at one of the middle weights. We've got 33 kids on the roster, but there's not a ton of depth, so we need to stay healthy."

The Tornado won the two most competitive matches of the night as well. Ryan Hannon snapped a 2-2 tie with a takedown of Nathan Bair in their 182-pound match with one second left in the second period. He secured an early escape in the third for a 5-2 decision.

Xavier Bennett fell behind the Planets' Chris Lorch 6-2 in the second period at 138, but rallied

with a pair of takedowns and a reversal to get back in the match. He claimed a 10-8 decision by taking down Lorch with 20 seconds left.

"It was good for Xavier to prove to himself he's got the skill set to bounce back from an early deficit," Stoner said.

Selker had Mars' lone pin at 152, rallying from a 4-1 deficit to put David Slomers to the mat 42 seconds into the second period.

McMahon won a 6-0 decision for Mars at 160 pounds.

"We've got a lot of work to do and we have to do a better job of thinking on the mat," Maisner said. "But we'll learn from this.

"We videotape every match. We'll break it down, analyze it, then drill hard in the room and correct mistakes."

Butler hosts the Doc Phillips Junior Varsity Tournament at 10 a.m. Saturday, then hosts Pine-Richland Dec. 19. Mars travels to Peters Township Friday night.

The Planets honored their youth wrestlers before Wednesday's match. Mars has 48 kids ages 5-12 in the program, now in its 20th year.

Butler 62, Mars 9

(match started at 170 pounds)

106-Max Stalnaker (B) by forfeit; 113-Conor Foust (B) by forfeit; 120- Blake Caudill (B) tech. fall (2.53) over Jake Snyder, 18-3; 126-Korey Caudill (B) dec. Richie Boeh, 9-2; 132-Cody Houston (B) pinned Drew Schultheis, 2:45; 138-Xavier Bennett (B) dec. Chris Lorch, 10-8; 145-Jeremiah Bortmas (B) pinned Ryan Barnes, 2:43; 152-Andy Selker (M) pinned David Slomers, 2:42; 160-Ryan McMahon (M) dec. Will Bortmas, 6-0; 170-Zach Raible (B) pinned Steve Crawford, 3:41; 182-Ryan Hannon (B) dec. Nathan Bair, 5-2; 195-Zach Weaver (B) pinned Jeremy Hughes, 1:01; 220-J.D. Bojanac (B) pinned Johan VanWyke, 4:31; HWT-Damian Wheeler (B) pinned Trey Turnblazer, 4:09

North Xtra:

Butler wrestling turns tables, wins title

December 13, 2012 12:06 am

By Ken Wunderley / Tri-State Sports & News Service

The Butler Area High School wrestling team knows what it feels like to lose a tournament team title by the smallest of margins.

Now the Golden Tornado knows what it feels like to win a team title by the smallest margin.

Last season, Peters Township outscored Butler, 183-182.5, to win the Chartiers-Houston tournament title on the opening weekend of the season.

A similar scenario occurred this past weekend at the same tournament, when five points separated the top three finishers. This time, Butler came out on top with a total of 185.5 points. South Fayette finished second with 185 and Peters Township was third with 180.5.

"It's kind of weird that we would lose by a half-point last year and then win by the same margin this year," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "It's even stranger when you consider the fact that last year's team came into the season with much more experience. This year, we have so many kids in the lineup who are first-year starters."

With that in mind, Stoner was quite surprised to hear that his squad was in first place by 3.5 points heading into the medal round.

"Our performance in the consolation semifinals and consolation finals were the difference," Stoner said. "We won five of six bouts in the consolation semifinals."

Butler won only two of six matches in the consolation finals, but Stoner felt one of those winners gave the Golden Tornado the two points that clinched the team title.

"I always stress to the kids the importance of bonus points," said Stoner, referring to the fact that teams can earn bonus points for major decisions, technical falls and falls. "Cody Houston came up with a pin in the fifth-place match at 132 pounds. That gave us two team points.

"Cody had a comfortable lead and could have cruised to a victory, but he kept pushing the pace. He mentally broke the Chartiers Valley kid [Mark Tharp] and pinned him in the third period."

Houston was one of eight Butler wrestlers to finish among the top six in their weight classes.

The Golden Tornado had two individual champions, Connor Foust and Ryan Hannon. Foust won the 113-pound weight class title with a 2-0 victory against South Fayette's Kevin Chaussard. Hannon claimed the 182-pound title with a 4-3 win against Moon Area's Patrick Barcaskey.

"Hannon didn't wrestle in this tournament last year, because he got beat out by a teammate in a wrestle-off," Stoner said. "We had hoped to have him at 170 over the weekend, but his weight-loss plan didn't allow him to drop that much. The same was true for Zach Weaver, so we bumped both up one weight class."

Weaver wrestled in the 195-pound weight class and placed fourth. He lost in the consolation final to South Fayette's Zach Walker, 6-0.

"Both Hannon and Weaver will be able to move down [one weight class] when we get the 2-pound weight allowance on Dec. 25," Stoner said.

Blake Caudill, Korey Caudill, Xavier Bennett and Damian Wheeler joined Weaver in the consolation finals for third place. Blake Caudill finished third at 120 when Beth-Center's Zach Swarrow defaulted. Caudill's only loss came in the semifinals to South Fayette's Seth Carr, the tournament champion.

Korey Caudill placed fourth at 126 after a 5-3 loss to South Side Beaver's Nathan Reckner. Bennett finished fourth at 138 after a pair of losses to Elizabeth Forward's Jake Terrick. Wheeler was fourth at heavyweight after a pair of 1-0 losses.

"Wheeler has had only three weeks of wrestling," Stoner said. "He lost, 1-0, in the first round to the eventual champion [Southmoreland's Jake Beistel], then came back to place fourth. His other loss was to Peters Township's Lukas Cervenak, in the consolation final. He's a gentle giant who doesn't have any bad habits."

Stoner was also impressed with the performances of Zach Raible and David Slomers, a pair of juniors.

"Raible had a 4-2 record and three pins at 170," Butler said. "Slomers was 3-2 with a pair of pins."

Fast falls

By John Enrietto Eagle Sports Editor



Butler Senior Blake Caudill recorded one of seven falls on the night as Butler cruised to a 58-10 section victory over Pine Richland.

BUTLER TWP — Butler's varsity wrestling team made quick work of Pine-Richland Wednesday night. Literally. Six of the seven Golden Tornado pins occurred in the first

period of a 58-10 section dual match victory in the Intermediate High School gym.

Blake Caudill at 120 pounds, Jeremiah Bortmas at 145, David Slomers at 152, Ryan Hannon at 182, Zach Weaver at 195 and Alex White at 220 all had first-period pins for Butler (2-0). Bortmas had the quickest fall at 45 seconds.

Connor Foust pinned his man at 113 pounds just 34 seconds into the second period.

"It's good to see those guys come out and be all business. There was no lollygagging around," Tornado coach Scott Stoner said. "At the same time, I'd like to see guys demonstrate a few different takedown maneuvers before putting an opponent away.

"I always look at how many takedowns we had compared to how many times we were taken down. That's the important aspect that goes beyond the final score."

Despite the lopsided loss, Pine-Richland coach Steve Joseph thought his team wrestled better than it did in a one-point loss to Knoch last week.

"That's how good a team I think Butler has," Joseph said. "We actually had a better showing tonight.

"The kids who gave up the early pins tonight were first or second-year wrestlers for us. They'll get better with time."

Two Tornado wrestlers — Foust and Hannon — stayed perfect on the season at 5-0. Weaver recorded his sixth pin in as many wins this season at 195.

"Zach sat behind Cole Baxter for a year, then came on the mat last season and recorded 26 pins," Stoner said. "He has the confidence and ability to go through people."

Four newcomers to Butler's lineup this season continue to shine. Cody Houston improved to 5-2 at 132 pounds by posting a majority decision. Slomers had his pin at 152 to improve to 4-3 while Zach Raible moved to 6-2 on the year with a 6-5 decision of Keegan Harris at 170

pounds.

Raible took down Harris with 20 seconds left in the match to secure the victory.

"Zach does not have natural athleticism, so he has to work hard for everything he gets," Stoner said. "Some of his wins may be ugly like this one, but he scrapped his way through and wound up with one point more than the other guy."

Butler's Damian Wheeler lost a 5-3 decision to Patrick Kline at heavyweight, but is still 5-2 on the year. Wheeler gave up his first two takedowns of the season.

"I'm very surprised at how well our newcomers are doing so early in the year," Stoner said.

"A lot of that credit belongs to Coach (Fred) Powell. He drills these kids and works with them every day to get better."

One of the Rams' better wrestlers, David Kelly, dropped a 7-0 decision to Korey Caudill at 126 pounds.

"We've only wrestled two matches so far and David's faced two experienced, high-caliber seniors on those nights," Joseph said. "I'm sure he's going to do fine."

"Korey won every scramble against that kid and Kelly's not a bad wrestler," Stoner said.

Butler's Xavier Bennett had a 14-4 lead on Matt Graf at 138 pounds when the latter could not continue due to injury early in the third period.

The Tornado will compete in the 36-team Southmoreland Holiday Classic Tournament Dec. 28-29.

Butler 58, Pine-Richland 10

(Match started at 106 pounds)

106-Connor Renkey (P-R) dec. Max Stalnaker, 8-0; 113-Connor Foust (B) pinned Bryce DeLeon, 2:34; 120-Blake Caudill (B) pinned Ryan Baer, 1:40; 126-Korey Caudill (B) dec. David Kelly, 7-0; 132-Cody Houston (B) dec. Dillon Florentine, 13-2; 138-Xavier Bennett (B) by injury default over Matt Graf, 4:32; 145-Jeremiah Bortmas (B) pinned Blake Watson, :45; 152-David Slomers (B) pinned Mike Geyer, 1:33; 160-Brendan Burnham (P-R) dec. Will Bortmas, 9-2; 170-Zach Raible (B) dec. Keegan Harris, 6-5; 182-Ryan Hannon (B) pinned Sam Kyle, 1:46; 195-Zach Weaver (B) pinned David Rambacher, :52; 220-Alex White (B) pinned Luke Krebs, 1:00; Hwt.-Patrick Kline (P-R) dec. Damian Wheeler, 5-3

Butler Eagle

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Butler claims Southmoreland tourney crown

Butler's Ryan Hannon and Slippery Rock's Forrest Christmann each captured individual championships in their respective weight classes on Saturday at the Southmoreland Holiday Wrestling Classic.

Butler won the 34-team tournament with a total of 193 points, finishing well ahead of second-place Mt. Pleasant's 148 points.

At 170 pounds, Hannon had a first-round bye, then pinned West Greene's Dalton Wildman at 1:50, earned a 6-4 decision over Meyersdale's Billy Dunbar and 4-2 against Forest Hills' Zach Pinkas, the latter in the semifinals.

Hannon captured a 5-1 decision over Gateway's Austin Davidson in the championship.

For Christmann, the top seed at 285 pounds, a first-round bye was followed by first-period pins over Burrell's Jimmy Reedy (at 1:22) and Meyersdale's Justin Dunmyer (:45), before a 3-1 decision over Pine-Richland's Pat Kline sent him to the finals.

Christmann scored a 5-0 decision over Southmoreland's Jake Beistel to claim the title.

Butler had four other wrestlers reach the consolation finals.

Blake Caudill (120) earned an 11-2 major decision over Valley's Josiah Hughes to earn third place. Zach Weaver (182), Korey Caudill (126) and Cody Houston (132) claimed fourth-place finishes.

Mars finished 21st in the team standings, Slippery Rock 22nd, Grove City 26th and Knoch 29th in the 34-team event.

Southmoreland Holiday

Wrestling Classic Place Winners

- 113 — Conner Foust (Butler), sixth
- 120 — Blake Caudill (Butler), third;
- 126 — Korey Caudill (Butler), fourth
- 132 — Cody Houston (Butler), fourth;
- 152 — Dave Slomers (Butler), sixth
- 160 — Will Bortmas (Butler), 5th
- 170 — Ryan Hannon (Butler), first
- 182 — Zach Weaver (Butler), fourth

Butler Eagle

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Finishing with falls

By John Enrietto Eagle Sports Editor



Butler's Ryan Hannon takes control against Knoch's Ben Nowicki in their 170-pound match Wednesday night. Hannon remained undefeated on the season with an 11-2 decision and the Golden Tornado wrestling team handled Knoch, 68-6. Steven Dietz/Special to the Eagle

BUTLER TWP — Blake Caudill enjoyed watching his Butler teammates get on a roll Wednesday night.

