

Sports

Guests inhospitable as Fulton finishes third in festival

by Dave Taylor

After winning the annual Fulton Wrestling Festival in its first three years, the Fulton varsity team fell to third in the 1998 festival, held Saturday, Jan. 17 at G. Ray Bodley High School. Mexico won the team points title, besting South Jefferson 207.5-203. Fulton tallied 201.5 points in finishing third out of 10 teams.

Each of the top three teams placed seven wrestlers in the finals of the festival, with Mexico claiming the title despite a 1-6 record by its finalists. The Tigers were aided by a strong showing by their wrestlers in the wrestlebacks, as the team added three third-place finishes and two fourth-place finishes to its total. Team points were assigned for every round of competition, with bonus points awarded for certain perfor-

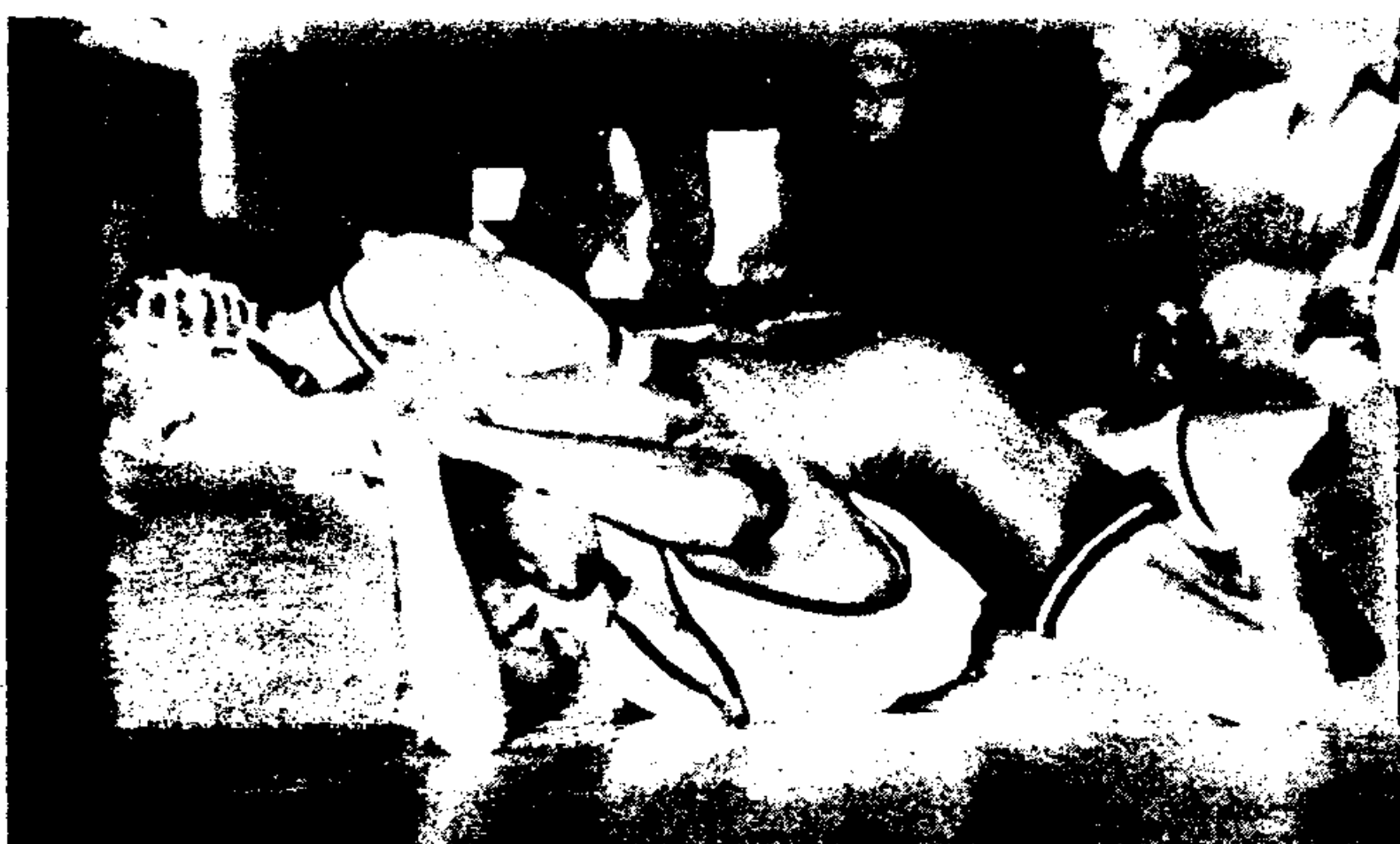
mance levels reached.

Mexico's lone champion was Joelon Williams in the 130-pound class. South Jefferson saw four of its seven finalists claim titles, while the Fulton contingent garnered three champions: Brett Kimball (152), Kyle Barbera (189), and Chris Demars (125).

Fulton coach Mike Conners said he was pleased with the performance of his wrestlers overall, despite not winning the title.

"I applaud Mexico's effort," Conners said. "Sure we wanted to win, but they wrestled really hard and deserve the credit. I thought the Mexico kids wrestled tough top to bottom, and when you do that, you deserve to win."

"I'm pleased with my kids, but we've got a ways to go still," the coach continued. "We're about 75 percent there, but we need a total effort."



