

★ Pirates Invade B'ville

There's good news and bad news for the No. 1 state-ranked Baldwinsville wrestling team as it prepares to host a power-packed day-long tourney tomorrow.

The good news is that Union-Endicott has pulled out of the field which should come as no surprise...

The bad news is that Mepham High's Pirates, from Long Island, haven't pulled out of the field. Be advised that coach John Walter's downstate powerhouse isn't traveling all the way to Baldwinsville to finish second.

"They're good, maybe the best team on Long Island," confirmed B'ville coach Leo Johnson. "They were 10-1-1 last year and there are eight returning seniors on that team."

Mepham, ranked No. 6 in the state poll, last week won the nine-school "Sprig Gardner Tournament" with 209 points and a handful of champions. Then Mepham won its dual meet opener handily, 58-3, over Valley Stream Central.

More bad news. Mepham's best wrestler is 145-pound Tony Damiani who was 25-1-1 last winter, his lone loss coming against state champion Paul Meyers of Baldwin, 5-3, in the Section Eight Tournament.

Also at 145 is B'ville's best, defending state 132-pound champ Tom Pickard who has won his last 41 bouts over two seasons. So it appears that this area's top individual wrestling showdown of the Christmas season will pair Damiani and Pickard Friday night in the tourney title match, barring earlier upsets. Pick Pickard.