Golden Tornado Wrestling Coach Scott Stoner is hopeful his senior 100-win wrestler is getting on one himself following Butler's 68-6 dual match win over Knoch.

Caudill (11-3 this year, 104-23 in his career) scored one of eight Butler pins against the Knights, putting his opponent's shoulders to the mat 52 seconds into the middle period.

"What I liked about Blake's match was he got a few takedowns before the pin and worked on some things," Stoner said. "He's faced three state-ranked wrestlers this season and lost to them all.

"That can work on a kid's psyche, shake his confidence a bit. But Blake looked good tonight." Also earning pins for the Tornado (3-1) were Max Stalnaker at 106 pounds, Xavier Bennett at 138, David Slomers at 152, Zach Weaver at 182, Alex White at 195, Nick Gibson at 220 and Damian Wheeler at heavyweight.

Ryan Hannon stayed unbeaten (11-0) at 170 pounds with an 11-2 major decision over Knoch's Ben Nowicki (11-5).

"Pennsylvania high school wrestling is so good that it's tough to have a night with this many pins," Caudill said. "It was fun watching so many teammates finish off moves."

Earlier this season, Caudill became the seventh Golden Tornado wrestler to reach 100 wins. He needs 15 more wins to pass Mike Crawford for the No. 2 spot on Butler's all-time list behind Cole Baxter (160).

"There's a T-shirt with all of the 100-win wrestlers' names on it and it's nice to see my name on that shirt," Caudill said. "I just want to keep climbing and make a mark in Butler wrestling, WPIAL wrestling and state wrestling."

Of Knoch's 12 wrestlers Wednesday, seven were freshmen or sophomores.

"We had some positives tonight," Knights coach Mark McLaughlin said. "We wrestled well on

our feet. We were aggressive and got takedowns at 152, 195 and 220 pounds.

"On the mat, we get caught out of position because of our inexperience ... You can't give up pins to a quality team like that one (Butler)."

Butler's David Slomers trailed Trevor Hilliard 9-2 in the second period before putting him on his back for a pin with 36 seconds left in the frame.

The Knights (1-3) did win the closest match of the night as Blaine Elliott (11-3) rallied to decision Cody Houston, 6-4, at 132 pounds. Elliott trailed 4-2 after two periods.

"Blaine led Cody 4-2 with eight seconds left in their match at the Southmoreland Tournament before giving up a reversal and back points at the buzzer," McLaughlin said. "Tonight, he finished."

Butler did as well.

"You have to wrestle a complete match, all the way through, and we did that tonight for the most part," Stoner said.

While Knoch hosts Mars next Wednesday, Butler travels to Connellsville for a dual match tonight. The Falcons are among the top three ranked teams in the WPIAL.

"That will be a challenge," Stoner said. "Connellsville kids wrestle aggressively and they punish guys for their mistakes. We have to be on our game."

Butler 68, Knoch 6

(Match started at 152 pounds)

106-Max Stalnaker (B) pinned John Emminger, :53; 113-Connor Foust (B) by forfeit; 120-Blake Caudill (B) pinned Jarrett Rosencrance, 2:52; 126-Korey Caudill (B) by forfeit; 132-Blaine Elliott (K) dec. Cody Houston, 6-4; 138-Xavier Bennett (B) pinned Brandon Yobst, 4:32; 145-Jeremiah Bortmas (B) dec. Matt Steinmiller, 10-1; 152-David Slomers (B) pinned Trevor Hilliard, 3:24; 160-Tyler Hlebiczki (K) dec. Zach Raible, 7-2; 170-Ryan Hannon (B) dec. Ben Nowicki, 11-2; 182-Zach Weaver (B) pinned Dalton Ashton, 1:08; 195-Alex White (B) pinned Bailey Savage, 2:38; 220-Nick Gibson (B) pinned Brian Mowry, 4:54; Hwt.-Damian Wheeler (B) pinned Kevin Kidd, 1:10

Butler Eagle

Article published January 4, 2013

Tornado wrestlers fall short

By John Enrietto Eagle Sports Editor

WEXFORD — North Allegheny weathered the storm — then stormed past Butler. The host Tigers (6-2, 3-0) took control of Class AAA Section 3-A Thursday night with a 39-25 dual wrestling match victory over the Golden Tornado (2-1).

"This was disappointing," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "I know we were heavy underdogs, but the score was within reach for us.

"We didn't reach out and grab it. We laid back too much and you can't do that in this sport and expect to win."

Butler trailed 21-6 before successive pins by Korey Caudill at 126 pounds and Cody Houston at 132, followed by a major decision from Xavier Bennett at 138, gave the Tornado a 22-21 lead with five matches remaining.

Bennett narrowly missed a third straight pin for Butler, keeping Blynn Shideler's back to the mat for several seconds in the second period.

"Getting through some of those middle weights was going to be tough for us," North Allegheny coach Jamie Kyriazis said. "I knew things could get pretty tight there.

"It was a matter of weathering the storm and taking control of the dual when we had the chance."

With 160-pounder Will Bortmas sidelined with a concussion, Stoner had to juggle his lineup once his team got the lead. That left junior Zach Shultz competing in his first varsity match of the season against once-beaten Jesse Rodgers at 145.

Rodgers secured a pin midway through the second period and the Tigers never trailed again. Vincent Leschak nipped Jeremish Bortmas, 4-3, at 152 and Ben Schweiger pinned David Slomers in the first period at 160. That gave the Tigers a 36-22 lead with two matches left and clinched the victory.

"Schweiger, Alex DeCiantis and a couple other guys in our lineup are just getting back from football," Kyriazis said. "I wasn't sure how they'd do tonight, but they came up big when we needed them."

Damian Wheeler pinned NA heavyweight Dan Watson (9-2) only 1:19 into their match.

Wheeler improved to 9-5 with eight pins as a first-year wrestler. Ryan Hannon improved to 10-0 for Butler by winning a 6-2 decision at 170.

"Dan made a mistake and that kid made him pay for it," Kyriazis said of Wheeler. "It was an aggressive move."

But the Tornado needed more of them.

"The aggressiveness and intensity just weren't there tonight," Stoner said. "It's OK to make a mistake, but we should be going 100 miles an hour when we make it.

"We didn't deserve to win tonight."

Butler wrestling, now in its 22nd season, has yet to defeat North Allegheny in varsity dual competition.

The Tornado are off this weekend before hosting Knoch Wednesday night.

North Allegheny 39, Butler 25

(Match started at 195 pounds)

106-Scott Stossel (NA) pinned Max Stalnaker, :23; 113-Connor D'Amato (NA) dec. Connor Foust, 3-0; 120-Dom Forys (NA) dec. Blake Caudill, 5-2; 126-Korey Caudill (B) pinned Sal Peluso, 3:27; 132-Cody Houston (B) pinned Ben Sipple, 3:19; 138-Xavier Bennett (B) dec. Blynn Shideler, 17-8; 145-Jesse Rodgers (NA) pinned Zach Shultz, 3:45; 152-Vincent Leschak (NA) dec. Jeremiah Bortmas, 4-3; 160-Ben Schweiger (NA) pinned David Slomers, 1:25; 170-Ryan Hannon (B) dec. Clay Byerly, 6-2; 182-Zach Smith (NA) dec. Zach Weaver, 4-2; 195-Alex DeCiantis (NA) tech. fall over Alex White, 5:05 (23-8); 220-Layne Skundrich (NA) dec. Nick Gibson, 11-3; Hwt.-Damian Wheeler (B) pinned Dan Watson, 1:19

Wrestling

Connellsville 38, Butler 21 — Jeremiah Bortmas (145) and Zach Weaver (182) recorded pins in this road match against the Falcons.

"We wanted to get top-level competition," said Butler coach Scott Stoner. "Even though we wrestle North Allegheny, we wanted to face a team that's very aggressive, so we came down here."

Blake Caudill (120), Korey Caudill (126) and Ryan Hannon (170) won decisions for the Tornado (3-2), who will take part in Saturday's South Side Duals before returning to dual match action Wednesday at Seneca Valley.

Connellsville 38, Butler 21

(Match started at heavyweight)

106-Tyler Kenney (C) won tech fall over Max Stalnaker, 22-7(4:27); 113-Daniel Leonard (C) pinned Connor Foust, 1:23; 120-Blake Caudill (B) dec. Ryan Burkholder, 2-0; 126-Korey Caudill (B) dec. Chase Cramer, 4-0; 132-Bryce Butler (C) dec. Cody Houston, 11-5; 138-Ethan Kenney (C) dec. Xavier Bennett, 5-2; 145-Jeremiah Bortmas (B) pinned Tyler Steele, 3:06; 152-Dale Provence (C) pinned Dave Slomers, :57; 160-Tommy Provence (C) pinned Zach Raible, 4:44; 170-Ryan Hannon (B) dec. Andy Cecil, 6-1; 182-Zach Weaver (B) pinned Frank Cavalier, :54; 195-Max Butler (C) dec. Nick Gibson, 8-6; 220-Dylan Miller (C) dec. Alex White, 1-0; Hwt.-Gunnar Lynch (C) dec. Damian Wheeler, 2-1

Butler wrestling goes 5-0 at duals

Six Butler High wrestlers went 5-0 to lead the Golden Tornado to a first-place finish at the 10-team South Side Duals on Saturday.

Conner Foust (112 pounds), Blake Caudill (120), Korey Caudill (126), Cody Houston (132), Zach Weaver (182) and Nick Gibson (195) each won all five of their matches.

Houston's effort included five pins, while Weaver tallied four pins.

As a team, Butler went 5-0. The victories came against Beaver (83-0), Ambridge (74-3), Shadyside, Ohio (58-21), Hopewell (44-30) and Greenville (39-25).

"We became more aggressive in Thursday's match against Connellsville (a 38-21 loss)," said Butler coach Scott Stoner. "To see that carry through the weekend is a really good sign."

Following are Butler's wrestlers who managed winning records at the South Side Duals.

106-Max Stalnaker (3-2)

112-Conner Foust (5-0)

120-Blake Caudill (5-0)

126-Korey Caudill (5-0)

132-Cody Houston (5-0)

138-Xavier Bennett (4-0)

145-Jeremiah Bortmas (3-2)

170-Ryan Hannon (3-2)

182-Zach Weaver (5-0)

195-Nick Gibson (5-0)

220-Alex White (4-1)

Butler Eagle

Butler scores 3 timely pins, defeats Seneca Valley, 39-19



By Sam Tallarico

Eagle Staff Writer Article published
January 17, 2013

Butler's Xavier Bennett battles with Seneca Valley's Brennan O'Shea in the 138lb weight class at Seneca Valley. STEVEN DIETZ/SPECIAL TO THE EAGLE

JACKSON TWP — In a match full of decisions, pins can carry you a long way. The Butler wrestling team used consecutive pins by Ryan Hannon, Zach Weaver and Nick Gibson to turn a three-point deficit into a 15-point lead and went on to post a 39-19 victory over host Seneca Valley Wednesday.

Butler finished with four pins to the Raiders' one.

"To a point, we pride ourselves on not giving up the bonus points," Seneca Valley coach Kevin Wildrick said. "Pins are hard to come back from."

With the match starting at 132, Butler coach Scott Stoner knew the Golden Tornado (9-2) would have to watch a stretch ahead and not lose any momentum.

Cody Houston started with a pin over Zain Skalos in 2:20, then Xavier Bennett picked up a 7-3 decision to stake Butler to a 9-0 lead.

The Raiders (12-4) responded with three consecutive wins in the bouts Stoner had mentioned, starting with an Austin Leon 6-2 decision at 145, then a Tyler Schillero pin and a Steven Rudolph decision over Zach Raible, 7-2, for a 12-9 Seneca Valley lead.

That's when the Tornado seized control.

Hannon (170) needed 3:49 to pin Brad Hensler, Weaver 56 seconds over Jake Eaton and Nick Gibson 4:33 over Ryan Muma to open a 27-12 advantage.

