

Hines Is Best at Last

By Gregg Sarra
STAFF WRITER

This was his last chance. It was the last time Syosset's Kevin Hines would wear the red-and-black singlet of the Braves — unless he won the county wrestling tournament. That was one place Hines had not persevered, finishing fifth, third and third over the past three years.

Hines erased the frustration of those three years when he turned in an impressive 12-5 victory over MacArthur's Brian Saltzer to win the 119-pound weight class last night at the Nassau County wrestling championships at Nassau CC. The victory earned Hines a trip to the state tournament in Syracuse Feb. 28.

"He's been an unknown entity in this county over the past three years," said first-year Syosset coach Jamie St. John, who won two state titles at Port Jefferson. "He's a very tough kid with a very competitive nature."

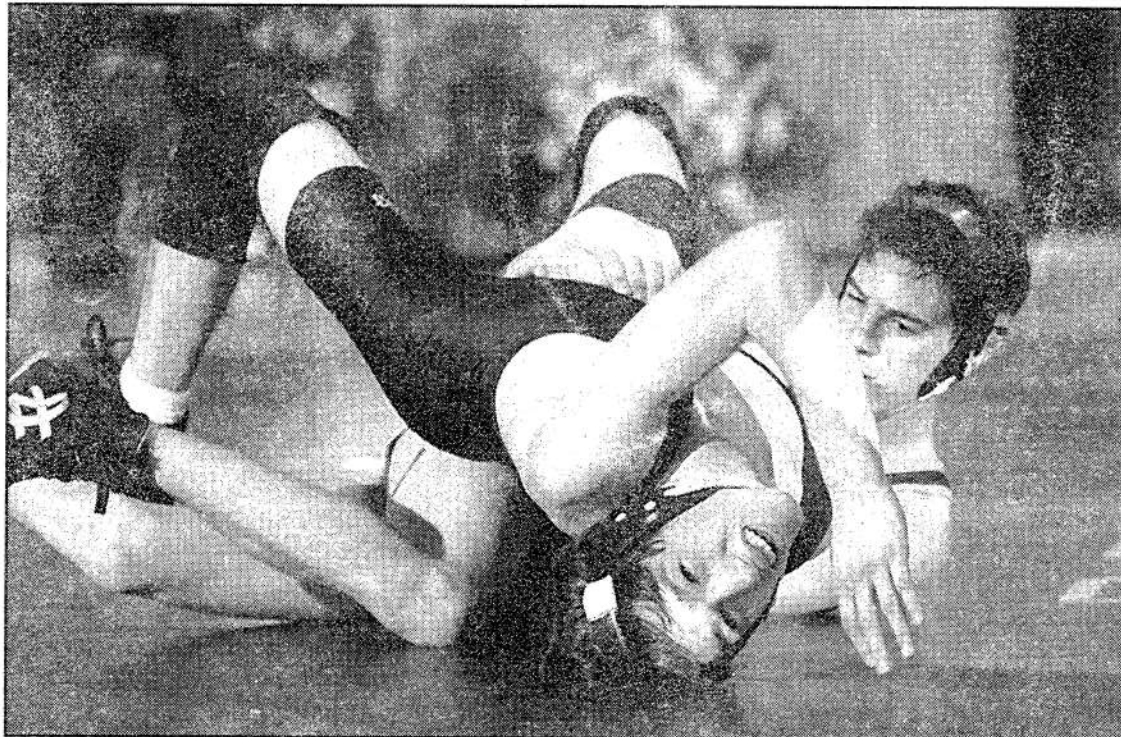
Hines moved to Syosset from Rochester as an eighth-grader. In five years of varsity wrestling he's compiled a 122-20 record and won four league titles. "Of all 122 wins this is the biggest, the very biggest," he said.

All 15 wrestlers seeded first in their respective weight classes made it to the finals. All six returning county champions reached last night's finals.

Baldwin's senior heavyweight Kevin Shippos (220), MacArthur senior Cartney Curnuck (140) and Bethpage junior Anthony Riccardi (112) each won a county title for the third time.

Shippos did it in grand fashion with four successive pins in a total time of 2:21 to earn the tournament's Most Outstanding Wrestler Award. He flattened Glen Cove's Ernest Baskin in 1:15 in the final for his 28th consecutive win, 27 by pin.

