

Two County Wrestling Favorites Fall

By Lou DeFichy

Westbury—Two major upsets were recorded in the qualifying rounds of the Nassau County high school wrestling tournament last night at Clarke High School where a field of 190 wrestlers started the two-day competition.

Jay Scherline of Wantagh, winner of the 116-pound championship last season and top-seeded in the South Shore, was defeated in the third round by Ed Papacena of Valley Stream South, 6-5, in the 123-pound division.

Albie Allstadt of Valley Stream Central, 130-pound South Shore II champion and second-seed in the tournament, was upset by Bob DeSantis of Seaford. DeSantis pinned Allstadt in 1:45 of the overtime period in the 130-pound division.

Bedlam broke loose amongst the 2,000 fans following each match. The clamor was like a jammed Madison Square Garden following a last-second winning goal by Andy Bathgate of the Rangers against Montreal.

Scherline was downhearted after his match. His head bowed and sweaty, he walked away slowly from the mat. When the plucky wrestler was asked about the outcome, he offered no excuses. "I wrestled my best," he said, "but I was beaten."

In the Valley Stream South quarters you couldn't pin down Papacena or his coach Dennis Kiely. They were wild with joy. Papacena's reaction was. "I feel like a million."

The coach looked up at his wrestler, smiled, and patted him on the back. "He deserved it," Kiely said. "He's done everything I've asked him to do. He went up and down in class. In the South Shore Division III finals he lost to Tepper (Elliott) of Berner in the last 18 seconds, 6-5."

The 17-year-old senior may get a chance to reverse that setback if both he and Tepper advance through this afternoon's quarter-finals.

DeSantis, winner of the South Shore Division III 130-pound title, was more than surprised over his victory. "It was my first overtime victory," he said. "I never thought I'd last. It looked like Allstadt would win it on a referee's decision because he was more aggressive. But when he got me on my back in the overtime, I figured it was now or never, and I reversed him for a pin."

Five of last year's county finalists advanced to the quarterfinals—Bob Stock and Ken Long of Mepham, Ken Haltenhoff and Tom Schlendorf of Calhoun and Jerry Blumberg of Valley Stream Central.

Stock decisioned Barry Feldman of Freeport, 10-0, in the 115-pound class; Long decisioned Joe Trubia of Seaford, 8-1, in the 141; Haltenhoff decisioned Mark Mann of Wheatley, 5-0, in the 148; Schlendorf decisioned Jeff Sawyer of Freeport, 5-0, in the 168, and Blumberg decisioned Richard Maraglio, 9-7, in the 183.

Mepham, pre-tourney favorite, leads the field with 33 points and placed the most wrestlers in the quarterfinals—seven. Valley Stream Central is second with 24 points, followed by Calhoun with 21.

Blumberg, heavyweight champion last season, hopes to win the 183-pound division. He moved down a class because, "It was better for the team."

Blumberg has won 23 straight in dual competition. He opposes John Fritz of Uniondale in the quarterfinals. If he wins, he faces either Lou Zemsky of Mepham or Mike Westfall of Wantagh in the finals. Blumberg figures Westfall will win. He split two matches against him. He won 3-0 and lost a scoreless referee's decision to Westfall in the finals of the South Shore Division II tournament. "I hope I get that far to meet him again," he said.

This is Blumberg's last season at Central.