"It was important for Hannon to get that pin," Stoner said. "He's only a junior, but he's a leader. He saw us lose those three matches.

"It makes him want to go out and execute as he's been coached. He's mature enough to show the kids that this is how you do it," Stoner added.

The Raiders received a 4-3 decision by Tyler Miller (220) when he worked an escape against Alex White with two seconds remaining.

The Tornado returned the favor when, at heavyweight, Damian Wheeler worked a takedown with 15 seconds remaining to pull out a 5-4 decision.

"That was the most exciting match of the night for us," Stoner noted. "That would have been a nice run for Seneca Valley late."

The Raiders picked up their last win of the night when Ben Lynch (106) scored a 13-2 major decision over Max Stalnaker, but the Tornado closed with decisions by Conner Foust, Blake Caudill and Korey Caudill, each blanking their opponents.

"We knew we could have a chance going to the Caudills' matches," Wildrick said. "They are both great wrestlers though."

Stoner admits he likes the matches beginning at 106, then down to the heavyweight division, but in this instance, it was a nice feeling knowing the Caudills were waiting at the end.

"Blake and Korey, we were looking for pins, but it was solid knowing they were there," Stoner said.

Notes: The Raiders return to action Friday and Saturday at the Burgettstown Tournament while Butler will take part in next Wednesday's team section championship along with Hampton, Central Catholic and North Allegheny.

Butler 39, Seneca Valley 19

(Match started at 132 pounds)

106-Ben Lynch (SV) major dec. over Max Stalnaker, 13-2; 113-Conner Foust (B) dec. Alex Lynch, 4-0; 120-Blake Caudill (B) dec. Nick Zoria, 6-0; 126-Korey Caudill (B) dec. Anthony Latess, 5-0; 132-Cody Houston (B) pinned Zain Skalos, 2:20; 138-Xavier Bennett (B) dec. Brennan O'Shea, 7-3; 145-Austin Leon (SV) dec. Jeremiah Bortmas, 6-2; 152-Tyler Schillero (SV) pinned David Slomers, :56; 160-Steven Rudolph dec. Zach Raible, 7-2; 170-Ryan Hannon (B) pinned Brad Hensler, 3:49; 182-Zach Weaver (B) pinned Jake Eaton, :56; 195-Nick Gibson (B) pinned Ryan Muma, 4:33; 220-Tyler Miller (SV) dec. Alex White, 4-3; Hwt.-Damian Wheeler (B) dec. Brady Moore, 5-4

Butler Eagle

Article published January 24, 2013

Tornado matmen bow in section semifinal

By John Enrietto Eagle Sports Editor

WEXFORD — Hampton coach Joe Bursick didn't get to choose which weight class began the Talbots' Section 3-AAA semifinal wrestling match against Butler Wednesday night at North Allegheny High School.

But he might as well have.

The match began at 145 pounds, the Talbots (11-2) won the first three bouts, opened up a 40-3 lead and wound up with a 40-30 victory.

"I would have chosen 138 or 145 to start at, for sure," Bursick said. "We're strong right through those middle weights.

"It gave us a nice jump early."

Hampton was able to build its insurmountable lead by getting a 3-2 decision over the Golden Tornado's Zach Weaver (18-6) at 182 pounds and an unexpected forfeiture at 220.

Hampton's Patrick Keyser scored a pin at 106 pounds as well.

"Those were all points I didn't see us getting," Bursick said. "No way do we figure on being up 40-3 at any point in this match."

"We didn't hold ourselves in there when we had the opportunities to," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "We knew we would pull in some big points in the lighter weights, but we didn't keep it close enough."

The Tornado won the dual's final five matches — three via pin, one by forfeit — to make the final score respectable.

Butler (10-3) then took advantage of four forfeitures to defeat Central Catholic, 42-24, to finish third in the section team event. North Allegheny defeated Central 59-10, then dominated Hampton, 54-12, to claim the section team title.

Weaver fell behind Hampton's Justin Aippersbach 3-0 in their 182-pound match, scored a reversal with 30 seconds left, but could not score afterward. The Tornado forfeited at 220 pounds because one of their wrestlers failed to make proper weight to be eligible for that match.

"We just didn't have any fire tonight," Stoner said. "We didn't compete hard. When we had to stay off our back to avoid getting pinned or giving up major points, we didn't.

"I coach because I believe in our kids and I feel like I can make a difference. It's frustrating ... I didn't see us compete at a level that I can even assess."

On a positive note for Butler, Korey Caudill (20-4) won a pair of matches at 126 pounds to become the first Tornado wrestler to hit the 20-win plateau this season.

Cody Houston (19-6) recorded his 15th pin of the season at 132, tying Weaver for the team lead.

"Cody has been our brightest star so far this year," Stoner said. "His effort has been consistent and he brings it every night after not getting on the mat last year."

Butler 170-pounder Ryan Hannon won two decisions — the latter 2-1 in overtime at 182 pounds vs. Central — to improve to 18-2 on the year.

The Tornado return to action Saturday at the Chartiers Valley Duals and will compete in the

WPIAL team tournament Tuesday against an opponent to be determined.

Section 3-AAA Semifinal

Hampton 40, Butler 30

(Match started at 145 pounds)

106-Patrick Keyster (H) pinned Max Stalnaker, 1:52; 113-Connor Foust (B) pinned Alex Orkowitz, 1:20; 120-Blake Caudill (B) pinned John Keyser, 3:55; 126-Korey Caudill (B) dec. Andrew Siford, 7-4; 132-Cody Houston (B) pinned Joe Lehman, 2:39; 138-Xavier Bennett (B) by forfeit; 145-Kevin Synan (H) dec. Jeremiah Bortmas, 11-0; 152-Zach Kocak (H) dec. David Slomers, 12-7; 160-Colin Siford (H) pinned Will Bortmas, 2:43; 170-Ryan Hannon (B) dec. Tyler Huber, 4-0; 182-Justin Aippersbach (H) dec. Zach Weaver, 3-2; 195-Jake Hart (H) pinned Alex White, 2:53; 220-Ryan Claggett (H) by forfeit; Hwt.-Noah Shulman (H) pinned Damian Wheeler, 3:45

Third-Place Match

Butler 42, Central Catholic 24

(Match started at 152 pounds)

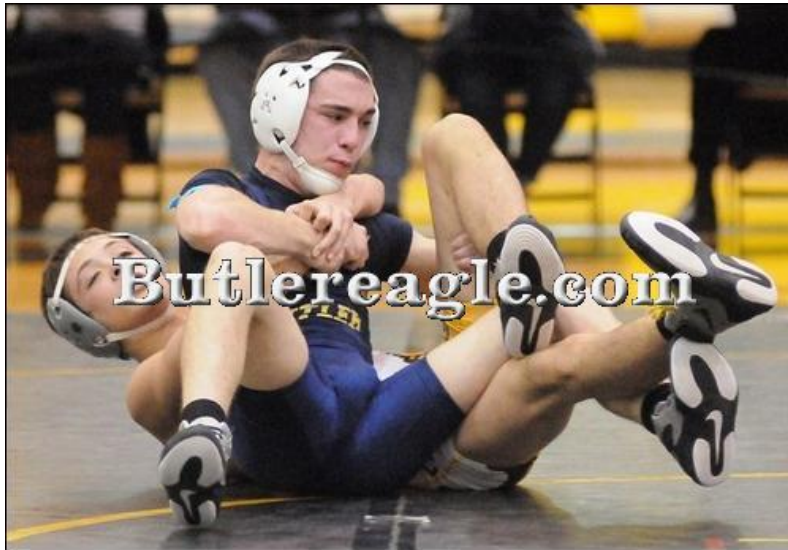
106-Max Ztlnaker (B) by forfeit; 113-Connor Foust (B) by forfeit; 120-Joseph Vinmcenzo (CC) dec. Blake Caudill, 5-0; 126-Korey Caudill (B) pinned Jayson Dean, 1:03; 132-Cody Houston (B) by forfeit; 138-Justin Alexander (CC) dec. Xavier Bennett, 6-1; 145-Chris Nuss (CC) dec. Jeremiah Bortmas, 8-2; 152-Kyle Coniker (CC) pinned Josh Boozel, 3:23; 160-John Cole (CC) dec. Zach Raible, 4-3; 170-Will Bortmas (B) by forfeit; 182-JRyan Hannon (B)_ dec. Sam Fallon, 2-1 in OT; 195-Zach Weaver (B) by forfeit; 220-Alex White (B) dec. Adisa Branch, 3-1; Hwt.-Zach DeLuca (CC) pinned Damian Wheeler, 5:33

Butler Eagle

Article published January 31, 2013

Tornado tumble Butler wrestlers fall, 36-28, in WPIAL playoffs

*By Derek Pyda
Eagle Staff Writer*



Butler's Korey Caudill rolls out of a hold against Greensburg Salem's Austin Shaw during their 126-pound match at North Allegheny Wednesday night. Caudill won the match, but Butler dropped a 36-28 team decision in the WPIAL playoffs.

WEXFORD — A third straight trip to the second round of the WPIAL Class AAA team playoffs avoided Butler's wrestlers Wednesday night. Five pins from Greensburg Salem proved too much to overcome as the Golden Tornado fell 36-28 at North Allegheny High School. The Golden Lions recorded falls at 106 pounds, 138, 160, 170 and

220. It was the 138-pound bout that got the team rolling.

Butler (15-4) had opened the match with wins via decision from Korey Caudill and Cody Houston at 126 and 132 pounds, respectively.

Trailing 6-0, the Lions sent Zach Mattucci to the mat to face Butler's Xavier Bennett.

A furious first period yielded a 6-5 lead for Mattucci, who took control by outscoring Bennett 9-1 in the second. The former finished the job with a pin 26 seconds into the final period.

"That bout was very important to us," said Greensburg Salem coach Randy Parsley. "I thought Zach could win, but to get the fall there, it was big."

It was one of three straight toss-up bouts that Butler coach Scott Stoner saw go to the Lions. "At (138, 145 and 152), those were swing matches and very pivotal toward the outcome," he said. "We weren't able to win any of them."

The match at 145 had Butler's Jeremiah Bortmas trailing Zach Sisteck 3-1 entering the final period. Bortmas managed an escape and a takedown with 1:20 left to take a 4-3 edge, but Sisteck answered with a reversal with just 27 seconds remaining on the clock and he held on for the one-point win.

Grant Ferrari also lost a close battle at 152, a 7-5 defeat to Lenny Grebeck.

"Grant has been injured for much of the season, but came back to help us win the (Chartiers Valley) tournament last weekend," said Stoner. "He had an opportunity to win tonight, but came up short."

Two more losses at 160 and 170 put the Tornado down 24-6, but the team received a major decision from Ryan Hannon and a decision courtesy of Zach Weaver to cut the Lions'

advantage to 24-13 with five bouts left.

Greensburg's Anthony Cable then pinned Nick Gibson early in the second period. It was a much-needed boost for the Lions (14-3).

"Anthony has been banged up lately, but I was expecting him to get the pin," Parsley said. Despite Damian Wheeler's pin at heavyweight that kept Butler alive — the lone fall of the night credited to the Tornado — the Lions sealed the match with Chris Eddins' pin of Max Stalnaker at 106.

"I thought Korey had a gutsy performance at 126 to start the night," said Stoner. "He's wrestling hurt right now, but maintained control to get the win. Ryan (Hannon) also looked good."

Butler wrestles at Gateway Wednesday.

Greensburg Salem 36, Butler 28

(Match started at 126 pounds)

106-Chris Eddins (GS) pinned Max Stalnaker, 3:51; 113-Connor Foust (B) dec. Lukas Mangery, 9-4; 120-Blake Caudill (B) won by forfeit; 126-Korey Caudill (B) dec. Austin Shaw, 4-2; 132-Cody Houston (B) dec. Graham Schaller, 7-5; 138-Zach Mattucci (GS) pinned Xavier Bennett, 4:34; 145-Zach Sisteck (GS) dec. Jeremiah Bortmas, 5-4; 152-Lenny Grebeck (GS) dec. Grant Ferrari, 7-5; 160-Tyler Reinhart (GS) pinned Will Bortmas, :21; 170-Zach Voytek (GS) pinned Zach Raible, 1:34; 182-Ryan Hannon (B) major dec. Dan Walters, 8-0; 195-Zach Weaver (B) dec. Raistlen Willett, 12-5; 220-Anthony Cable (GS) pinned Nick Gibson, 2:33; Hwt.-Damian Wheeler (B) pinned Eric Ahrens, 1:47

Butler Wrestling Wins Chartiers Valley Duals-

Brothers Blake (120 pounds) and Korey Caudill (126) both went 5-0 to spark Butler to its fourth win in as many tournaments this season as the Golden Tornado bested 11 other teams at the Chartiers Valley Tournament.

