



Photo by Joseph D. Sullivan

Brentwood's Tom Finnerty keeps control of West Islip's Tom McLaughlin during quarterfinal 96-pound match at Suffolk championships

Quick Pins Put Finnerty On Road to County Title

By Gregg Sarra

STAFF WRITER

He posted two pins in barely more time than it takes to complete a period. It took Brentwood's Tom Finnerty only 2 minutes, 20 seconds to flatten two opponents in the opening rounds of the Suffolk County wrestling championships Friday at Stony Brook University.

Finnerty, who earned the 96-pound title a year ago with a stunning five-point move in the waning seconds over East Islip's Rohan Murphy, didn't need such dramatics through the quarterfinal round of this tournament. He won easily.

Finnerty, a senior, improved his record to 29-0. He pinned Joe Macaluso of Islip in 1:31 and Tom McLaughlin of West Islip in 49 seconds to move into Saturday's semifinal round against Mike Rudden of Connetquot at 10 a.m.

"He takes no one for granted," Brentwood coach Bob Panariello said. "We've seen too many quality kids lose over the years — when they were expected to win. He's been our leader all season and I know he's very focused on winning another county title."

Finnerty is on his way to a second county crown. But the two overtime losses at the state tournament last year are the focus of his ire. He won one match at the state championships

in Syracuse and failed to place last year. That disappointment serves as fuel for motivation to go out and capture a state title. Brentwood hasn't crowned a state champion since 1984, when Joe Plante earned the 132-pound title.

"I lost to the kids that took third and sixth last year in the state tournament and I know I could have beaten them both," Finnerty said. "I've done everything possible to get ready for this opportunity. I've already won the county in my mind. I'm very confident about that."

Finnerty is an Honor Society student and an excellent role model for the rest of the Indians wrestlers. He is highly regarded by opposing coaches and expected to get through the county tournament and find success upstate.

"He had the jitters last year at the states," Sachem coach Jack Mahoney said. "He'll be more physically mature this time around. Younger wrestlers can't match his speed and strength. This year, he's primed because he's had a lot of matches at 103 pounds and he's got that state experience."

Only one of the top seeds was beaten in the first day of competition. Riverhead's John Capwell was pinned in 45 seconds by unseeded Mike Basso of Rocky Point at 160 pounds in the opening round.

Hauppauge's top-seeded Gavin Ress survived a first-round scare when he edged Sachem's unseeded Rick Caravaggio, 1-0, in a quarterfinal. The wrestlers battled to a score-

less overtime tie before Ress escaped with five seconds remaining in the sudden-victory period. Ress went out of bounds with Caravaggio trying to hold on and was awarded an escape for the win. The call drew a chorus of boos from the crowd as Caravaggio stood in disgust. "The Hauppauge kid went out of bounds but turned and faced his opponent, who was still on the mat," referee Ken Cellan said. "and that's a point."

Riverhead moved three wrestlers into the semifinal round and leads the team scoring with 66 points. It's the first time the Blue Waves have led in team scoring since 1963. Huntington, the two-time defending team champion, has 47 points in seventh place. Brentwood (54), Floyd (48) and Islip (53) have four semifinalists each, the most of any team.

SUFFOLK INDIVIDUAL WRESTLING TOURNAMENT

At Stony Brook University — Semifinal Pairings

96 — Finnerty (Brentwood) vs. Rudden (Connetquot); Torres (Brentwood) vs. Mulzoff (Whitman). 103 — Masciale (Newfield) vs. Iannello (Hauppauge); Rosado (Central Islip) vs. Tutunjian (Longwood). 112 — Flynn (Huntington) vs. Raynor (Riverhead); Patrovich (Islip) vs. Spanga (Longwood). 119 — Vaccaro (East Islip) vs. Camarda (Islip); Arias (Brentwood) vs. Fredette (Westhampton). 125 — Manarte (Sachem) vs. Sterling (Copiague); McCready (Shoreham-Wading River) vs. Palacios (Huntington). 130 — Hromada (Half Hollow Hills East) vs. Song (Hauppauge); Malcolm (Amityville) vs. Kizis (Kings Park). 135 — Ress (Hauppauge) vs. Johansen (Rocky Point); Cummings (Bay Shore) vs. Anastasia (Patchogue-Medford). 140 — Miracola (Shoreham) vs. Frieberger (Ward Melville); Sykes (Sachem) vs. Lucas (West Babylon). 145 — Sair (Huntington) vs. Fraser (Amityville); Barone (Floyd) vs. Ferrugiari (West Islip). 152 — Viera (Central Islip) vs. Stevenson (Riverhead); Dini (Sayville) vs. Bartoli (Islip). 160 — Forza (Lindenhurst) vs. Newsom (Patchogue); Lewors (Harborfields) vs. Archer (Floyd). 171 — Piscak (Floyd) vs. Goodale (Riverhead); Coffin (Smithtown) vs. Mentz (Patchogue). 189 — Parris (North Babylon) vs. Mahaffy (Whitman); Strelter (Harborfields) vs. Blumenauer (Brentwood). 215 — McQuade (Longwood) vs. Congero (Eastport); Whitfield (Islip) vs. Taylor (Copiague). 275 — Navarro (Whitman) vs. Casarona (Smithtown); Walker (East Hampton) vs. Crisci (Floyd). **Team Scores** — Riverhead 66, Hauppauge 55, Brentwood 54, Islip 53, Longwood 52, Floyd 48, Huntington 47, Patchogue-Medford 40, North Babylon 38, Sachem 34, Whitman 31, Central Islip 30, Smithtown 30, Westhampton 28, Shoreham-Wading River 28.

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