

Massapequa Tops in Nassau

By Gregg Sarra

STAFF WRITER

The fans packed the Nassau Community College gym to the rafters. When all the seats were filled they stood three deep behind the railings to get a glimpse of Nassau's top wrestlers. What a show they saw.

Two of the first three bouts in last night's Nassau County wrestling championships went into sudden-death overtime. Defending county champion Ryan Kelly of Massapequa and Mike Trotta of Oceanside wrestled a barnburner at 112 pounds in a rematch of the Lawrence qualifier. For the second time in as many weeks, Kelly used a late reversal to hold off Trotta for a 2-0 title victory.

Division's Dan Carlon and Bethpage's Tom Paladino met at 125 pounds for the fourth time in two years, including the county title last year. Carlon won the first three meetings by scores of 4-3, 4-3 and 11-4. Last night would be different.

Paladino scored a reversal and a takedown to come away with a stunning 6-2 victory to claim the 135-pound weight class.

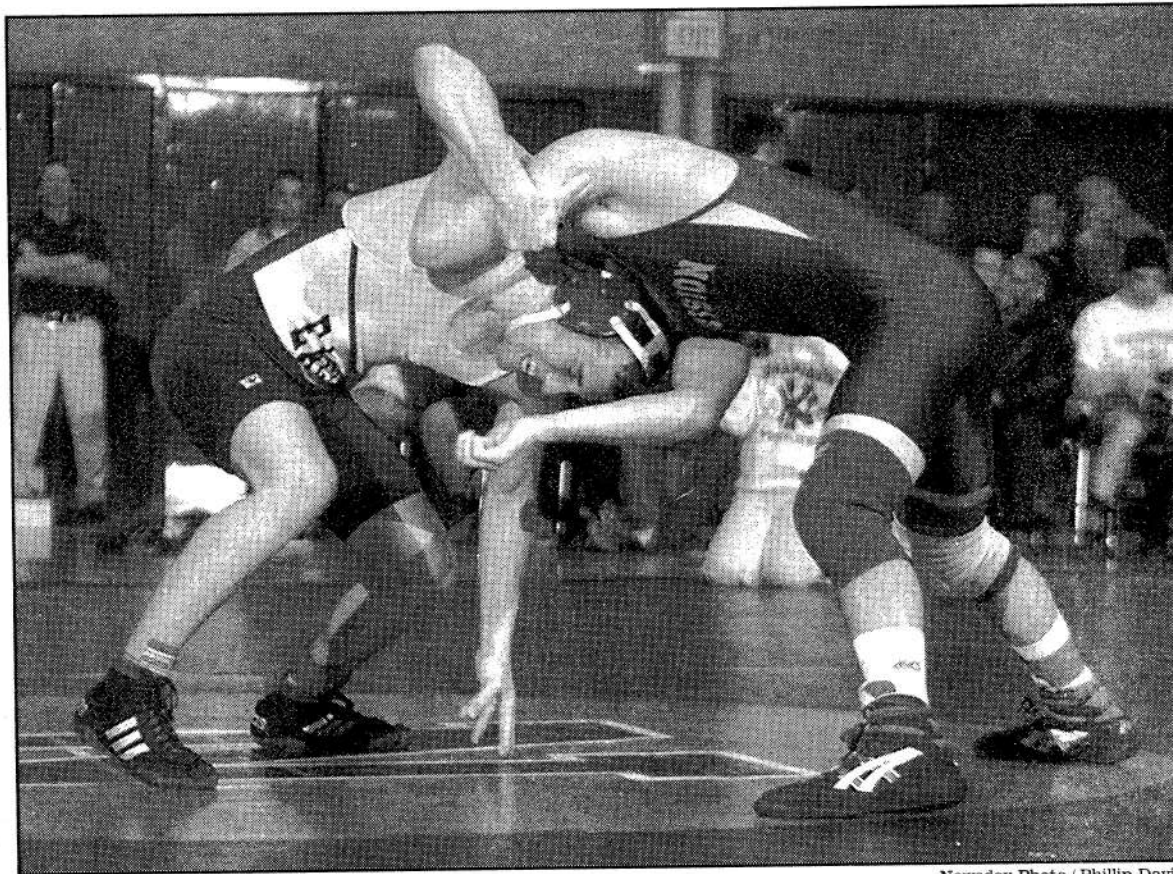
"I'm still in shock," Paladino said. "In the past I was nervous and I didn't wrestle aggressively and take my shots. This time I didn't want to look back and feel like I didn't wrestle my style and it worked out."