Blake Caudill tallied four pins, while several other wrestlers enjoyed solid outings. They included: Cody Houston (132, 4-1), Xavier Bennett (138, 3-0), Jeremiah Bortmas (145, 4-1), Will Bortmas (160, 4-1), Ryan Hannon (170, 4-1) and Zach Weaver (182, 4-1).

As a team, Butler reeled off five wins at the event, defeating Bentworth (59-10), Chartiers Valley (44-23), Freedom (75-3), Chartiers-Houston (51-28) and Norwin (34-29).

The Golden Tornado will face Greensburg Salem in the first round of the WPIAL Class AAA team tournament at 6 p.m. Wednesday at North Allegheny High School.

Butler Eagle

Article published February 13, 2013

Olympics unfair to wrestling



Jason Orfao

BY Jason Orfao

I couldn't believe what I was reading.

The sun had yet to rise and I was still shaking out the early-morning cobwebs when the headline appeared on my monitor: "IOC drops wrestling from 2020 Olympics."

Excuse me?

That's just not right.

I've never stepped foot on the wrestling mat as a competitor, but I do know the IOC has made a puzzling mistake.

Wrestling has been an Olympic tradition since ... practically forever. It was on the program at the inaugural 1896 Olympics in Athens and hasn't left since.

It was voted off in favor of modern pentathlon, a combination of fencing, horse riding, swimming, running and shooting — all of which already have individual events at the Olympics.

This has to be a joke, right?

One of the most physically demanding sports you'll ever come across, wrestlers are instilled with discipline and hard work.

You've probably never heard of Phil Moricone, but his story epitomizes the sport.

Moricone was one of my best friends in high school and on the outside he probably came off as just another teenage goof — and based on our day-to-day antics, that label was certainly justifiable.

However, in the wrestling room his dedication was unmatched. He won three New Hampshire state titles and was a two-time New England champion, becoming the most decorated grappler in my school's history.

Moricone turned himself into a Division I recruit and landed at Edinboro University with a goal of becoming an All-American, but his success on the mat was stunted by numerous injuries..

In his final NCAA Tournament, he was two matches away from clinching All-American status. After rehabbing through previous MCL tears and a neck-fusion surgery, he again tore his MCL and sprained his neck in that match. He won anyway.

One victory away from accomplishing the goal he set out for when arriving at the Edinboro campus six years earlier, it wasn't meant to be. The injuries were too much to overcome and Moricone lost a narrow decision.

Not all stories end like a fairy tale, but we can still learn from them.

The end result is rarely more important than the trials and tribulations during the course of a journey.

I've never personally come across a more resilient athlete than my friend Phil and the life lessons wrestling taught him were far more valuable than standing on an All-American podium.

He's succeeding in the real world because of the qualities he adapted while competing on the mat.

Although the IOC absurdly decided wrestling is no longer worthy of the Olympics, I hope it doesn't lead to a dip in youth participation.

It's a sport that sets an athlete up for success, on and off the mat.

Jason Orfao is a staff writer for the Butler Eagle.

Flurry of pins spark Tornado

By John Enrietto Eagle Sports Editor

BUTLER TWP — The pins came early and often for Butler Tuesday night.

Five of the Golden Tornado's first six wrestlers to hit the mat won by fall as Butler (17-4) rolled past Bethel Park, 61-9, in the first of three home dual matches this week.

Butler racked up eight pins on the evening.

"We've been working on using the arm bar around the back and trapping it underneath," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "We've struggled with it, but we picked up three or four pins in a row tonight using that move."

Max Stalnaker, Connor Foust, Korey Caudill, Cody Houston, Jeremiah Bortmas, Zach Raible, Zach Weaver and Damian Wheeler scored the pins for the Golden Tornado.

Houston pinned his opponent at 132 pounds in 51 seconds, Butler's quickest pin of the night. It was also Houston's team-leading 22nd fall of the season.

Weaver was locked in a scoreless tie with Bethel's Adam Montgomery midway through the second period when he scored a takedown and executed the arm bar maneuver for a sudden pin.

"Once you trap the guy, he has nowhere to go," Stoner said.

Butler won two matches by decision. Ryan Hannon posted a 13-3 win at 170 pounds and Alex White scored a reversal with 50 seconds left to score a 2-0 win at 220 pounds.

Blake Caudill (27-4) won by forfeit at 120 pounds. The victory was the 120th of his career, second on the Tornado's all-time list behind Cole Baxter.

"I was hoping to get Blake a match tonight. This is the stretch run before the sectional meet," Stoner said.

Bethel Park (5-7) won three matches via decision and scrambled to win two of those. The Black Hawks' Paul Dunn (21-9) scored a reversal with 1:04 left to edge Xavier Bennett, 8-7, at 138 pounds. Alex Gates (7-1) reversed Grant Ferrari with 23 seconds left for the only points in a 2-0 decision at 152.

"We didn't come to wrestle tonight," Bethel Park coach Bob Stewart said. "This was very disappointing. We didn't show what we can do at all.

"Butler is a strong team from top to bottom. We didn't respond to their aggressiveness."

Bennett's (19-9) loss kept him from becoming the Tornado's seventh 20-win wrestler this season. The six include Foust (23-7), Blake Caudill (27-4), Korey Caudill (28-4), Houston (28-7), Hannon (25-3) and Weaver (26-7).

Natge Grygo improved to 27-8 at 195 pounds for Bethel Park with a 9-4 decision of Alex White.

"Alex held his own in that march and had a nice ankle takedown late against a tough kid," Stoner said. "You look for things to build on in a match like that and that was one of them." Stewart said Bethel Park used to wrestle Butler on a fairly regular basis during the 1990's.

"We haven't seen them at all recently and their program has become stronger," he said. "It's good for our kids to wrestle kids they've never seen before, especially this close to the individual tournaments.

"I just wish we would have done better."

Butler closes out its dual match schedule by hosting West Allegheny tonight and Blackhawk on Friday night.

Butler 61, Bethel Park 9

(Match started at 106 pounds)

106-Max Stalnaker (B) pinned Theodore Gates, 3:25; 113-Connor Foust (B) pinned Michael Smith, 2:25; 120-Blake Caudill (B) by forfeit; 126-Korey Caudill (B) pinned Mike Vogel, 2:37; 132-Cody Houston (B) pinned Grant Conroy, :51; 138-Paul Dunn (BP) dec. Xavier Bennett, 8-7; 145-Jeremiah Bortmas (B) pinned Tom Kologziej, 4:58; 152-Alex Gates (BP) dec. Grant Ferrari, 2-0; 160-Zach Raible (B) pinned Bryce Carter, 5:43; 170-Ryan Hannon (B) dec. Matt Nolan, 13-3; 182-Zach Weaver (B) pinned Adam Montgomery, 3:21; 195-Nate Grygo (BP) dec. Nick Gibson, 9-4; 220-Alex White (B) dec. Sam Gercak, 2-0; Hwt.-Damian Wheeler (B) pinned Chris Pauley, 1:46

Butler Eagle

Article published February 14, 2013

Cruise control

By Sam Tallarico
Eagle Staff Writer



Butler's Xavier Bennett battles with West Allegheny's Jacob Yockel in the 138-pound weight class Wednesday night. Bennett won his match by pin and the Golden Tornado posted a 45-20 team victory. Steven Dietz/Special to the Eagle

BUTLERTWP — The pins came early — and often for the Butler wrestling team Wednesday. With the match starting at 106 pounds, the Golden Tornado won five of the first six matches

— all via pins — to build a 27-point cushion and cruise to a 45-20 victory over West Allegheny.

"Looking at the records, we knew we could roll it up early," Butler coach Scott Stoner said.

"We got to see our really young guys early," Indians coach Mike Johnson said. "Our light and middle weights got a little experience. Our experienced guys wrestled well and had some good matches."

Max Stalnaker opened the match with a pin over Mason Schaefer in 1:42 before the Indians' Ryan Cunningham countered with a 1-0 victory — on a second-period escape — over Connor Foust.

"That was the most evenly-matched bout of the night," Stoner said.

The Tornado (18-4) then reeled off pins by Blake Caudill (120), Korey Caudill (126), Cody Houston (132) and Xavier Bennett (138) to take a commanding 30-3 lead.

"Xavier wrestled a pretty good match," Stoner said. "He's had a tough go. He lost a couple in a row."

West Allegheny answered with wins in the next three bouts — decisions by Nathan Hall (who has lost just once all season) and Tim Bish, then a technical fall by Josh Bahr over Zach Raible — trimmed the deficit to 30-14.

With the Indians slowly creeping back, Ryan Hannon (170) took a slim 3-2 lead over Chandler Usenicnik into the third period and went on to post a 9-5 decision.

"Ryan was sick tonight and looked it," Stoner said. "The bottom line is, some kids will be sick, then they'll feel better and in a day or two, then they're on their backs again. (Usenicnik) did a good job and Ryan did a good job and got a win out of it."

Zach Weaver and Nick Gibson tacked on pins for the Tornado at 182 and 195, respectively, to take a 45-14 lead with two matches remaining.

The Indians picked up a pair of decisions to wrap up the meet.

Butler returns to action Friday, when it hosts Blackhawk for Senior Night.

Notes: Houston and Korey Caudill each picked up their 29th wins on the season, while Blake Caudill won his 28th, Weaver 27th, Hannon 26th and Bennett his 20th.

Butler 45, West Allegheny 20

(Match started at 106 pounds)

106-Max Stalnaker (B) pinned Mason Schaefer, 1:42; 113-Ryan Cunningham (WA) dec.

Connor Foust, 1-0; 120-Blake Caudill (B) pinned Dante Bizzarri, 2:44; 126-Korey Caudill (B) pinned Jason Dolfi, :58; 132-Cody Houston (B) pinned Joe Wagner, 3:15; 138-Xavier Bennett (B) pinned Jacob Yockel, 2:48; 145-Nathan Hall (WA) dec. Jeremiah Bortmas, 8-1; 152-Tim Bish (WA) dec. Grant Ferrari, 3-1; 160-Josh Bahr (WA) tech. fall over Zach Raible, 15-0 (3:50); 170-Ryan Hannon (B) dec. Chandler Usenicnik, 9-5; 182-Zach Weaver (B) pinned Brendan Cunningham, 1:45; 195-Nick Gibson (B) pinned Luke Seifert, 2:50; 220-Kasey Teysier (WA) dec. Alex White, 3-0; Hwt.-Shea Beaumont (WA) dec. Damian Wheeler, 3-1

Butler Eagle

Article published February 14, 2013

Pins mean wins

By John Enrietto
Eagle Sports Editor



Butler 132-pound junior Cody Houston is leading the Golden Tornado wrestling team with 23 pins this season after rarely seeing the mat as a sophomore.
Submitted Photo

BUTLER TWP — When Cody Houston didn't want to wrestle varsity, he did. When he wanted to, he couldn't.

Now Butler's 132-pound junior has settled into a productive season — and hopefully a prep career — on the mats.

"Looking back on it, all of that stuff helped me," Houston said. "I benefited from all of those experiences."

Houston is sporting a 29-7 record for the Golden Tornado this season. He leads the team with 23 pins and is second on the squad with 33 takedowns.

"I figured he was capable of a good season, but I wasn't expecting this," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "Cody's leading the team in wins and that's something I didn't see coming."

Two years ago, Houston was the Tornado's freshman 103-pounder — but not by choice.

"We had no one else at that weight class," Butler Junior High mat coach Don Geibel said. "I remember how timid Cody was about wrestling varsity.

"He wanted no part of it. His parents weren't crazy about the idea, either."

Houston doesn't deny the apprehension.

"I didn't think I was ready for it," he said. "I didn't see how it was going to help me or the team."

He was wrong on both ends.