Gaining the upper hand

Fulton wrestler Chris Demars applies the pressure to Nate Hoatland of Southern Springs at the 1998 Fulton Wrestling Festival. Demars won the match, and the 125-pound title, with his 6-2 decision over Hoatland.

-Valley News photos by Dave Taylor



Raider champion

Fulton's Kyle Barbera locks up John Hansen of Mexico on the way to taking the 189-pound title with a 6-1 decision. The Red Raiders finished third overall at the wrestling festival in the team points competition.

•In the 96-pound class, Chris Weikel of South Jefferson took a 14-1 decision over Fulton's Chris Ely, improving his record on the season to 15-0. Chrissy Wilde (Southern Springs) came in third, while Brian Schultz (Oswego) finished fourth.

•At 103 pounds, Justin Lohr of Vernon Verona Sherrill beat Jon Pecori of South Jefferson 19-7. Fulton wrestler Toby Pawlewicz defeated Pat Johnson of Mexico to claim third place.

•At 112 pounds, Newark Valley's Brian Foster won an 8-2 decision over Dustin Comes of Mexico to take the title, while Doug Mcrae (South Jefferson) came in third and Shane Sallerson (East Rochester) ended up fourth.

•At 119, South Jefferson representative Steve Porter won the team's second title by pinning Shaun Chima of West Genesee with 42 seconds left in the second period. Frank Downing (Mexico) was third, while Peter Huston (Newark Valley) finished fourth.

•At 125, Chris Demars claimed the Red Raiders' first championship, outpointing Nate Hoatland of Southern Springs 6-2. Joe Bice (South Jefferson) and Matt Allen (VVS) were third and fourth, respectively.

"I'm real pleased with Chris Demars," Conners commented afterward. "That kid (Hoatland) had beaten him twice this year." In two previous matchups, Hoatland earned a pin and an 8-2 decision over Demars.

•In the 130-pound class, Mexico's Williams took an 8-2 decision over Chuck Dibble of South Jefferson to become the Tigers' only champion. The match was tied at 1 until Williams got two points with 1:16 left in the third. Andy Boice of VVS defeated Nick Hansen of Fulton to claim third place in the class.

•At 135 pounds, Keith Pittinaro of East Rochester defeated Justin Turner of South Jefferson to take the title. Matt Bryant of Mexico and Dave Griffin of West Genesee were third and fourth.

•In the 140-pound class, Matt Nentarz became the second East Rochester wrestler in a row to claim a title, beating Mexico wrestler Dan Smith 7-5 in overtime. Nentarz, who was trailing 4-5, got a controversial point with under 10 seconds left in the third to force the overtime. Steve Maley of West Genesee beat Fulton's Joe Demars to claim third place.

•The 145-pound finals featured a rematch between Dustin Winterhault of Oswego and Chad Bush of Fulton. Winterhault had beaten Bush earlier in the season when the two teams met, and he did so again with a 7-5 decision. The match was tied at 5 entering the third, but Winterhault scored a takedown to claim the title. Sean Dust of VVS finished third, followed by Brent Tyldesley of Mexico.

"He took the shot; he went and got it," Conners noted of Winterhault's victory. "Wrestling rewards the aggressor."

•At 152 pounds, Fulton's Brett Kimball improved to 9-1 in an injury-plagued season by outpointing Jason Larabee of Mexico 14-13. The match was marked by a wild finish, with the lead changing hands three times in the final minute, and Kimball forging ahead with just 13 seconds left in



Take down

Mexico wrestler Joelon Williams tosses his opponent, Chuck Dibble of South Jefferson, to the mat during the 130-pound title at the 1998 Fulton Wrestling Festival. Williams won the match with an 8-2 decision, and his team beat out South Jefferson for the team title.

the third. Keith Arnold of East Rochester claimed third, and John Schlick of VVS took fourth place.

"Brett Kimball, what a phenomenal effort that was, coming back from being sick," Conners said of the match.

•In the third of five straight title matchups featuring Red Raiders, Nick Vieni absorbed the second loss at 160. He was defeated by Gary Cooper of South Jefferson 14-7, with Gino DiCiola (New Hartford) and Charlie Spencer (Newark Valley) rounding out the top four.

•At 171, Fulton's Kurt Kimball suffered a pin at the hands of Dan Perry of New Hartford at 1:48. Steve Pecori of South Jefferson wound up third, and Brian VanHoltz finished fourth.

•At 189, Red Raider Kyle Barbera won the final matchup featuring a Fulton wrestler, taking a 6-1 decision over John Hansen of Mexico. Dan Eplin of East Rochester took third, and Bryan Racino of VVS fourth.

•At 215, Jordan Cooper of South Jefferson won over Luke Bickford of Mexico by a 14-5 count. Eric Fedrizzi (West Genesee) and Fulton's Jeremy Stacey were third and fourth, respectively.

•In the festival's final matchup, at 275 pounds, Aaron Head of Newark Valley defeated Javin Watson of Mexico, with Andy Renshaw finishing third in a small field.

The participants of the Festival were Fulton, Mexico, Oswego, South Jefferson, West Genesee, Newark Valley, Vernon Verona Sherrill, East Rochester, New Hartford, and Southern Springs.

East Rochester's Pittinaro was named the Most Outstanding Wrestler for the festival, while South Jefferson's Porter won the aggregate pins title.



In the grasp

Eric Fedrizzi of West Genesee clutches onto Fulton's Jeremy Stacey during the wrestleback portion of the Fulton Wrestling Festival. Fedrizzi claimed third place with his win over Stacey.

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