

Weidler Rebounds Nicely

By Gregg Sarra

STAFF WRITER

Patchogue-Medford's John Weidler walked away from the county wrestling tournament last year with a sixth-place finish. He called it a disappointing performance and vowed to do better in his senior year.

This is Weidler's senior year. He opened the season with 21 consecutive wins before losing a 3-1 overtime decision to Connetquot's Kevin Kaminsky last week in the League I final. Weidler understands about failure, didn't lose his confidence and used the loss as motivation for yesterday's Suffolk County wrestling championships at the Indoor Sports Complex at SUNY-Stony Brook.

Patchogue-Medford coach Craig Kelskey called Weidler's loss a blessing in disguise. He thought it brought Weidler back to reality a little bit and made him focus more on this tournament.

Kelskey may have been right. An aggressive Weidler recorded a first-round pin in 5:57 and then used a first-period fireman's carry and three back points to build an 8-3 lead in his 8-5 quarterfinal win over top-seeded Chris Hughes of Centereach. Weidler moved into today's semifinal round against Babylon's Justin Kiernan today at 10 a.m. at SUNY-Stony Brook.

"I felt I should have been the top seed but Kaminsky wrestled a great match and beat me," Weidler said. "I knew the loss would make it a more difficult draw for me in the county, but to win this thing you have to beat the best out there. Each match is different. I wrestle depending on the style of the opponent."

It didn't matter who the opponents were for seven of

the eight defending county champions. Islip's Tom Longobardi (98), Longwood's Rason Phifer (112), Wyandanch's Russell Jones (145), Brentwood's Dan Bergin (145), Longwood's John Lange (155), Rocky Point's Rob Wyllie (167) and Newfield's Frank Ganter (250) all made it safely through the quarterfinals.

Lange, Wyllie and Ganter were pinning machines. Lange took all of 43 seconds and 1:12, Wyllie recorded pins in 48 seconds and 2:49, and Ganter toppled two of the big men in 1:11 and 1:30.

Bergin and Jones are on a collision course to meet in the final. Defending county champion Brett Chester (126) lost a physical match to Mike Uccellini of Hills East, 9-3. The decisive move came when the stocky Uccellini hit a five-point second-period move with 15 seconds left to open a 7-1 lead.

"We have similar styles and I just hit my move before he hit his," Uccellini said. "I also got pumped up when I saw a huge crowd float over to our match to watch. I guess they thought it was going to be a good one. I hope they liked it."

Hills East coach Joe Pennacchio did. Uccellini was one of three Thunderbirds to move into the semifinals. The most satisfying had to be the advancement of 138-pounder Darren Pascarella, who used a two-point reversal with 15 seconds left in his quarterfinal match to beat Sachem's Tom Mongiello, 2-0. Pascarella fought stomach cramps and increased his record to 29-0. It was a special win for the senior, who had lost in three consecutive county tournament quarterfinal rounds.

"I was never worried about it," Pascarella said. "Sure I thought about it, but now that I'm past the

quarters I'm confident I can win the county."

Hills East 112-pounder Matt Hickey also moved into the semifinals with two wins.

Patchogue-Medford leads the team scoring with 69 points, 19½ more than defending champion Longwood. "We had tough draws and fought our way through," Kelskey said. "The semis is where it all counts."

The unseeded Weidler's quest for a county title is two wins away. First he must beat the fourth-seeded Kiernan, the League VI champion, who recorded two pins yesterday. League IV champion Kevin David made his way into the semifinals opposite the second-seeded Kaminsky in the lower half of the 132-pound bracket. The third-seeded David (23-3) avenged two of his losses with a 4-1 decision over Pete Hutzler of Hauppauge for the league title and a 5-3 decision over Rob Relinger of West Islip in yesterday's first round.

SUFFOLK COUNTY WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

At Indoor Sports Complex, Stony Brook

Semifinal Pairings

91 — Zegarelli (DP) vs. Swallow (Lind), Halleran (NB) vs. Cintron (F), 98 — Longobardi (I) vs. Locascio (P-M), Ellison (Wy) vs. Short (Long), 105 — A. Bonilla (Hunt) vs. Massaro (WI), Martinez (Brent) vs. Bracero (New) 112 — Phifer (Long) vs. Bernholz (MtS), Hickey (HHHE) vs. L. Bonilla (Hunt), 119 — J. Amira (Hunt) vs. Forsythe (F), Mancuso (HB) vs. Walker (WI), 126 — Uccellini (HHHE) vs. Dowd (Conn), Edwards (Bell) vs. M. Wyllie (RP), 132 — Weidler (P-M) vs. Kiernan (Bab), David (Say) vs. Kaminsky (Conn), 138 — Pascarella (HHHE) vs. Morrison (SW-R), Lavey (Harb) vs. Maltese (Lind), 145 — Jones (Wy) vs. Peers (Whit), Maraggiolo (Bell) vs. Bergin (Brent), 155 — Lange (Long) vs. Matthews (Wy), Ilovic (Smith) vs. Tucci (MtS), 167 — R. Wyllie (RP) vs. Vecchio (Sach), J. Cardone (Bell) vs. Bacastow (WM), 177 — Crawford (Wy) vs. Hartman (Sach), Raptis (SW-R) vs. Minogue (P-M), Hvy — Majestic (P-M) vs. Enners (HB), Prole (Lind) vs. Feise (F), 250 — Ganter (New) vs. Hartig (Harb), Ramirez (P-M) vs. Henriquez (Whit).

Team Scores — Patchogue-Medford 69, Longwood 49½, Wyandanch 44½, Huntington 43½, Hills East 39½, Floyd 39, Bellport 38½, Lindenhurst 35, Brentwood 33, Harborfields 31½, Connetquot 31, Newfield 28, tie: Whitman and Mt. Sinai 27, Sachem 26½, tie: West Islip and Rocky Point, 26.