

Finnerty-Murphy a Thriller

By Gregg Sarra

STAFF WRITER

They kicked off the Dr. Robert Fallot Suffolk County wrestling championships in stunning fashion last night. East Islip's Rohan Murphy, the top seed at 96 pounds and unbeaten at the weight, and Brentwood's Tom Finnerty put on arguably one of the most memorable final-round opening bouts in county history.

Emotions ran high as Murphy, who wrestles despite having had his legs amputated when he was 4, and Finnerty squared off in front of a packed house of 5,619 fans at Stony Brook University.

Murphy opened a 6-2 lead and held that margin late in the third period before Finnerty stunned the crowd with a dramatic five-point move to take a 7-6 lead with 15 seconds remaining. Murphy squirmed and tried to elude the tight grip of Finnerty but could not get away as time expired.

What happened next drew the fans in the Sports Complex to their feet for more than two minutes.

As Brentwood celebrated Finnerty's breathtaking comeback in one corner of the mat, East Islip coach Guy Leggio, tears filling his eyes, hoisted Murphy and carried him to the side of the mat. The crowd went wild.

The outpouring of emotion tipped off a brilliant county tournament in which all five defending county champions repeated and advanced to the state tournament at the Onondaga County War Memorial in Syracuse March 2-3.

Huntington captured the team title for the second consecutive year. The Blue Devils had nine wrestlers place in the tournament — including two champions in defending state titlist Pat

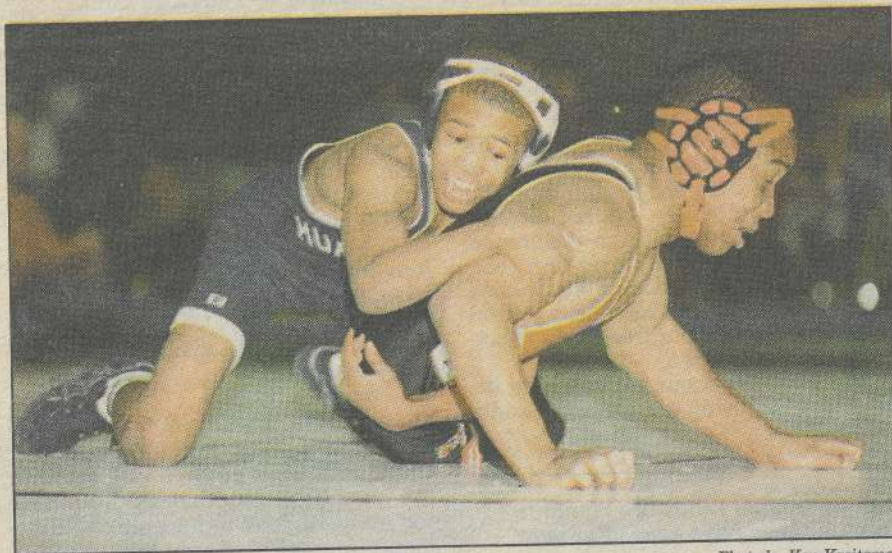


Photo by Ken Kreitzman

East Islip's Rohan Murphy, right, steadies himself en route to downing Huntington's Shawn Riley in 96-pound semifinals. Murphy then was defeated by Brentwood's Tom Finnerty.

Flynn (112) and Steven Palacios (125) — as coach Lou Giani increased his career total of county place-winners to a Suffolk-record 154. Amityville coach Joe Valla held the old record of 149.

The Blue Devils scored 167 points as Giani guided them to the school's eighth county team title. Only two other coaches, Cliff Clark (Bay Shore) and Joe Campo (Brentwood), had teams win eight county crowns.

Notes & Quotes: Central Islip continues to show marked improvement in the past three years. For the first time since 1978, the Musketeers had two county finalists, crowning Carlos Patrick a champion at 160 pounds after a 5-2 win over North Babylon's Sean Fehn. The school's last county champ was Victor Montalvo at 91 pounds. He finished second in the

state . . . Only four of the 30 wrestlers to advance to the final round were not league champions — which means winning the league is a big advantage in the seeding.

CHSAA Tournament. Keith Eckert (103) and Lucas Magnani (119), both from St. Anthony's, and Chaminade's Andrew Sampson (130) did it. At yesterday's CHSAA state tournament at Monsignor Farrell (S.I.), each wrestler succeeded in his bid to win three straight state titles. Magnani, a junior, also is a defending champion in the public school tournament and will look to repeat that title on March 2-3 in Syracuse. St. Anthony's won five individual titles in addition to the team crown.

Chaminade's Brian Benson decided Fordham Prep's Carl Majette, 3-2, to win the 125-pound title. Trail-

ing 1-0 in the third period, Benson escaped and recorded the takedown with 30 seconds left.

