

14 earn right to represent Section VI matmen in state



Tonawanda's Rick Silvestri appears to be laying down on job

... But he went on to beat Gary Devin of LP Pioneer for title

By ED SLOWINSKI

The schoolboy wrestling scene is just about over. All that remains is the New York State wrestling tournament next weekend in Syracuse. Fourteen young men will be going to that tournament after winning the right to represent Section VI by taking their respective weight classes in the state qualifier met at Sweet Home this past weekend.

Roughly 57 schools took part in the two-day event, with over 219 wrestlers in action. When the grappling came to a close only 14 remained.

Tough Pioneer High School of Arcade took team honors far and beyond anybody else with five individual champions and 94½ points, more than 50 points ahead of the next finisher.

Also included on Pioneer's award list was the most Valuable Wrestler — Keith Stearns. The 155-pounder was extremely tough as he posted four wins in the tourney — all of them by pins.

For Niagara Frontier League teams, well it was just too much. Co-champions Niagara-Wheatfield and Tonawanda both experienced their difficulties.

Niagara-Wheatfield was eliminated completely from the competition before the consolation. Tonawanda, on the other hand, came up with the best showing from the NFL teams and placed four wrestlers in the consolation. Kenmore East, third place finishers in the Frontier circuit, had a couple of ace wrestlers.

The most outstanding was Chris Lawson, who won top laurels in the 167-pound category. It was a long night for the Kenmore East senior, but very rewarding one.

Lawson won his opening match without difficulty. He faced Tonawanda's Steve Marone in his second bout and handed Marone an 8-2 defeat, eliminating Marone from further competition. This was the second time Lawson had edged Marone this year and then went on to win top laurels in the 167 class. The first came in the NFL meet a couple of weekends ago at Lew-Port. Ironically, Marone was the only grappler to beat Lawson earlier in the NFL season.

Another fine job was the third place finish of Scott Pine.

The East sophomore's main tormentor throughout the season was Niagara-Wheatfield's Nick Perri. Pine advanced after the first round as did Perri setting the stage for their clash.

This time Pine was not to be denied. He went on to drop Perri out of the running with a 5-4 loss.

In the semifinals Pine lost by the same score as he beat Perri, to Greg White of Southwestern. Pine returned in the consolation to beat Seth Becker of Maple Grove 3-2.

For Tonawanda it was a fitting finish to perhaps its best wrestling season in years. The Red Warriors finished the Niagara Frontier league season with a clean 16-0 showing, came up second place in the NFL meet and claimed top honors (beating Niagara-Wheatfield) in the Section VI Division III wrestle offs.

Four Red Warriors placed in the wrestling.

Freshman Guy Miller placed fourth for the Warriors. He edged Jim Bender in the semifinals 1-0 before dropping a 9-4 loss to Mark Garcia of Maryvale.

Miller, who has the best two-year record on the Tonawanda team, suffered a heart-breaking 4-3 loss to Larry Cohen of Williamsville South in the consolation.

Jeff Toth also placed fourth for Tonawanda. After a convincing first round win, Toth edged Howard Nutt of Frontier to advance.

He then suffered a 6-5 loss to Darrell Stebbins of Westfield to be left in the consolation. In that match he dropped a 4-3 decision to Dave Young of Lancaster.

For Toth it was another honor to be stored with the rest of his awards. Only a junior, he will return with Miller next year and you can bet these wrestlers, along with East's Scott Pine, will be back for more.

Senior Rick Silvestri was another fourth place finisher for Tonawanda. The highly-regarded 145-pounder won his opening match in easy fashion before winning a tough 2-0 battle from Tom Wheeler of Iroquois.

In the semifinals, Silvestri had Dave Izard of Sweet Home 6-0 before falling to a pin. Silvestri's only loss this year was to Izard in the All-Amherst tourney earlier this season.

Gary Devin of Pioneer edged Silvestri in the consolation match.

Silvestri will graduate from Tonawanda this year with the most wins every by a Tonawanda wrestler (16-0) during the NFL regular season. He was also the NFL's best by winning the NFL meet a couple of weekends back.

After posting a early encouraging pin, Tonawanda's Ron Snyder came up with a third place showing.

Snyder won his first match with a 4:56 pin over Russ Carson of Amherst. He

followed with another fall over Rich Ihle of East Aurora. The clocking of this one was 2:28.

In the semifinals Snyder was stopped by Medina's highly regarded Ron Taylor 13-3.

The Tonawanda senior 250 pounder bounced back in the consolation to grab a 5-1 win over Jim Krentz of Cheektowaga.

Lew-Port's Tom Blinco was the only wrestler to repeat on winning the section VI achievement as he won the 215 class with little problem. The Lew-Port junior has won two Section XVI championships in the 215 class.

SEMI-FINALS

91 — Leonard Woods (L. Shore) d. Dan Emke (Ran.) 4-3. Bari Hallberg (M. Grove) d. Dan Mason (Pio.), 6-3.

98 — Mark Garcia (Marv d. Guy Miller (Ton.), 9-4. Doug Keenan (Pio.) d. Larry Cohen (W. South), 7-4.

105 — Tim Booker (W. Sen. East) d. Seth Becker (M. Grove), 7-0. Greg White (S. Western) d. Scott Pine (Ken-East), 5-4.