Houston put together a 27-14 record, compiling 33 takedowns and 13 pins. He was seemingly set up for a 100-win high school career.

Then he ran into the Caudill brothers.

Houston couldn't beat out Blake Caudill at 113 pounds last season. Korey Caudill stood in his way at 120.

"There was no place for Cody to go," Stoner said.

So he sat and watched most of the varsity matches last year. Houston won the only two varsity bouts he took part in.

But the season was far from a waste.

"I went up against Blake and Korey in the (wrestling) room every day," Houston said. "They made me better. You can't help but get better when you're facing guys of that caliber."

Blake Caudill has 120 career wins while Korey has 85. They are the most productive brother act in Butler wrestling history.

"Maybe that's where his pinning ability came from, I don't know," Stoner said of Houston's pin total this season. "Cody is an athletic wrestler — probably the most athletic on the team — and he has tremendous balance.

"When he gets an opponent into position to pin him, he knows how to hold him there and finish. He's all about balance, aggressiveness and taking the right angle."

Geibel said Houston compiled "maybe six to eight pins a year" when he was on the junior high team.

And now that freshman year appears invaluable in Houston's eyes.

"I don't know where I'd be right now without it. I don't even want to think about it," he said. Houston was an avid gymnast from age 4 through fifth grade before switching over to wrestling.

"Even today, he could do back flips all the way across this gym like a cheerleader," Stoner said. "Gymnastics clearly helped him with agility that favors him on the mat."

Houston admitted that his athleticism and flexibility comes from gymnastics.

"Those years set me up for this sport," he said.

Houston's goals are to reach the third day of the WPIAL Tournament this year and win a section title as a senior next year.

North Hills senior Drew Walker is in his 132-pound weight class and defeated Houston by technical fall earlier this season.

"I held my own through the first period with him, then he tossed me around pretty good," Houston said. "Sure, I'd love another shot ... I'm just not sure I can beat him."

One thing is for certain: Cody Houston has arrived as a wrestler.

"Looking at all he's done ... He's been a pleasant surprise," Stoner said.

Butler Eagle

Article published February 16, 2013

Not pinned yet Wrestling community hopeful IOC reinstates its sport

*By Sam Tallarico
Eagle Staff Writer*



Butler senior Blake Caudill, battling West Allegheny's Dante Bizzarri here, is among numerous wrestlers and coaches throughout the world incensed by the IOC's decision to drop wrestling as an Olympic sport, effective in 2020. STEVEN DIETZ/SPECIAL TO THE EAGLE

BUTLER TWP —
While the
International

Olympic Committee is trying to ride wrestling off the mat, the wrestling community is working hard on the reversal.

On Tuesday, the IOC executive board announced that wrestling would be dropped from the 2020 Games because it had placed low in many of the 39 different criteria. It was selected instead of the frontrunner, the modern pentathlon.

Along with catching the wrestling world off-guard, it struck a nerve as well.

"You have 72 countries with wrestling," said Butler athletic director Bill Mylan, who competed at Beth-Center High School and Slippery Rock University. "I hate to put a knock on other sports, but wakeboarding and wushu?"

"It's totally absurd. Wrestling is one of the oldest sports," Mylan added.

In May, eight sports — including wrestling — will get to make their pitch in hopes of taking that extra spot open in 2020, which does not have a site.

The other sports are baseball and softball (combined), karate, squash, roller sports and sport climbing.

Wrestling has been on the docket since 1896 for the inaugural games in Greece.

"You go back to 706 B.C. There are hieroglyphics on the walls of rival tribes," said Tornado coach Scott Stoner. "It's mankind's oldest sport. The Olympics are supposed to be about competition.

"It's man versus man, country against country and non-European countries like Iran, Iraq, Hungary, Bulgaria, its many of these countries' biggest sport," Stoner added.

Marty Ruley, who is in his 35th year at the helm at Grove City High School, was definitely upset by the ruling.

"That's the only reason why I watch the Olympics," Ruley said. "The thing that bothers me is

they say wrestling doesn't have a following, but then we didn't see it on TV.

"There are countries that have three or four athletes, all in wrestling. If wrestling is gone, they won't have anything.

"This is a viable sport, the oldest sport. Some of these people don't care about tradition," Ruley added.

Stoner's assistant coach the past three seasons, Fred Powell, has seen wrestling grow not just in the United States, but on the international stage as well.

Powell has done just about everything one can do in wrestling. He won an NCAA championship (123 pounds) while at Lock Haven in 1964, coached an Olympic bronze medalist in Stan Dzedzic at Slippery Rock University and coached a year in Australia.

While coaching at Slippery Rock, Powell won 215 matches in 23 years and won three Division II Eastern Regional titles. He also started the Slippery Rock High program, which became a varsity program in 2000-01.

Powell has also been in attendance for two Olympics: 1972 in Munich and 1976 in Munich — the latter where Dzedzic won his bronze.

"I've witnessed the excitement of wrestling through fans internationally," said Powell, "with the pride of the Japanese and the intensity of Iran, the dominance of Russian wrestling for many years and finally the U.S. coming to challenge the world in freestyle wrestling.

"I coached a year in Australia and I wrestled in the world championships and I know of the climate."

"Like many, I'm overwhelmed by the decision. They want to take one sport away instead of one that already has five individual events (the pentathlon has fencing, horse riding, swimming, running and shooting).

"It's a personal thing. It's an embarrassment to the IOC, obviously for political gain," Powell added.

Stoner agrees that wrestlers worldwide will have to fight the good fight, for the future of the sport.

"With wrestling, we're so proud and we sometimes don't want to worry about the outside, but we don't sell it as well as we should," said Stoner.

"Part of my job as a coach is to promote the sport. I've been trying to promote it since I've been here in 1993. I do my part and maybe that's why we're where we are at. More of our coaches should do that," he added.

Knoch coach Mark McLaughlin agrees and looks at the demise of college programs as an example of what could continue to happen.

"Maybe this will serve as a wakeup call," McLaughlin said. "You look at Slippery Rock and Duquesne and it's gone? Why is it gone? People are not paying attention."

Two of Stoner's wrestlers, seniors Blake and Korey Caudill also see a sport they've grown to love possibly being removed from its greatest stage.

"I feel like since it's one of the oldest sports, it shouldn't be eliminated," said Blake. "There are so many positives, there's no reason to cut it.

"People have been sounding off on websites and social media, all getting behind wrestling," he added.

Said Korey, "There's really no where else to go after college. It's a heartbreaker because you're breaking kids' dreams. Wrestling, boxing and track founded the games."

Brittney Faust, who wrestled for McLaughlin and is now wrestling at Missouri Valley, sent a text to McLaughlin.

"For a long time, her aspiration was to be an Olympic wrestler," said McLaughlin. "She's

having a banner year this year and all of the sudden, this happens. The plan was for 2020." Members of FILA, the international wrestling body, will meet this weekend in Thailand to devise a strategy for global support.

"It's not a done deal as I understand it," McLaughlin said, "but, however, it is concerning. "It hits home hard here in western Pennsylvania."

Stoner acknowledges that being in this area has allowed wrestling fans to see some of the best talent in the country, including two that competed in last year's Summer Games.

"Coleman Scott of Waynesburg and Jake Herbert of North Allegheny (who is Faust's cousin) wrestled here in this little gym," Stoner noted.

Still, wrestling will get to make its case in hopes of appearing in 2020. If not, the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro might be the sport's last go-around for a while.

"I hope we get enough strength in our country and other countries to battle an ill-fated decision," Powell said.

"I feel confident they'll bring it back," said Korey Caudill. "There's so much spirit it has to come back."

Butler Dominates Gateway in Non-Section Competition

Butler 58, Gateway 12 — Max Stalnaker (106), Korey Caudill (126), Cody Houston (132), Jeremiah Bortmas (145), Ryan Hannon (170), and Zach Weaver (182) each registered pins as the Tornado rolled past the Gators.

Butler (16-4) will have three home matches next week: Tuesday against Bethel Park, Wednesday against West Allegheny and Friday (Senior Night) against Blackhawk.

Butler 58, Gateway 12

(Match started at 170 pounds)

106-Max Stalnaker (B) pinned Brandon Tumey, 1:59; 113-Connor Foust (B) won by forfeit; 120-Blake Caudill (B) won by forfeit; 126-Korey Caudill (B) pinned Ther Shulman, 2:55; 132-Cody Houston (B) pinned Justin Leone, 3:24; 138-Jaylin Key (G) dec.Xavier Bennett, 6-3; 145-Jeremiah Bortmas (B) pinned Tyler Bay, 3:24; 152-Mike Limbacher (G) dec.Grant Ferrari, 4-3; 160-Austin Davidson (G) dec. Will Bortmas, 8-2; 170-Ryan Hannon (B) pinned Malint Shulman, 1:12; 182-Zach Weaver (B) pinned Cody Talowski, 1:03; 195-Nick Gibson (B) major dec. over Dominic McKenna, 13-1; 220-Alex White (B) won by forfeit; Hwt.-Jamar Parrish (G) dec. Damian Wheeler, 9-2

Butler Eagle

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Survival games

By John Enrietto Eagle Sports Editor



Butler's Xavier Bennett, trying to break a hold against Greensburg Salem here, is one of many area wrestlers hoping to secure a berth in the WPIAL Tournament through the Section 3-AAA individual championships Saturday at Fox Chapel. Tye Cypher/Special to the Eagle

The road to the WPIAL Tournament begins Saturday.

The Section 3-AAA section tournament takes place at Fox Chapel High School with the top five placers in each weight

class earning a trip to Norwin next weekend.

"Individual talent in this section has really picked up," Butler coach Scott Stoner said. "It's not going to be easy for anyone past the one and two seeds.

"We always want to hit double digits in terms of number of kids we send to the WPIAL meet, but if you don't show up and wrestle hard Saturday, you're going to be sitting home."

Butler's Blake Caudill is the only area wrestler entering this tourney as a defending section champion. He won at 113 pounds last year and is seeded No. 2 at 120 pounds — behind Central Catholic's Vincenzo Joseph — this year.

Caudill is bidding for his third section crown Saturday. Only two Tornado wrestlers — Mike Crawford and Cole Baxter — have ever accomplished that feat.

"Blake will have some tough matches and he hasn't put together a good match against the better kids he's wrestled this year," Stoner said.

Ryan Hannon, at 170 pounds, is Butler's only No. 1 seed. Seeded No. 2 are Connor Foust at 113, Caudill at 120, Korey Caudill at 126 and Cody Houston at 132.

Seneca Valley has 145-pounder Austin Leon seeded No. 2 at 145 pounds.

"Austin's our best shot, obviously," Raiders coach Kevin Wildrick said. "We got seven kids through last year and I'm hoping to top that number this year.

"Taking five wrestlers out of a 12-wrestler bracket ,.. That's attainable for just about everyone if you go down there and compete."

Mars coach Zach Maisner said he hopes to get five wrestlers through to WPIAL competition. The Planets have a pair of No. 3 seeds in Ryan McMahon at 160 and Austin Bitzer at 195.

"Richie Boeh at 126, Andy Selker at 152, Nathan Bair at 182, I can see them advancing," Maisner said. "I think our overall team is stronger than it was a year ago, but this field is tougher.

"There are eight 20-match winners in the 106-pound bracket alone. There's going to be some quality

kids left behind.”

Knoch has never sent more than two wrestlers to the WPIAL tourney. The Knights have a pair of fourth-seeded wrestlers Saturday in Blaine Elliott at 132 pounds and Ben Nowicki at 170.

“Tyler (Hlebiczki) at 152 and Brian Mowry (195) stand an excellent chance, too,” Knoch coach Mark McLaughlin said. “Mowry is 13-13, but he’s been in every match this year except five of them.

“We’ve got a bunch of freshmen beyond those four. Injuries have hurt us this year. Our younger kids need to go down there (to Fox Chapel), experience the tournament, learn from it and build from it.”

The tournament gets under way at 9:30 a.m. The finals are slated for 6 p.m.

“I’d put the top two seeds in each weight class in our section up against anybody’s,” Stoner said.

“This should be an extremely competitive event.”

“You either advance or it’s the end of the road,” McLaughlin said. “There’s always a lot of heartbreak down there.”

