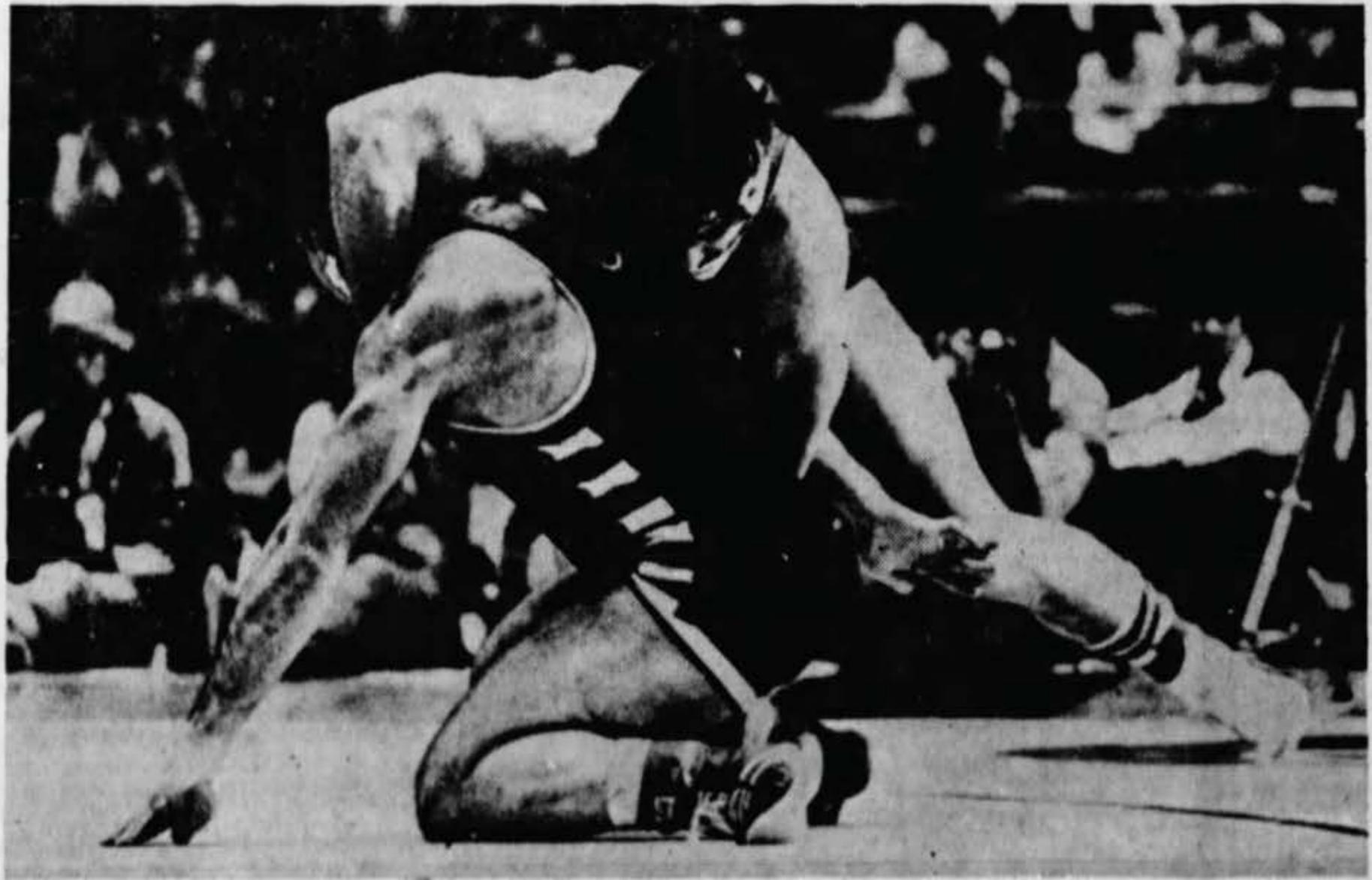


★ Two New Jersey wrestlers capture national titles



Courier-News Photo By Jay Eger
Tom Martucci of Trenton State College works on Temple's Tony Mantella during 190-pound NCAA Wrestling Championships. Martucci became TSC's first Division I national champ with a 4-3 decision.