DR. ROBERT FALLOT

SUFFOLK COUNTY WRESTLING TOURNAMENT
Final — At Stony Brook University

96 — Finnerty (Brent) d. Murphy (EI), 7-6. 103 — Vaccaro (EI) d. Fiumano (Hunt), 10-2. 112 — Flynn (Hunt) d. Moramarco (MP), 8-2. 119 — Manarte (Sach) d. Fredette (WHB), 14-5. 125 — Palacios (Hunt) p. McCoy (NB), 7:31 OT. 130 — Roberts (Bell) d. Garced (Brent), 7-0. 135 — J. Iannello (Haup) d. Roth (HHHW), 7-4. 140 — Jackson (Amity) p. Ressa (Haup), 3:14. 145 — Melitto (PM) d. Sair (Hunt), 9-7. 152 — M. Patrovich (I) d. Viera (F), 11-2. 160 — Patrick (CI) d. Fehn (NB), 5-2. 171 — Robey (New) d. Burns (Com), 8-4. 189 — Adams (DP) d. Scioli (Bell), 7-6. 215 — Banks (Brent) d. Karbowski (PM) 6-4, OT. 275 — Gugliotta (Say) p. Adler (PJ), 1:16. **Most Outstanding Wrestler** — Steven Palacios (Huntington). **Champion of Champions** — Tom Finnerty (Brentwood). **Most pins/least time** — Ryan Robey (Newfield) 3 falls in 6:24. **Team scores** — Huntington 167, Brentwood 114.5, Patchogue-Medford 95, North Babylon 93.5, East Islip 88.5, Hauppauge 85, Sachem 83, Floyd 77.5, Central Islip 67.5, Newfield 62, Northport 59.5, Islip 58.5, Bellport 57.5, Lindenhurst 54.5, Shoreham-Wading River 54, Longwood 52.

Semifinal

96 — Murphy (EI) d. Riley (Hu), 5-3; Finnerty (Brent) d. R. Patrovich (I), 2-0. 103 — Vaccaro (EI) d. King (Hu), 8-1; Fiumano (Hu) d. Sganga (Lon), 6-0. 112 — Flynn (Hu) def. Colasunnono (Sach), by tech. fall, 4:54; Moramarco (NP) d. Dolson (RP), 9-2. 119 — Manarte (Sach) d. Hromada (HE), 10-5; Fredette (WHB) d. Roelli (Cop), 11-5. 125 — Palacios (Hu) d. Cummings (BS), 7-2; McCoy (NB) d. Dugin (WHB), 9-6. 130 — Roberts (Bell) def. Sokolowski (Sach), by tech. fall, 5:30; Garced (Br) p. Johansen (RP), 5:18. 135 — J. Iannello (Haup) d. Alfieri (MP), 13-3; Roth (HW) d. Summers (Lind), 8-2. 140 — Jackson (Am) d. Anastasia (PM), 8-2; Ressa (Haup) d. Miracola (SWR), 3-2. 145 — Melitto (PM) d. Falvra (EI), 7-1; Sair (Hunt) d. Piscak (WF), 3-1. 152 — M. Patrovich (I) def. Mentz (PM), by tech. fall, 5:37; Viera (CI) d. Buckman (Long), 8-6, OT. 160 — Fehn (NB) d. Isabell (Argyle), 4-3; Patrick (CI) d. Archer (WF), 16-5. 171 — Robey (New) p. Blumauer (Brent), 2:52; Burns (Com) d. Alpi (NB), 7-2. 189 — Scioli (Bell) d. Jean-Baptiste (Har), 3-2; Adams (DP) d. Rizzo (NP), 6-5. 215 — Banks (Brent) d. Dreyer (Conn), 6-5; Karbowski (PM) p. Beau brun (WW), 5:58. 275 — Gugliotta (Say) d. Apolain (EI), 9-0; Adler (PJ) d. Crisci (WF), 6-3. **Team scores** — Huntington 124.5, Brentwood 86.5, East Islip 77, Patchogue-Medford 76, North Babylon 69.5, Sachem 63.5, Hauppauge 60, Central Islip 59.5, Bellport 53.5, Floyd 53, Islip 49, Northport 47.5, Longwood 45, Newfield 43, Amityville 38.

CHSAA State Tournament

Final — At Monsignor Farrell

96 — Carl Parson (MSM) d. Vinny DeMarco (SF-B), 11-0; 103 — Keith Eckert (SA) d. Vinny Russo (SA), 9-4; 112 — John Wilzenbocker (C) d. Joe Drennen (SA), 10-8; 119 — Lucas Magnani (SA) d. Sal Pallante (SJS), 10-2; 125 — Brian Benson (C) d. Carl Majette (FP), 3-2. 130 — Andrew Sampson (C) d. Luke Alessi (SA), 16-5; 135 — John Hatzidakis (SA) d. Greg Hayes (C), 6-4 in OT. 140 — Chris Raab (SA) d. Dan DeVitoria (FP), 8-2. 145 — Stefan Serie (SA) p. Rich Crifasi (HT), 2:41; 152 — Harry Ocasio (MSM) p. Calm McCarthy (FP), :35; 160 — Matt Main (K) d. Jordan Arma (HT), 8-4; 171 — Brandon Booker (SF-B) p. Dave Fitzpatrick (K), 2:55; 189 — Sean Reilly (MSM) def. Joe Vuotto (SJS) by TF, 4:19; 215 — Chris Minogue (SA) d. Vincent Realmuto (SA), 7-0; 275 — Jason Forest (SJB) p. Tom Tamsent (SM-B), 1:34. **Most Outstanding Wrestler** — Brandon Booker (SF-B), 171. **Most pins/least time** — Jason Forest (SJB), 275, 3 in 3:39. **Team sportsmanship Award** — St. Anthony's Iron-Man Award — Andrew Sampson (C), 130; Brandon Booker (SF-B), 171. **Team Scores** — St. Anthony's 320.5, Chaminade 219.5, Fordham Prep (Queens) 170.5, St. Joseph by the Sea (S.I.) 130.5, St. Francis (Buffalo) 124.5, Mt. St. Michael's (Bronx) 113, Kellenberg 99, Holy Trinity 89, Monsignor Farrell (S.I.) 81, St. Joseph's Collegiate (Buffalo) 61, Salesian (New Rochelle) 55, St. Mary's (Buffalo) 41, Xaverian (Brooklyn) 38, Nazareth (Queens) 32.5, St. Peter's (S.I.) 28, St. John the Baptist 28, Canisius (Buffalo) 23, Xavier 18, Niagara Catholic (Buffalo) 17.