It worked out for Division's Bill Bennett, too. He shook off a vicious head butt in the second period to pound out a 7-4 win over Mepham's Wes Berger for the 152-pound title. It was the third county title for Bennett, who needed his head bandaged to stop the bleeding from over his right eye. "He jerked his head back and intentionally butted me," said Bennett, who had a large lump and a cut on his eyebrow. "You don't do that to guys in this sport. I'm just glad I won."

Long Beach junior Jon Masa has placed three times in the county tournament. Last night, he fought off Massapequa's Mike Lombardo for a 10-4 win in the 125-pound class.

"He was ready but you come to expect that from Massapequa kids," Masa said. "And now I'm ready for the states. I can't wait."

Neither can the four Freeport wrestlers who stormed the finals and came away with titles. Freeport's Eddie Gomez wasted no time winning the 160-pound championship. He threw Bethpage's Chris Romano on his back in the first 13 seconds and had him pinned in 17 seconds. Romano did a great job to reach the final, coming from an unseeded position and beating the second and third seeds.



Newsday Photo / Phillip Davies

After three losses to Division's Dan Carlon at 135 pounds, Bethpage's Tom Paladino, left, won fourth meeting last night

Freeport's Terry Brown (215) won his second county title and teammates Tyshawn Scarlett (103) and John Nuzzi (171) captured their first. Nuzzi's may have been the most impressive in the tournament. Nuzzi avenged losses to top-seeded John Kopacz of Herricks and second-seeded Pat Callahan of Massapequa to grab his crown.

He lost to Kopacz, 12-2, and was pinned by Callahan a week ago. Nuzzi pinned Kopacz in the semifinals in 5:10 and decisioned Callahan, 11-6, for the title. When asked to explain the dramatic turnaround, Nuzzi pounded his heart and said, "It all starts here, baby, right here."

It all ended with Massapequa. The Chiefs won the team title for the fifth straight year and crowned three champions in Joe Amalfitano (140), Tom Katsi-

giorgis (189) and Vinny D'Agostino (275).

D'Agostino punctuated the Chiefs' night when he took down state runner-up Dan Vicchiarelli as time expired for a 3-1 victory.

"Wow! Could you believe it?" Massapequa coach Gary Mims asked. "Wow! What a night."

NASSAU COUNTY WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS At Nassau CC Final results

96 — Sickie (BJFK) pin LeMonier (Lyn), 2:53. 103 — Scarlett (Free) dec. Murphy (IT), 4-4, overtime criteria. 112 — Holzer (IT) dec. Cruz (LB), 1-1, overtime criteria. 119 — Kelly (Mass) dec. Trotta (Oc), 2-0. 125 — Masa (LB) dec. Lombardo (Mass), 10-4. 130 — Bruno (Min) dec. Dennis (Oc), 12-3. 135 — Paladino (Beth) dec. Carlon (Div), 6-2. 140 — Amalfitano (Mass) dec. Walsh (LV), 7-6. 145 — Green (Mep) dec. Bielo (Beth), 6-0. 152 — Bennett (Div) dec. Berger (Mep), 7-4. 160 — Gomez (Free) pin Romano (Beth), :17. 171 — Nuzzi (Free) dec. Callahan (Mass), 11-6. 199 — Katsigiorgis (Mass) dec. Daddino (Sew), 5-3. 215 — Brown (Free) dec. Longo (Mass), 8-6. 275 — D'Agostino (Mass) dec. Vicchiarelli (Beth), 3-1. **Team Scores** — Massapequa 245. Freeport 160.5. Bethpage 144. Seafood 131.5. Long Beach 110.5. East Meadow 92. Bellmore JFK 91.5. Oceanside 74. Lawrence 77.5. Mepham 73.5. Division 62. Baldwin 56. Herricks 52. Manhasset 50. Locust Valley 43. Port Washington 39. **Most Outstanding Wrestler** — Tom Paladino (Bethpage), 135. **Champion of Champions** — Tom Paladino (Bethpage), John Nuzzi (Freeport). **Most pins/least time** — Travis Sickie, Bellmore 4 pins in 8:19. **Class A team champion** — Massapequa. **Class B** — Bethpage. **Class C** — Valley Stream North.