

Steve Schuelein Says



State Dual-Team Tourney Puts Albany on Mat

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New York Cup I was a great exploratory step toward a dual-team wrestling championship last week at West Point. But without state help from Albany, a meaningful determination of a state champion will never result.

For the tourney to work, it must be held later in the season when a more accurate assessment can be made of teams deserving to go. And Albany must sanction the tourney as a state championship beyond the maximum 18 matches (no more than three of which can be tourneys) schools in New York State are now allowed.

The brainchild of Long Islanders Sonny Greenhalgh and Al Bevilacqua, New York Cup I was conceived of the best intentions and the worst plans.

Greenhalgh, who installed the state's only sectional dual-team championship in Section Eight (Nassau County, L.I.), thought the model could be expanded to the state level.

"Last year Baldwinsville, the No. 1 team in the New York State Sportswriters Poll, and Huntington, the intersectional school champion, never met," said Greenhalgh. "It was a shame."



TONY POLICARE

Unfortunately, New York Cup I only determined the Long Island championship, with Sachem nipping Bay Shore 26-25 in a showdown of Suffolk County strongboys. Upstate powers Baldwinsville and Canandaigua, which met last night to determine their version of No. 1, were unable to compete at West Point.

By the time Greenhalgh began inviting 16 schools for the inaugural, around New Year's, many had already filled their 1980-81 schedules months before. Administrators in some areas of the state claimed the tournament violated numerous rules in the New York State Public High School Athletic Association handbook.

Top-ranked Canandaigua, Section V neighbors Irondequoit and Brockport and Section VI unbeaten Iroquois declined invitations because of full schedules. Section III questioned the legality of the tourney and told Baldwinsville and Liverpool to stay home. Other schools declined or dropped out because of administrative pressure.

Seven showed: Long Island schools Sachem, Bay Shore, Baldwin and Bellmore Kennedy, Schenectady Mont Pleasant, Waverly and Orchard Park.

The Quakers dropped out of the Canandaigua tourney, alienating officials there, to go to West Point. Loquacious Orchard Park Coach Tony Policare said, "This is the best dual team tourney

offered in the state and we were honored to be invited as a part of it."

Policare and Greenhalgh, both graduates of Vestal High School near Binghamton, hope the aborted inaugural will pave the way for better results in future years.

"We should have something like the Super Sixteen in basketball," said Policare. "Pennsylvania has unlimited tournaments to showcase its wrestlers. I don't know why New York can't."

"We're hoping the state picks up the ball and gives us a one-day extension on the season," said Greenhalgh. "We could wrestle the tourney the day after the states like they do in Wisconsin. The interest would certainly be there." (The Friday-Saturday intersectionals before a full house in Syracuse last year earned more than \$8,000, the highest profit of any state scholastic sport).

Greenhalgh admitted the selection procedure needed improvement but would be aided by the "Super Sixteen" concept at season's end.

Each section should be held responsible for determining a representative and could install its own tourney similar to that of Section VIII.

Section VI, for example, could neatly determine a winner in two days. The four top Erie County Interscholastic Conference teams, champions of the Niagara Frontier and Niagara-Or-

leans leagues and the two best from the Southern Tier and Tri-County circuits could meet in four separate quarterfinals the Tuesday between league and sectional tourneys.

The four winners could advance to a central site the following Tuesday after sectionals for semifinals and the final. The winner would be assured a berth that Sunday for the Super Sixteen.

Greenhalgh said the remainder of the field would be comprised of deserving "wild cards" selected by a committee, presumably sectional runners-up with high NYSSWA poll rankings.

The postseason competition would only involve a handful of top teams and not interfere with spring sports practice. The state tourney weekend concluding on a Sunday instead of Saturday would create no delays and could add an exciting new dimension to state wrestling.

"I liked it; I was very enthused," said Intersectional chairman Reed Hawke of Jamesville-DeWitt after visiting West Point. "I can see some merit to it. It may be a year or two in coming but it will be looked into."

Otherwise future New York Cups will remain, as Policare put it, the "best dual team tourney offered in the state."

But nothing more.