By PAUL FRANKLIN
Courier-News Sports Writer

PRINCETON — Gene Mills is looking ahead to the World Cup Championships. Tom Martucci is looking ahead to the National AAs.

But excuse them please while they take a moment to enjoy the NCAA Wrestling Championships.

Mills and Martucci, both from North Jersey, certainly enjoyed Saturday night, winning national championships at Jadwin Gym.

"This is nice, winning in my home state," said Mills, the 118-pound Syracuse senior from Pompton Lakes. "I guess I'm ready for a new challenge now."

Mills, awarded the Outstanding Wrestler trophy, was hardly a surprise winner. A national champion as a junior, Mills concluded a 139-5-1 career, including a 76-0 mark over his last two seasons.

Saturday he had another fall, his 13th in his final 14 matches of the season, this one coming at 6:35 against Central Michigan's John Hartupee. Mills was ahead 19-5 at the time.

Martucci, however, wasn't expected to accomplish what he did.

The senior from Palisades Park had won the Division III nationals for Tren-

ton State a couple of weeks ago. But, as Martucci would admit, so what?

"That was nice, but that only means you're the best in that division. This means you're the best in the country."

Martucci became the nation's top 190 pounder by holding off Temple's John Mantella 4-3.

With the score 3-3 in the final period, Martucci escaped for the winning point. He came close to being called for stalling, for the second time, which would have given Mantella two points and the match.

"I had to wrestle cautious, because if I forced something and didn't hit it, Mantella would have snapped me for two. Because of the first stalling call, I had to push that much harder. I can't tell you how much pressure was on me at the end.

"This has been a dream since I was in high school," he smiled. "I remember sitting up in the bleachers when the nationals were held here in 1975, thinking how badly I wanted to win it."

And now he has.
"I'm a national champion. I can't ask more anything more."

Darryl Burley can. A national champ as a freshman two years ago, the Lehigh junior has now taken home the silver plaque two years in a row.

Saturday he lost Iowa State junior Jim Gibbons 16-6. Burley had beaten Gibbons 16-6 earlier in the year.

"I was in shock," said Burley, who sprinted for privacy immediately after the horn. "But as coach (Thad Turner) said, this isn't the end of my life. It's just a sport. I still have next year.

"I just had technical breakdowns," he added. "I just didn't function. And I have to say," he said, forcing a smile, "this one hurts even more than last year's loss."

"I worked real hard for this," said Gibbons, "as hard as I've ever worked for anything. I was in much better shape this time.

"This is much more important than the loss. That is, ten years from now they won't remember that I lost to him in the dual meet. They'll remember this national championship. And that's what I'll remember."

Iowa broke its own scoring record in taking its fourth straight team title. Dan Gable's Hawkeyes scored 129.75 points, with sophomore twins Ed and Lou Banach leading the way.

Several travelers from the Midwest were seen boasting their Black and

Jersey wrestlers win titles

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Yellow "Banach Button" buttons, and the brothers from Port Jervis, N.Y. gave their rooters no reason to panic.

Ed, now a two-time NCAA champion, decked Charlie Heller of Clarion in 4:15, giving him a 76-2-1 record in his first two years. Brother Lou then

shocked unbeaten Bruce Baumgartner, from Manchester (N.J.), hitting a cradle with an 8-3 lead for the fall at 5:45.

(NCAA NOTES) — Mills, along with 126-pounder Jerry Kelly of Oklahoma State, had four falls in the tournament, but Kelly was the official pin champ because of less time.

Three-day attendance was 51,536.