SECTION 3-AAA TOURNAMENT

Area opening matches

106 pounds-Max Stalnaker (Butler) 14-14 vs. Patrick Keyser (Hampton) 17-15; Alex Lynch (Seneca Valley) 23-10 vs. Jared Rice (Fox Chapel) 25-6; Anthony DiNinno (Plum) 15-12 vs. Max Hulak (Mars) 4-11

113-Devon Klaas (North Hills) 14-11 vs. Ben Lynch (Seneca Valley) 20-10; Bryce DeLeon (Pine-Richland) 11-12 vs. Connor Foust (Butler) 24-8

120-Sal Peluso (North Allegheny) 10-15 vs. Jarrett Rosencrance (Knoch) 4-19; Ryan Baer (Pine-Richland) 8-14 vs. Nick Zoria (Seneca Valley) 24-9; Keagan Lawson (North Hills) 12-10 vs. Silas Bender (Mars) 9-8, winner vs. Blake Caudill (Butler) 29-4

126-Keith Gonzales (Pine-Richland) 3-1 vs. Jake Borland (Knoch) 4-6; Richie Boeh (Mars) 14-9 vs. Blynn Shideler (North Allegheny) 19-11; Tyler Edwards (Plum) 0-6 vs. Anthony Latess (Seneca Valley) 9-6; Korey Caudill (Butler) 30-4, bye

132-Seth Schiever (Seneca Valley) (4-12) vs. Joe Lehman (Hampton) 11-17; Austin Heintz (Shaler) 15-11 vs. Blaine Elliott (Knoch) 13-3; Josh Kunisky (Plum) 2-13 vs. Andrew Schultheis (Mars) 14-10; Cody Houston (Butler) 30-7, bye

138-David Badamo (North Hills) 6-20 vs. Brandon Yobst (Knoch) 13-14; Chris Olszewski (Hampton) 20-9 vs. Xavier Bennett (Butler) 21-9; Chris Lorch (Mars) 1-17 vs. Brennen O’Shea (Seneca Valley) 14-13

145-Tyler Cybach (Mars) 2-10 vs. Cory Mahon (Fox Chapel) 18-12; Jeremiah Bortmas (Butler) 16-13 vs. Anthony Zummo (Plum) 9-13, winner vs. Austin Leon (Seneca Valley) 24-9

152-Justin Moreno (Shaler) 7-15 vs. Andy Selker (Mars) 12-13; Grant Ferrari (Butler) 2-4 vs. Tyler Schillero (Seneca Valley) 19-9; Tyler Hlebiczki (Knoch) 15-8 vs. Justin Helfferich (North Hills) 5-16

160-Keegan Harris (Pine-Richland) 9-13 vs. Steven Rudolph (Seneca Valley) 12-16; John Cole (Central Catholic) 18-14 vs. Ryan McMahon (Mars) 16-7; Will Bortmas (Butler) 11-9 vs. Andrew Davis (Fox Chapel) 2-13

170-Ryan Hannon (Butler) 27-3, bye; Sam Kyle (Pine-Richland) 9-16 vs. Brad Hensler (Seneca Valley) 12-16; Ben Nowicki (Knoch) 21-7, bye; Tristan Houser (Fox Chapel) 16-11 vs. Alex Grosso (Mars) 5-4

182-Dalton Ashton (Knoch) 7-12 vs. Nathan Bair (Mars) 12-10; Zach Weaver (Butler) 28-7, bye; Jake Eaton (Seneca Valley) 16-14 vs. Collin Rzutkiewics (Pine-Richland) 4-10

195-Sean Stanek (Seneca Valley) 5-7 vs. Adam Novacic (Fox Chapel) 6-16; Nick Gibson (Butler) 13-10 vs. Austin Bitzer (Mars) 13-2; Brian Mowry (Knoch) 13-13 vs. Chase Hawthorne (Central Catholic) 2-16

220-Tyler Miller (Seneca Valley) 18-10 vs. Johan VanWyke (Mars) 16-5; Jake DiGuilio (Plum) 22-8 vs. Alex White (Butler) 14-10

285-Damian Wheeler (Butler) 18-16 vs. Eli Swain (North Hills) 13-15; Trey Turnblacer (Mars) 10-12 vs. Brad Abramson (Seneca Valley) 1-2

Hannon rallies for section title as Butler sends 11 to WPIALs

By John Enrietto Eagle Sports Editor



Butler's Ryan Hannon battles with North Allegheny's Clay Byerly on Saturday at Fox Chapel High School. Hannon eventually pinned Byerly to earn the WPIAL Section 3-AAA title at 170 pounds. Tye Cypher/Special to the Eagle

FOX CHAPEL — Call it living on the edge. Butler's wrestlers did a good job of that Saturday night during the Class 3-AAA Section Tournament at Fox Chapel High School.

Ryan Hannon won the Golden Tornado's lone section title despite trailing 2-1 entering the third period of his 170-pound championship match against North Allegheny's Clay Byerly. Five other Butler matmen — Xavier Bennett at 138 pounds, Will Bortmas at 160, Zach Weaver at 182, Nick Gibson at 195 and Damian Wheeler at heavyweight — extended their seasons by winning fifth-place matches to qualify for the WPIAL Tournament.

"This is the hand we're dealt with and we're going to play it," Butler coach Scott Stoner said prior to the final round.

Hannon scored the first point of his match with Byerly via a second-period escape, but was taken down with 30 seconds left in the frame. He began the third period in the top position. "I tried to turn him on his back, but it wasn't happening. I couldn't do it," Hannon said of the early seconds of the final period. "I had to let him go."

Hannon gave Byerly an escape point with 1:24 left in the match. He took him down to tie the bout with 38 seconds left, then pinned him with 13 seconds left.

"It was a risky move called a broomstick, a single-leg, reaching around the body ... it's a five-point move if you hit it," Hannon said.

"I was able to put him on his back and finish it. It felt good. I wanted that win for myself and the team."

The win was Hannon's 30th of the season, joining Tornado teammates Blake and Korey Caudill, Cody Houston and Weaver in the 30-win club this season.

Hannon had one of only two pins in the section finals. The other belonged to Dom Forys of North Allegheny, who pinned Butler's Connor Foust in the 113-pound finale.

Two other Tornado wrestlers reached the section finals, but Korey Caudill dropped an 11-3 decision to North Hills' Tyler Walker at 126 and Houston dropped a 19-9 verdict to the Indians' Drew Walker at 132.

The Walker brothers are a combined 59-5 on the season.

"Those guys are studs and Forys placed third in the state last year," Stoner said. "We had some tough draws there. Ryan's win was big, especially getting a pin in the finals. That doesn't happen often."

Butler qualified 11 wrestlers to the WPIAL tourney, which begins Thursday at Norwin. Blake Caudill placed third at 120 pounds after winning section titles the previous two years.

"That was a tough weight class this year," Stoner said. "It shows how this section keeps getting stronger."

Mars qualified four wrestlers for the WPIAL meet. All four qualifiers — Richie Boeh at 126, Ryan McMahon at 160, Austin Bitzer at 195 and Johan VanWyke at 220 — placed fourth in the section.

Two Planets, Andrew Schultheis at 132 and Trey Turnblacer at heavyweight, lost fifth-place bouts to end their campaigns. Wheeler pinned Turnblacer in 27 seconds.

Seneca Valley advanced three wrestlers, including third-place finisher Ben Lynch at 113 pounds. Twin brother Alex placed fifth at 106 and Austin Leon was fifth at 145.

The Lynch brothers have combined for 48 wins this year as freshmen.

"They're exceptional kids and they both weigh in at 106," Raiders coach Kevin Wildrick said. "One of them has to bump up to 113."

"Getting them both through will be a great experience for them. They should have great careers."

Four SV wrestlers — Nick Zoria, Anthony Latess, Tyler Schillero and Tyler Miller — lost fifth-place matches.

"With the addition of Central Catholic, our section has gotten a lot deeper," Wildrick said. "It's a grind to get through this thing."

Knoch has never qualified more than two wrestlers to the WPIAL tourney and did so again Saturday, advancing Blaine Elliott (fourth) at 132 pounds and Ben Nowicki (fifth) at 170.

Brian Mowry was involved in a 2-2 tie with Gibson in the 195 fifth-place match, but was suddenly pinned with 14 seconds left in the first period.

"He put his head down and the kid caught him," Knoch coach Mark McLaughlin said. "It was as simple as that."

"We wrestled average today, very average. And we got average results."

Section 3-AAA Finals

(Top 5 to WPIAL tourney)

Championship Finals

106-Gage Curry (North Hills) dec. Scott Stossel (North Allegheny), 11-4; 113-Dom Forys (North Allegheny) pinned Connor Foust (Butler), 2:30; 120-Vincenzo Joseph (Central Cath.) dec. Logan Heintz (Shaler), 4-3; 126-Tyler Walker (North Hills) dec. Korey Caudill (Butler), 11-3; 132-Drew Walker (North Hills) dec. Cody Houston (Butler), 19-9; 138-Jesse Rodgers (North Allegheny) dec. Justin Alexander (Central Cath.), 2-0; 145-Chris Nuss (Central Cath.) dec. Kevin Synan (Hampton), 6-4; 152-Brendan Burnham (Pine-Richland) dec. Kyle Coniker

(Central Cath.), 4-3; 160-Jonathan Avon (North Hills) dec. Ben Schweiger (North Allegheny), 5-3 in OT; 170-Ryan Hannon (Butler) pinned Clay Byerly (North Allegheny), 5:47; 182-Alex DeCiantis (North Allegheny) dec. Justin Aippersbach (Hampton), 20-7; 195-Jacob Hart (Hampton) dec. Alen Turcinhodzic (North Hills), 6-2; 220-Zach DeLuca (Central Cath.) dec. Noah Shulman (Hampton), 5-1; Hwt.-Pat Kline (Pine-Richland) dec. Tyler Lever (Fox Chapel), 10-2

Consolation Finals

106-Mike Heintz (Shaler) dec. Jared Rice (Fox Chapel), 4-2; 113-Ben Lynch (Seneca Valley) dec. Alex Orkwis (Hampton), 13-0; 120-Blake Caudill (Butler) dec. Tommy Zummo (Plum), 6-5; 126-Jordan McGonigle (Shaler) dec. Richie Boeh (Mars), 6-2; 132-Austin Heintz (Shaler) dec. Blaine Elliott (Knoch), 7-2; 138-Eric Green (Plum) dec. Chris Olszewski (Hampton), 3-2; 145-Vince Leschak (North Allegheny) dec. David Tuzikow (North Hills), 5-3; 152-Zach Kocak (Hampton) dec. Zach Martin (Plum), 3-2; 160-Collin Siford (Hampton) dec. Ryan McMahon (Mars), 5-1; 170-Brandon Olszewski (Hampton) dec. Elliot King (North Hills), 10-1; 182-Nathan Turchick (Plum) pinned Rich Giovanetti (Fox Chapel), 2:36; 195-Zach Smith (North Allegheny) pinned Austin Bitzer (Mars), 1:33; 220-Jake DiGuilio (Plum) dec. Johan VanWyke (Mars), 11-1; Hwt.-Dan Watson (North Allegheny) dec. Stephen Turchick (Plum), 2-1

5th-6th Place Matches

106-Alex Lynch (Seneca Valley) dec. Patrick Keyser (Hampton), 9-0; 113-Bryce DeLeon (Pine-Richland) dec. Aaron Rouda (Shaler), 4-2; 120-Sal Peluso (North Allegheny) dec. Nick Zoria (Seneca Valley), 2-0; 126-Blynn Shideler (North Allegheny) dec. Anthony Latess (Seneca Valley), 7-2; 132-Joe Lehman (Hampton) dec. Andrew Schulthies (Mars), 2-0 ; 138-Xavier Bennett (Butler) dec. Derrin Dietz (Fox Chapel), 2-1; 145-Austin Leon (Seneca Valley) dec. Jeremiah Bortmas (Butler), 7-4; 152-Tyler Heasley (Fox Chapel) dec. Tyler Schillero (Seneca Valley), 5-2; 160-Will Bortmas (Butler) dec. Hunter Fenk (Plum), 6-2; 170-Ben Nowicki (Knoch) injury default over Andrew McRandal (Plum); 182-Zach Weaver (Butler) pinned Sam Fallon (Central Cath.), 3:04; 195-Nick Gibson (Butler) pinned Brian Mowry (Knoch), 1:46; 220-Michael Bonsmann (North Hills) dec. Tyler Miller (Seneca Valley), 6-3; Hwt.-Damian Wheeler (Butler) pinned Trey Turnblacer (Mars), :27

Butler Eagle

Article published February 28, 2013

19 county matmen battling in WPIALs

By John Enrietto Eagle Sports Editor



Butler's 132-pound Cody Houston, involved in a match against West Allegheny here, is one of 10 Golden Tornado wrestlers competing in the WPIAL Tournament this weekend at Norwin High School. Seneca Valley, Mars and Knoch also have wrestlers competing.
File Photo

The message seems clear for the 19 Butler County wrestlers in this weekend's WPIAL Tournament. No margin for error. Twelve of the 19 are involved in the "pigtail" round that opens the tournament at 5:30 p.m.

today at Norwin High School. Wrestlers in those matches must win just to advance to the 7 p.m. preliminary round.