112 — John Callen (Sala.) d. David Young (Lanc.), 6-4. Darrell Stebbins (Westf.) d. Jeff Toth (Ton.), 6-3.

119 — Kyle Grunwald (Pio.) p. Bruce Meyers (Olean), 3-0. John Caulfield (W. North) d. Rick Rothfuss (Iro.), 7-2. (ot).

126 — Dale Rogers (Pio.) d. Jerry Reynolds (P. Valley), 4-0. (ot). Don Sutliff (Amh.) d. David Butler (M. Grove), 2-1. (ot).

132 — Doug Tingle (Pio.) d. Pat Broad (W. Sen. East), 7-5. Chris Leichtweis (Olean) d. Joe Swanson (Portv.), 1-0.

138 — Gene Tundo (Fr.) d. Ken Zoeller (Marv.), 10-4. Jerry Young (Lanc.) d. Terry Miller (Port.), 9-0.

145 — Dave Izard (S. Home) p. Rick Silvestri (Ton.), 3-50. Tim Prince (M. Grove) d. Gary Devine (Pio.), 11-7.

155 — Jeff Cotter (Med.) d. John Martineck (Lanc.), 6-4. Keith Stearns (Pio.) p. Bryan Meder (Cassa. Gall.), 1-06.

167 — Chris Lawson (Ken-East) d. Dan Hackett (Pio.), 8-3. Tim Hagen (Tar.) d. Dennis Long (Dunk.), 8-1.

177 — Steve Pulley (Lanc.) p. John Aiken (Newf.), 3-57. Doug Berkum (W. South) d. Frank Portnova (Marv.), 4-1. (ot).

215 — Don Schonover (Alle.) d. Paul Bickelmann (W. South), 5-1. Tom Blinco (Lew-Port) d. Bob Darling (James.), 8-3.

250 — Ron Taylor (Med.) d. Ron Snyder (Ton.), 13-3. Peter Battaglia (Lew-Port) d. Jim Krentz (Cheek.), 3-0.

CONSOLATIONS

91 — Emke d. Mason, 5-0. 98 — Cohen d. Miller, 4-3. 105 — Pine d. Becker, 3-2. 112 — Young d. Toth, 4-3. 119 — Rothfuss d. Meyers, 6-1. 126 — Reynolds won by forfeit. 132 — Broad p. Swanson, 3-49. 138 — Miller won by forfeit. 145 — Devin d. Silvestri, 4-1m 155 — Martinek d. Meder, 12-4. 167 — Hackett won by forfeit. 177 — Aiken d. Uortnova, 2-0. 215 — Bickelman d. Darling, 6-2. 250 Snyder d. Krentz, 5-1.

FINALS

91 — Halberg d. Woods, 17-2. 98 — Keenan d. Garcia, 10-2. 105 — Booker d. White, 25-7. 112 — Callen p. Stebbins, 5-56. 119 — Grunwald d. Caulfield, 4-3. 126 — Rogers p. Sutliff, 4-50. 132 — Tingle d. Leichtweis, 1-0. 138 — Tundo p. Young, 3-59. 145 — Izard d. Prince, 3-1. 155 — Stearns p. Cotter, 5-02. 167 — Lawson d. Hagen, 4-2. 177 — Pulley d. Berkum, 4-0. 215 — Blinco d. Schonover, 7-3. 250 — Taylor p. Battaglia, 3-20.



Kenmore East's Chris Lawson

... Beams after wrestling championship

Sanders finishes third in wrestling nationals

Tonawanda High School wrestling star Bob Sanders returned home from Worthington, Minn., late Sunday night with an All-American label, a third-place finish in the National Junior College Athletic Association Wrestling Championships and a near-miss at being national champion.

Sanders, who wrestles for Niagara County Community College, is the first grappler in the history of his school to become an all All-American and to place in national competition.

His coach, Eric Knuutila, said today that Sanders "was a little down" on the way home.

"He lost to Mike Mirrick of Schoolcraft Community from Michigan in the semifinals last Friday and Mirrick went on to win the national championship in the 150-pound class. In their match Mirrick scored on a reversal only seconds from the finish to win 8-6. At the point of the reversal Sanders had lag time and this was erased by the reversal and Sanders lost 8-6. Had it not been for the reversal Bob probably would have been the national champion, not Merrick."

On Saturday Sanders decided Joe Mulligan of

Alfred tech 4-0 and also beat Ed Moody of Broward, Fla. 13-10 to take third place in his division.

Another NCCC wrestler, North Tonawanda's Paul Churder, split two matches on Thursday in the 134-pound class and was eliminated.

NCCC finished 25th out of 104 teams in the team standings.

Haze posts trio of wins

The Haze Athletic Club pushed its season's record to 23-1 with three hard-earned victories over Local 2104 this week. 15-10, 15-11, 15-9. Haze overcame an 11-7 deficit in the second game.

Next week Haze will oppose National Hose, attempting to overcome its lone loss of the campaign in the Tonawanda Recreational Volleyball League.

WARD STILL UNSIGNED

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (UPI) — Manny Trillo was the only Chicago Cubs player who failed to report and Chris Ward remained the only unsigned Cub as the squad of 39 began full scale workouts Sunday.

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