

4 wrestlers earn 2nd trip to state finals in Syracuse

By Mark Coley

Democrat and Chronicle

When wrestling fans recall Super Sectional tournaments, the 1992 state qualifier will rank as one of the most competitive in Section 5.

"The competition (last night) shows our talent," said Section 5 wrestling chairman Don DeBadts. "The people who won here tonight deserve to represent our section. The matches were some of the best I've ever seen for this tournament."

DeBadts' statement has merit. Four wrestlers will make return trips to this weekend's state tournament in Syracuse.

But one wrestler who made the trip last season will not be among the four. Dan Nier, 105 pounds, faced Spencerport's Joe Barbera for the second weekend in a row. Trailing, 6-2, Barbera rallied and scored a takedown with less than 10 seconds remaining to defeat Nier, 8-7, and gain his first trip to Syracuse.

Barbera was named the tournament's outstanding wrestler, receiving the John Ordway Trophy.

"When I came into the match, I thought I would be winning by at least four points," said Barbera, who extended his season record to 38-1. "When I was down, I knew I had to keep the pressure on just like last week."

Barbera is confident that he could win the state title at 105.

"I'm going to Syracuse to win," he said. "If I don't, I'd be very disappointed."

"Joe's ability to keep his focus was the key," said Spencerport Coach Bill Jacoutot. "Dan Nier is a quality kid and to come back like he did was outstanding. We had a lot of respect for Nier coming into the match."

The match between Nier and Barbera was one of two hotly con-

STATE WRESTLING QUALIFIERS

The Section 5 representatives by weight class for the state wrestling tournament in Syracuse this weekend.

- 91 pounds:** John Gemmel, Hornell
98: Darrell Travers, Waterloo
105: Joe Barbera, Spencerport
112: Alex Croog, Brighton
119: Mike Kohl, Fairport
126: Kevin Bulling, East Rochester
132: Rusty Grant, Brighton
138: Wade Marriott, Kendall
145: Matt Logan, Fairport
155: Matt Leach, Brockport
167: Sirrell Gissendanner, Spencerport
177: Dave Dennie, Palmyra-Macedon
215: Casey Lamb, Victor
250: Jack Fisher, Newark

tested matches in the lower weights. At 119 pounds, McQuaid's Mark Voci and Fairport's Mike Kohl met for the third time this season.

After trailing, 2-1, Kohl, needing a last-second move, hit a lateral drop on Voci with four seconds left and pulled out a 3-2 victory.

"I didn't have much time," said Kohl, whose record is 25-1. "I just went with reaction."

"We figured it was going to be a war," said his Coach Pete Logan. "Mike has the heart of a lion. He never gives up and always finds a way to win."

Among the other highlights ...

● Brighton will send two unbeaten wrestlers to Syracuse. Alex Croog, who finished second at 105 pounds last season, defeated Tim Allen of Canandaigua, 20-7, to move his record to 27-0. Rusty Grant (132) will bring a 37-0 record into the states after defeating Greece Athena's Ron Sanger, 3-2.

● Brockport's Matt Leach at 155 pounds, 167-pounder Sirrell Gissendanner of Spencerport and heavy-

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weight Casey Lamb of Victor will also be returning to Syracuse.

Leach defeated highly-touted Chris Van Gorden of Palmyra-Macedon, 4-2, to move his record to 31-3. Gissendanner completed his run through the field by beating Eric Strafel of Brockport, 9-2, to go 32-6-1.

● Lamb is one of four Finger Lakes wrestlers to qualify. The others were Darrell Travers of Waterloo (98), Dave Dennie of Palmyra-Macedon (177) and Jack Fisher of Newark (250).

● Hornell sophomore John Gemmel and Kendall's Wade Marriott

(138) will be making their first appearances in the state tournament. Gemmel defeated sectional champions in three classes, capping it off with a 4-3 victory over East Rochester's Rodney Frey. Marriott, whose record stands at 36-0, scored a 9-2 decision over Vince Acciaio of Irondequoit.

It's rare that anyone who isn't favored to win a Section 5 title runs through the field, but Gemmel proved that theory wrong.

Gemmel finished fourth in the Class B tournament last weekend, but upset three champions to earn a spot in Syracuse.

Gemmel's victory marks the first time in 14 years that a Hornell

wrestler will advance to the states. Gemmel continued his run by defeating Class D champion Brian Schaal (Alexander) in the first round on Friday.

Yesterday he started with a win over Chad Costanza of Greece Athena, 6-2. In the semifinals he knocked off Class B champion Jason McLaughlin of Palmyra-Macedon, 4-2.

In the finals, Gemmel and East Rochester's Rodney Frey were scoreless before Frey scored the first point on a reversal to take a 2-0 lead. Gemmel followed with his own reversal to tie the score. After Gemmel intentionally let Frey up from the

bottom position Gemmel scored the go-ahead point, a two-point take-down with :21 remaining to seal the victory.

"I never expected John to win after last week," said Hornell Coach Matt Shelton. "His confidence went down."

"It was important for him to come this year (to the Super Sectionals) to get experience for next season."

"I wasn't favored to win so I had nothing to lose," said Gemmel, who sports a 31-4 record. "I'm amazed. I just wanted to go and do well. I felt I could beat anyone after beating Brian Schaal (on Friday)."

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HEADLINE ON STORY

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2ND TRIP TO STATE

FINALS IN SYRACUSE

Correction

A headline on page 9E of Sunday's metro editions of the *Democrat and Chronicle* incorrectly said four Section 5 wrestlers qualified for return trips to the state championship. Only three Section 5 wrestlers are returning to the state meet.