

# Just Like His Coach

Syracuse — It pays to pay attention.

Just ask Kellenberg's Steve Conlon, who reached the 98-pound final of the state wrestling championships last night at the Onondaga County Convention Center.

Conlon led 11-2 late in the third period of his semifinal bout against Nathan Haig when the Canajoharie wrestler defaulted at 5:02 because of an injury.

The win made Conlon only the second Catholic League wrestler in 13 years to reach the final. It also gave him something in common with his coach, Robert Murphy, who was the first Catholic League finalist.

"Now we have something in common," Conlon said. "His confidence wore off on me and he showed me the way."

Conlon also looked to become only the second Catholic League wrestler to win a state title. The first was Murphy, who won a state title for Chaminate at 215 in 1986.

"Some kids become too good and stop listening," Murphy said. "Not Steve. He feels he can learn from every kid in the practice room from the inexperienced ones to the veterans. I knew I had someone special that could perform up here when I saw how he developed after last year."

Conlon finished 2-2 and failed to place at last year's tournament.

"I knew what it would take to win here," Conlon said. "So I worked for it."

Said Murphy, "He's the total package — a great student, exceptional athlete and a nice kid. He's humble but not afraid. I think he can win the title."

## Hey, pal, take a seat

"Sit down" was the call heard most often at the Onondaga County Convention Center this weekend.

Renovations at the Onondaga War Memorial forced the state tournament to move to the Convention Center, a building designed and used as an exhibition hall. The War Memorial, which hosted the tournament the past 19 years and 24 times in 31 years and accommodates 7,000, is expected to be ready for the 1993-94 tournament.

"I can't go through another experience like this," Suffolk wrestling chairman Paul Brodmerkel said. "No one is comfortable, the seating is inadequate. It's very bad."

Without tier seating, visibility to all four mats was poor and the hall was only able to accommodate 4,200 people.

"There is poor spectator visibility from virtually every seat," Nassau sectional chairman Cliff Forziat said. "The people are trying to adapt, but this was not a good alternate site."

Reed Hawke, the state wrestling chairman and tournament director, announced yesterday that New Channels of Syracuse would show the finals on closed-circuit television to accommodate the overflow crowd of about 2,000. Large screens were set up in a separate room at the Convention Center.

"I drove 260 miles for this?" screamed an unhappy woman in the lobby. "This is tragic. My son is wrestling the biggest match of his life and I can't see him. Whose idea was this anyway?"

## Nassau disappointing

The Nassau sectional squad had slim hopes of improving upon last year's seventh-place finish because eight of its 14 wrestlers were eliminated without placing.

Nassau had five semifinalists and another wrestler in the wrestlebacks. However, four semifinalists lost, with only Long Beach's Aldy Teran (155) making it into the final.

Nassau had 74 points and was in seventh place after the semifinal round, with little chance of moving up.

"This is not what we expected," sectional coach Gary Mims of Massapequa said. "Our inexperience was a real factor."

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## STATE WRESTLING NOTEBOOK

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**Gregg  
Sarra**

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