Butler has five matmen in those bouts — Xavier Bennett at 138 pounds, Will Bortmas at 160, Zach Weaver at 182, Nick Gibson at 195 and Damian Wheeler at 285.

"We're underdogs in a couple of those matches and Wheeler wrestled his kid before in a match decided by one point earlier this year," Butler coach Scott Stoner said.

"We're trying to max out some of our kids this weekend, hopefully get them into the tournament and win a couple of matches in wrestle-backs."

All three of Seneca Valley's WPIAL qualifiers — Alex Lynch at 106 pounds, twin brother Ben at 113 and Austin Leon at 145 — are in pigtail matches. So are both of Knoch's qualifiers, Blaine Elliott at 132 and Ben Nowicki at 170. Elliott missed part of the regular season with an injury.

Two of Mars' four qualifiers — Richie Boeh at 126 and Ryan McMahon at 160 — are in pigtail bouts as well.

The Planets have Austin Bitzer (15-4) at 195 pounds and Johan VanWyke (18-7) at 220 in preliminary round matches.

"Austin's the only one of our four who didn't go last year," Mars coach Zach Maisner said of the WPIAL tourney. "When you walk in for the first time and see how big it is, knowing it's the step to get to states ... guys can get the deer in headlights look sometimes."

Bitzer, McMahon and VanWyke are all seniors. Boeh is a sophomore.

"Richie can sneak up on people and surprise them with his style," Maisner said. "All of our

kids have a chance to advance.”

Butler has five of its 10 qualifiers in the preliminary round in Connor Foust (26-9) at 113, Blake Caudill (32-5) at 120, Korey Caudill (32-5) at 126, Cody Houston (32-8) at 132 and Ryan Hannon (30-3) at 170. Hannon, a section champion, is the highest seed of any local wrestler at No. 5 in his weight class.

“Ryan and Blake are probably our best chances of getting me to head east (for the state tournament) next weekend,” Stoner said.

Despite reaching the PIAA tourney last year, Blake Caudill is only seeded eighth at 120 pounds in the WPIAL tourney. Only the top three placers in each weight class advance to Hershey.

“Blake has a tough road,” Stoner said. “That 120-pound group is the toughest weight division in this tournament. The committee took two hours to seed those kids fairly.”

Foust, Korey Caudill and Houston were section runner-ups. Foust is a sophomore and Houston a junior.

“Korey hasn't committed to a college yet and I know he wants to wrestle,” Stoner said. “This could be a big tournament for him in that regard.

“He's got strong grades, so he could get some academic money from a Division III school, too.”

The WPIAL tournament continues at 5:30 p.m. Friday with the quarterfinals and first-round consolations. Second-round consolations begin at 10 a.m. Saturday.

Semifinals and third-round consolations are at noon Saturday, followed by fourth-round consolations at 2:15 p.m. The consolation finals are at 6 p.m.

The Parade of Champions begins at 7:15 p.m. with the finals slated for 7:30 p.m.

Area wrestlers opening matches

Pigtail Matches

106 pounds-Alex Lynch (Seneca Valley) 25-12 vs. Cole Rush (Waynesburg) 17-15

113-Kris Demorest (Hempfield) 13-7 vs. Ben Lynch (Seneca Valley) 23-11

126-Richie Boeh (Mars) 16-11 vs. Dustin Winkle (Hopewell) 24-12

132-Blaine Elliott (Knoch) 15-5 vs. Jake Ardellitz (Kiski Area) 25-12

138-Xavier Bennett (Butler) 23-11 vs. Koree Rodriguez (Central Valley) 15-12

145-Austin Leon (Seneca Valley) 26-11 vs. Travis Grando (Montour) 12-12

160-Nate Painter (Franklin Regional) 20-16 vs. Will Bortmas (Butler) 13-11

160-Ryan McMahan (Mars) 18-9 vs. Marcus Pizzi (Waynesburg) 14-14

170-Nathan Barcaskey (Moon) 13-15 vs. Ben Nowicki (Knoch) 23-9

182-Elliott Baran (Ambridge) 11-2 vs. Zach Weaver (Butler) 30-9

195-Nick Gibson (Butler) 15-12 vs. Derek DeSalvo (Belle Vernon) 20-10

285-Rusty Casteel (Norwin) 22-14 vs. Damian Wheeler (Butler) 20-18

Preliminary Round

113-Philip Mary (Peters Township) 27-6 vs. Connor Foust (Butler) 26-9

120-Ryan Yocum (Trinity) 25-7 vs. Blake Caudill (Butler) 32-5

126-Terry Victor (Waynesburg) 16-15 vs. Korey Caudill (Butler) 32-5

132-Cody Houston (Butler) 32-8 vs. Corey Wilding (Upper St. Clair) 27-9

170-Ryan Hannon (Butler) 30-3 vs. Daniel Walters (Greensburg Salem) 19-10

195-Nate Grygo (Bethel Park) 29-8 vs. Austin Bitzer (Mars) 15-4

220-Grant Slezak (Greensburg Salem) 20-15) vs. Johan VanWyke (Mars) 18-7

Butler Eagle

3 Butler wrestlers in quarterfinals

By Mike Kilroy
Eagle Staff Writer



Butler Junior Ryan Hannon wrestles against Kiski in the quarterfinal round at the WPIAL Tournament at Norwin

NORTH HUNTINGDON TWP — Blake Caudill is well aware of the gauntlet he must run in the 120-pound weight class at the WPIAL Class AAA Wrestling Championships.

That bracket is arguably the toughest and deepest of any in the tournament, which began Thursday at Norwin High School and will run through Saturday.

The Butler senior, though, is undaunted.

"It's going to be a war," Caudill said. "So, I'm just going to pick up my sword and shield and go to battle."

He got off to a good start in the preliminary round Thursday, slaying Ryan Yocum of Trinity with a pin.

For Caudill, the impressive showing was a must.

"The first match of the tournament is always

hard," Caudill said. "You have to get warmed up. You have to get past all of the mental hurdles. So, it was good I was in good position the whole time and never faded."

It will get much tougher today for Caudill when he faces Sam Krivus of Hempfield in the quarterfinals.

Krivus won the WPIAL title at 113 pounds last season and finished third at the PIAA tournament with a 45-4 record.

This year Krivus is 33-3.

"If he gets through, it will be something he definitely earned," said Butler wrestling coach Scott Stoner. "The level of competition is just incredible."

Caudill is one of three Butler County wrestlers who survived the preliminary round unscathed — all three from Butler.

Caudill's brother, Korey, earned a 4-1 decision over Terry Victory of Waynesburg at 126 pounds and section champ Ryan Hannon pinned Daniel Walters of Greensburg Salem early in the second period.

"I treated it like any other match," Hannon said. "It was important to get a big win right off the bat like that."

Hannon, a junior, struck quickly and wasted little time to get his first victory out of the way.

"I just caught him — it's a situation we practice all the time," Hannon said. "You have to start

off right.”

Stoner said he was impressed with the way Hannon attacked.

“We’ve been trying to get Ryan more tools on his feet — offensively he doesn’t have a lot. He’s not a smooth technician on his feet. He’s more of a brawler,” Stoner said of Hannon. “The Greensburg Salem kid wrestled pretty well defensively, stopped a couple of our best shots. Ryan stuck with it, stayed the aggressor and caught him.”

Butler also has five wrestlers still alive in the consolation bracket.

Mars has four in the consolation bracket today, including 220-pound senior Johan VanWyke, who had perhaps the most exciting match of the night.

VanWyke trailed 4-2 against Grant Slezak of Greensburg Salem, but got a takedown with three seconds remaining in the third period to force overtime.

VanWyke, though, lost on a technical violation when he grabbed a handful of Slezak’s singlet. “He’s a tough fighter,” said Mars wrestling coach Zach Maisner of VanWyke. “That kid has more heart than most here I bet. He’s just an awesome kid.

“I thought he had that one,” Maisner said. “Just one simple mistake when you are tired. That’s all it takes.”

Knoch and Seneca Valley also advanced two wrestlers into the consolation bracket.

All wrestlers in the consolation bracket have a daunting task ahead of them starting this afternoon.

“They have a long way back,” Maisner said. “VanWyke has a tough road, but you never know with that kid. He always surprises you.”

WPIAL Class AAA results

Here is a look at how Butler County wrestlers fared Thursday night at Norwin High School:
Pigtail Round

106: Cole Rush (Waynesburg) dec. Alex Lynch (Seneca Valley), 8-6; 113: Ben Lynch (Seneca Valley) dec. Kris Demorest (Hempfield) 8-4; 126: Richie Boeh (Mars) dec. Dustin Winkle (Hopewell) 6-1; 132: Blake Elliott (Knoch) dec. Jake Ardellitz (Kiski) 4-2; 145: Austin Leon (Seneca Valley) maj. dec. Travis Grando (Montour) 13-3; 160: Nate Painter (Franklin Regional) pinned Will Bortmas (Butler), 5:06, Ryan McMahan (Mars) pinned Marcus Pizzi (Waynesburg), 1:57; 170: Ben Nowicki (Knoch) pinned Nathan Carcaskey (Moon) 1:19; 182: Zach Weaver (Butler) pinned Elliott Baran (Ambridge), 1:41; 195: Nick Gibson (Butler) pinned Derek DeSalvo (Belle Vernon), 3:28; 285: Rusty Casteel (Norwin) dec. Damian Wheeler (Butler), 1-0.

Preliminary Round

113: Philip Mary (Peters Township) dec. Connor Foust (Butler), 2-0, A.C. Headlee (Waynesburg) pinned Ben Lynch (Seneca Valley) 1:43; 120: Blake Caudill (Butler) pinned Ryan Yocum (Trinity) 3:06; 126: Korey Caudill (Butler) dec. Terry Victor (Waynesburg), 4-1, Michael Kemerer (Franklin Regional) pinned Richie Boeh (Mars) 3:26; 132: Corey Wilding (Upper St. Clair) maj. dec. Cody Houston (Butler), 11-0, Fillippo Crivelli (Hopewell) dec. Blaine Elliott (Knoch), 2-0; 138: William Bell (Connellsville) tech fall Xavier Bennett (Butler), 15-0; 145: Cole Landowski (Kiski) maj. dec. Austin Leon (Seneca Valley), 15-6; 160: Zach Voytek (Greensburg Salem) pinned Ryan McMahan (Mars), 4:47; 170: Ryan Hannon (Butler) pinned Daniel Walters (Greensburg Salem), 2:28, Tyler Worthing (Kiski) pinned Ben Nowicki (Knoch), 1:08; 182: Drew Phipps (Norwin) pinned Zach Weaver (Butler), 3:18; 195: Nate Grygo (Bethel Park) dec. Austin Bitzer (Mars), 6-2, Matt McCutcheon (Kiski) pinned Nick Gibson (Butler), 3:28; 220: Grant Slezak (Greensburg Salem) dec. Johan VanWyke (Mars), 5-4 (OT)

Butler Eagle

Article published March 2, 2013

Staying alive

8 Butler County wrestlers fighting way through consolations at WPIAL meet

By Mike Kilroy Eagle Staff Writer



Butler's Blake Caudill, left, battles Hempfield's Sam Krivus in the 120-pound quarterfinals Friday night at the WPIAL Class AAA wrestling championship meet at Norwin High School. Caudill dropped a 5-2 decision.

