

Romeo's woes

Canandaigua's Matt King stands in his way to states

By TOM BATZOLD
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Romeo Battazzi is a three-time Section 5 Class A champ, a two-time County champ and has a flashy 79-14-1 record in three varsity wrestling seasons but one goal remains elusive.

The East Rochester senior would like to earn a trip to Syracuse as Section 5's 132-pound representative in the state tournament but an old arch-rival — Canandaigua's Matt King — is standing in his way.

"It's a shame they both can't go to the states, they're that good," says East Rochester Coach Don Quinn. "If either one wasn't in that weight class, they'd each be able to walk through it. They're both pretty slick wrestlers."

Battazzi is 27-3-1 this season, losing only to King in the Canandaigua tournament, to defending state champ Clar Anderson of Olean, and to Fulton's Tim Shortsleeve, a third-place state finisher.

LAST WEEK, Battazzi and King (26-1-1) battled to a scoreless tie in a dual meet at Canandaigua and they'll probably meet in the semifinals of the state qualifier Saturday at Fairport High. The two split a pair of matches at 119 pounds a year ago.

"Actually, they're both pretty good friends; they have a lot of respect for each other after banging heads for so long," Quinn says. "They both know each other's moves so well, it'll probably be decided by one mistake. I think whoever gets that first takedown will win it."

King won last year's qualifier and then finished fourth at the state tournament. His only loss this season was to Olean's Anderson, who broke the all-time state record for career victories this year.

Matt and younger brother Marty are also one of five pairs of brothers who are trying to earn a trip to Syracuse. The others are Penfield's Larry and Chris Kane, Pittsford Mendon's Mike and Rick Kase, Geneseo's Dana and Paul Richard and Canandaigua's Don and Ron Jones.

The first round begins Friday at 5 p.m. at Fairport. Saturday's quarterfinals begin at 11 a.m., followed by the semifinals at 2 and the finals at 7:30.

Here's a class-by-class look at what to expect:

91 pounds — Canandaigua's **Marty King** (18-4) is only an eighth grader but he's the guy to beat. After all, he was good enough to knock teammate **T.J. Mincer**, last year's runnerup in the states, out of the Braves' lineup. Next best looks like Spencerport sophomore **Rich LaPaglia**, who pinned Franklin's **Clarence Brown** in last week's Class AAA finals.

98 pounds — Pittsford Mendon has never sent a wrestler to the states but unbeaten sophomore **Mike Kase** (27-0) is a good bet after breezing through the Class AA tournament last weekend. Mynderse Academy's **Steve Siegfried** has tournament experience and looks like the only real threat.

105 pounds — Penfield's **Larry Kane**, third in the state at 98 pounds a year ago, should earn another trip to Syracuse. His only problem may be getting psyched for opponents he's already beaten two or three times.

112 pounds — Irondequoit's machine-like **Tony Cotroneo**, fourth in the state at 105 pounds as a sophomore, is another prohibitive favorite. He beat Penfield's **Chris Kane** by only 3-0 in last week's Class AAA finals, but the match wasn't as close as the score would indicate.

119 pounds — Favored **Bob Arao** (18-1) defaulted to Irondequoit's **Tim Lehmann** (24-2) after suffering dizziness in last week's Class AAA finals but he has been given a clean bill of health. "He's ready to go," Fairport Coach **Pete Logan** said. "We just didn't want



Matt King
Canandaigua



Romeo Battazzi
East Rochester

to take a chance of anything serious happening last week." **Ron Jones** (27-2), who beat Lehmann by a point in the Canandaigua tournament, could be another headache for Arao in the semifinals. Others who could surprise in one of the toughest weight classes are Avon's **Tracy Regan**, Geneseo's **Dana Richard** and Athena's **Dan Pienaszek**.

126 pounds — Spencerport's **Trevor Graham** (29-1) is favored but he expects a battle. He had to go into overtime to edge Irondequoit's **Glen Locke** (19-4) last weekend and East Rochester's **Mike Kuhn** (26-2) has beaten Locke twice already this season. The darkhorse is sophomore **Steve Finnick** (22-6), one of 12 Canandaigua wrestlers in the qualifier.

132 pounds — King vs. Battazzi. Possible sleeper: Geneseo's **Rob DiFranco**.

138 pounds — Four-time Class B champ **Paul Richard** of Geneseo is the heavy favorite after a fifth-place finish at the states last year. Canandaigua sophomore **Morris White** (30-3) and **Joe Walczyk** (22-5) have the best shot at an upset, followed by Irondequoit's **Jim Brault** and East High's **Jerry Crumity**.

145 pounds — Churchville's **Scott Trainor** should win in a less-than-spectacular weight class. Longshots are Irondequoit's **Paul Salamone** and Brockport's **Todd Buenting**, two previous Trainor victims.

155 pounds — Gates-Chili's rugged **Dave Silipini** (23-0-1) is unbeaten but he hasn't faced Mendon's **Rick Kase** (22-2), a third-place state tournament finisher in Florida who was injured at this year's County tournament. Arcadia's **Jeff Smith**, who beat Kase in a tournament last month, has a bad knee and will have trouble surviving four gruelling matches in a tough weight class.

167 pounds — Strictly a two-man show. Brighton's **Terry Kent** (23-0) is unbeaten but several neutral coaches feel he's an underdog against Canandaigua's **Bill Hadsell** (24-2), who comes from a family rich in wrestling tradition. "Plus Hadsell's faced better competition this season and he's knocking heads every day with those Canandaigua kids," explains one coach. "That could pay off."

177 pounds — The guy everyone has been talking about is Livonia's unbeaten **Ron Kidder** (30-0), one of Section 5's premier athletes. He's also an outstanding football player and was a gold medalist in the Decathlon at last summer's Empire State Games. He'll have his hands full, though, with Newark's **Scott Eberhardt** (24-1), who's made a great comeback following knee surgery. And don't count out Greece Athena's **Joe Prestigacamo**, a super competitor.

215 pounds — You can bet the ranch on Newark's **Bob Button**. After finishing second in the state as a sophomore, Button is the closest you'll find to a sure thing in the qualifier, with a 29-0 record and 21 pins this season. It's not a strong heavyweight field this year, either.

250 pounds — Give a slight edge to Geneva football star **John Cosentino**, but anything can happen when these giants start rolling around on the mat. Other possibilities: Canandaigua's **Joe Kuras**, Madison's **Henry Hood** and Kearney's **John DiMarisco**.