Riccardi (24-0), who came back from an assortment of injuries from the soccer season, won his third straight title



Newsday Photo / Phillip Davies

Joe Allen of Massapequa does everything but stand on his head in losing 103-pound final to Mepham's Mike McCann

with a victory over Massapequa junior Luke Palmisano (31-4), 7-4.

"He [Riccardi] missed the whole month of December because of injuries," Bethpage coach Ron Abatelli said. "But he's come back very strong and he's hitting his stride."

Mepham junior Mike McCann (34-1) successfully defended his county title with a 10-3 victory over Massapequa's Joe Allen (28-5) at 103 pounds. McCann placed sixth at the state tournament last year as a sophomore.

East Meadow's Steve Pedicini, a two-time All-America in soccer, won his 28th consecutive match with a 10-5 win over top-seeded Ron Serrano of MacArthur. Pedicini, who will attend Notre

Dame in the fall on a soccer scholarship, was the first to beat a top-seeded wrestler in the tournament.

Division senior Nick Bennett (34-1) used a takedown with 24 seconds left in the third period to edge top-seeded Kingsley Wedderburn of Freeport, 2-1, at 135 pounds. The victory earned him the Champion of Champions Award.

But it was a bittersweet night for the Bennett family. After Nick's win, cousin Bill Bennett, a sophomore and defending champion, was upended by MacArthur senior Curnuck (27-1), 8-2, at 140 pounds.

Long Beach senior Kevin Haggerty (32-0), who earned the Champion of Champions distinction in last year's

county tournament, won his second successive title when he beat Sewanhaka's Gerard Daddino (21-3) by technical fall at 5:44.

Joe Morrison (26-3) of Bellmore JFK edged Farmingdale's Angelo Lancia, 5-4, at 171 pounds to become the school's first champion since 1982 when Steve Delgado won the 167-pound class. Morrison's father, Chip, won a county title for East Meadow in 1968.

NASSAU COUNTY WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS At Nassau CC

96 — Jerold Limongelli (Massapequa) d. Mike Trotta (Oceanside), 10-5. 103 — Mike McCann (Mepham) d. Joe Allen (Massapequa), 10-3. 112 — Anthony Riccardi (Bethpage) d. Luke Palmisano (Massapequa), 7-4. 119 — Kevin Hines (Syosset) d. Brian Saltzer (MacArthur), 12-5. 125 — Steve Pedicini (East Meadow) d. Ron Serrano (MacArthur), 10-5. 130 — Jon Alarcon (Long Beach) d. Wes Blauberg (Massapequa), 6-4. 135 — Nick Bennett (Division) d. Kingsley Wedderburn (Freeport), 2-1. 140 — Cartney Curnuck (MacArthur) d. Bill Bennett (Division), 8-2. 145 — Chris Hirsch (East Meadow) d. Damien Armella (Massapequa), 11-2. 152 — Noel Thompson (Freeport) d. Natovich Tomasino (Long Beach), 6-1. 160 — Kevin Haggerty (Long Beach) ff. Gerard Daddino (Sewanhaka), 5:44. 171 — Joe Morrison (Bellmore JFK) d. Angelo Lancia (Farmingdale), 5-4. 189 — Terry Brown (Freeport) d. Joe Borra (MacArthur), 7-2. 220 — Kevin Shippos (Baldwin) p. Ernest Baskin (Glen Cove), 1:15. 275 — Ryan Fletcher (Glen Cove) p. Ray Tutku (Massapequa), 2:52. **Team Scores** — Massapequa 280, MacArthur 132, Freeport 127, Long Beach 120½, Bethpage 113½, East Meadow 100½, Farmingdale 100½, Division 98½, Glen Cove 90½, Baldwin 86½, Mineola 63, Wantagh 61, Valley Stream South 56, Herricks 53, Bellmore JFK 52, Lawrence 43, Oceanside 40, Port Washington 37½, Mepham 35, Locust Valley 34½, Syosset 32½. **Most pins/least time** — Shippos, 4 pins in 2:21. **Most Outstanding Wrestler/Champion of Champions** — Nick Bennett, Division.