DAVE PRELOSKY/BUTLER EAGLE

NORTH HUNTINGDON TWP — Blaine Elliott and Ben Nowicki are doing things the hard way.

And loving every minute of it.

The two Knoch grapplers have survived into the final day of the WPIAL Class AAA Wrestling Championship despite coming out of the pigtail round.

Both were dominant in their first-round consolation matches Friday night at Norwin High School.

"I'm stoked. We're excited," said Knoch wrestling coach Mark McLaughlin. "I'm excited for Blaine because he's worked so hard throughout the year. He's had some

tough breaks and has lost to some tough guys."

But Elliott, a 132-pound senior, mauled Austin Heintz of Shaler, controlling his opponent the entire match for a 3-0 decision.

Nowicki, a 170-pound junior in just his second season of varsity wrestling, had a similar performance in his 8-4 win over Daniel Walters of Greensburg Salem.

The Knoch pair are two of eight Butler County wrestlers moving on to Saturday's final day. None of the eight have a shot at winning a WPIAL title, but they all have the chance to finish third and advance to the PIAA championships.

It won't be easy for any of them.

"Anything can happen," McLaughlin said. "It's been a good showing for the Knoch duo."

It wasn't such a good showing for the Butler trio in the quarterfinals.

Blake Caudill (120), Korey Caudill (126) and Ryan Hannon (170) all lost their matches by decision.

Blake Caudill had the toughest draw of the three, squaring off against Sam Krivus of Hempfield, who won the WPIAL title at 113 last season and was third in the state. Blake Caudill nearly pulled off an upset when he got Krivus on his back at the end of the second period. The only thing that saved Krivus was time.

Krivus went on to win 5-2.

Korey Caudill also nearly pulled out a miraculous win, getting Tyler Walker of North Hills on his back near the end of the third period. Time ran out on Korey Caudill as well in an 11-5 loss.

"That's the thing about those two, they are high-level athletes who believe they can win," said Butler wrestling coach Scott Stoner. "Blake — even in that loss, sometimes a loss against a top-notch kid can give you confidence."

Perhaps the most confident of the Butler wrestlers right now is 113-pound sophomore Connor Foust, who earned a 12-1 major decision over Derrick Knox in the consolation round. "Connor is wrestling the best of any of the guys right now," Stoner said. "He's someone who was timid throughout last year, not very confident, but he's gaining that."

Also moving on for Butler is Zach Weaver, who won his 182-pound consolation match by forfeit.

It also was a tough night for Mars. All four Planets who were alive in the consolation bracket were knocked out Friday.

Seneca Valley, though, had one survivor: Austin Leon at 145 pounds.

Leon pulled out his match against Collin Smith of Albert Gallatin with an escape with less than five seconds remaining in the third period for a 5-4 win.

"At WPIALs, especially when you are in the consolation bracket, it's just all about getting that next win," said Seneca Valley wrestling coach Kevin Wildrick. "It doesn't matter if you win by one or win by a pin. Just keep moving."

WPIAL Class AAA Results

Here is a look at how Butler County wrestlers fared Friday night at Norwin High School:

Quarterfinals

120: Sam Krivus (Hempfield) dec. Blake Caudill (Butler), 5-2; 126: Tyler Walker (North Hills) dec. Korey Caudill (Butler), 11-5; 170: Tyler Worthing (Kiski) dec. Ryan Hannon (Butler), 5-2.

First-round Consolation

113: Connor Foust (Butler) maj. dec. Derrick Knox (Central Valley), 12-1, Ryan Cunningham (West Allegheny) dec. Ben Lynch (Seneca Valley), 5-0; 126: Sean Perri (Mt. Lebanon) dec. Richie Boeh (Mars), 1-0; 132: Blaine Elliott (Butler) dec. Austin Heintz (Shaler), 3-0, Mike Risnear (Penn Trafford) maj. dec. Cody Houston (Butler), 11-0; 138: Eric Green (Plum) dec. Xavier Bennett (Butler), 9-3; 145: Austin Leon (Seneca Valley) dec. Collin Smith (Albert Gallatin), 5-4; 160: Austin Bell (Belle Vernon) dec. Ryan McMahan (Mars), 5-2; 170: Ben Nowicki (Knoch) dec. Daniel Walters (Greensburg Salem), 8-4; 182: Zach Weaver (Butler) by forfeit; 195: Zac Herrle (McGuffey) dec. Nick Gibson (Butler), 9-1, Jack Zablonksi (Montour) dec. Austin Bitzer (Mars), 5-2; 220: Moe Slinger (Upper St. Clair) dec. Johan VanWyke (Mars), 6-0

Butler Eagle

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His motor never quits

Butler Junior High mat coach Geibel's efforts pay dividends for Tornado

By John Enrietto

Eagle Sports Editor



Butler Junior High wrestling coach Don Geibel watches a high school match during the WPIAL Section 3-AAA individual championships at Fox Chapel High School last weekend. A former Golden Tornado wrestler, Geibel helps out with the high school team as well.

TYE CYPHER/SPECIAL TO THE EAGLE

BUTLER TWP — From Aliquippa to Burrell to Fox Chapel — all in a day's work for Don Geibel. "The guy is non-stop," Butler High School wrestling coach Scott Stoner said of his junior high coach.

Geibel has been the junior high wrestling coach at Butler for eight years. He was recently named Section 3-AAA Junior

High Coach of the Year for the fourth time and was named WPIAL junior High Coach of the Year a couple of seasons ago.

Last week, his Saturday began coaching some Butler kids at an elementary tournament in Aliquippa. He then did some coaching at an open tournament at Burrell High School before finishing the day at the Section 3-AAA section finals at Fox Chapel.

"I remember how important my coaches were to me," Geibel said. "They were there for me when I was a wrestler and I want to be there for all of these kids."

A Butler graduate, Geibel never stepped on to a wrestling mat until his sophomore year. He reached the PIAA Tournament as a senior.

"Basketball wasn't working out for me and I had a few friends on the wrestling team who talked me into trying it," Geibel said.

He's been passionate about it ever since.

"We were losing the Parkers (Tim and Jason) to graduation and needed a kid in the lighter weight class," Stoner recalled. "Donnie was a little scrappy kid and I put him on the scale as a freshman. He came out for the team the following year."

Geibel wound up wrestling at Gannon and Edinboro in college. Shortly after he accepted a

position as a nuclear medicine technician at Butler Memorial Hospital, the junior high wrestling coaching position opened up at Butler.

Geibel has been at it ever since. He secured his 100th junior high coaching victory late this season and led four wrestlers — Caleb Baxter (25-0), Scotty Dietrich (23-4), Zack Hunka (22-8) and Hank Finan (20-8) — to 20-win seasons this year.

"The only high school coaching job I would take on is Butler's and Scott's going to be at that for a while," Geibel said. "I wouldn't even consider going anyplace else.

"I'm comfortable here. I love the people I work with and there's something to be said for coming back to your alma mater."

Stoner appreciates such loyalty as well.

"It's cool to work with a guy as passionate about this sport as I am," Stoner said. "Some guys get involved in wrestling and simply can't let it go. Donnie and I are two of those guys.

"When it's someone you've coached, you've helped develop, and he returns to the program with his kind of fire ... It's special."

How passionate is Geibel about wrestling?

He once rolled around the mat with current junior Will Bortmas, despite having an IV strapped to his arm.

"I'll never forget that," Bortmas said. "I was in seventh grade and needed to cut weight.

Coach Geibel did some drills with me despite wearing that IV and a fanny pack."

"I had been in the hospital with a bad infection and had to wear that thing," Geibel recalled, smiling. "Will had to work out to cut weight and there was no one around, so I rolled around the mat with him for a while."

Connor Foust, a sophomore 113-pounder who has 50 varsity wins already, credits Geibel with hastening his development on the mat.

"He's tireless when it comes to doing drills. He's rough on you," Foust said. "But it's worth it. In terms of style, he prepares you for this level.

"The success I've had so far, I owe plenty to him."

The 100 wins aren't important to Geibel. Feeding polished wrestlers to the high school program?

Different story.

Bortmas knows the answer to that question: "The guy wrestled me with an IV. What more needs to be said?"

Butler Eagle

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Matmen land roles in movie

By John Enrietto Eagle Sports Editor



Dakota Collins, top, wrestles for Butler High School in a 2011 match against West Allegheny. Collins was an extra in the filming of *Foxcatcher*, which is based on the murder of an Olympic wrestler. Butler Eagle File Photo

BUTLER TWP — From work in the wrestling room to a spot on the silver screen is quite a journey, but former Butler matmen Don Geibel, Dakota Collins and T.J. McCance completed such a trip.

Each served as extras in scenes from the movie "Foxcatcher," filmed in the Pittsburgh area from November through January. The film is based on the 1996 murder of Olympic wrestler David Schultz by the heir to the DuPont fortune, John DuPont.

Geibel said, "I saw an ad on a wrestling website saying they were looking for people to fill out some scenes, real wrestlers to make the scenes authentic. We drove down to Pittsburgh to check it out.

"They took our picture, took down our heights and weights ... We were there all of five minutes. I figured that was it."

But the three later received invitations to a try out for spots on two 10-man wrestling teams appearing in the movie. Geibel said 30 people showed up.

"They decided to keep us," he said.

For the next three months, their lives were interrupted from time to time, whenever they were called to the set.

Geibel spent about 12 days working for the film. Collins was there nearly 20 days, and McCance made one appearance.

"I got to do a locker room scene at the Petersen Events Center," McCance said. "I was walking in and out of the locker room while (actor) Mark Ruffalo (portraying Schultz) and a coach were talking.

"They asked me to do more days, but I'm a financial adviser up in Clarion now and I couldn't

get away.”

Geibel is a nuclear medicine technician at Butler Memorial Hospital and the junior high wrestling coach at Butler. Collins, who graduated from Butler in May, is a student at Butler County Community College.

Collins and McCance both won more than 100 matches as Golden Tornado wrestlers.

“It was fun getting back into it again,” Collins said. “And I have new respect for the movies; all of the work and time it takes to get a scene right.”

Geibel said it took “eight hours to complete one 30-second scene I was in. We did it 10 or 15 times with one set, then they tore down and rebuilt everything to try it from another angle.” The wrestlers did scenes shot on a sod farm in Connoquenessing, a wrestling room in West Mifflin, a site near Mount Pleasant and in the gym at California (Pa.) University.

“That gym is where they shot the Olympic wrestling stuff,” Geibel said. “They had all of the nations’ flags up, the Olympic mats ... It was pretty cool.

“I’m a fan of wrestling, too, so seeing (U.S. Olympian and North Allegheny graduate) Jake Herbert, three national champions and runners-up there, it was very humbling to me.”

And some of the days were long.

“There were days we were there for 16 hours,” Geibel said. “One day, I was there for 12 hours and never did a thing. They fell behind schedule and never got to the scene I was in.”

Geibel said they were paid regular time for eight hours per day, time and a half for 12, double time for 16 or more.

“We weren’t getting rich on it,” he said, laughing. “A 16-hour check was about the same as eight hours pay at my day job. Still, I’d do it again. It was worth it.”

Collins said he spent the waiting hours on the set playing cards and talking about wrestling with the other extras.

“We all had wrestling backgrounds so we exchanged stories,” he said. “I feel like I made a lot of friends during that time.”

Channing Tatum portrays Schultz’s brother, Mark, in the movie. Collins spent some time with him while Geibel got to know Ruffalo well, and McCance was able to meet actor Steve Carell, former star of the television show “The Office” and movies “The 40 Year Old Virgin,” “Bruce Almighty” and “Get Smart.”

“That was a thrill. I’m a big fan of his,” McCance said.

Geibel described Ruffalo as one of the nicest guys he’s ever met.

“He was tremendous,” Geibel said. “He got to know everybody by his first name and was so friendly every day.

“I got to know one of the directors pretty well. He called me one day, asking if I knew where he could get a bunch of 12 to 16-year-old wrestlers for a scene. I got clearance from the school and brought my junior high team down.”

The movie is expected to arrive in theaters by late fall.

Collins is anxiously awaiting its release.

“Even if I’m not in it ... Anybody who ever gets the opportunity to do something like this, you should jump on it,” he said. “It was a blast.”

