

# Suffolk Dominates Again

## Four titlists help grab 10th team crown in last 19

By Gregg Sarra

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Syracuse — The Suffolk sectional team paraded six wrestlers into the finals of the state wrestling championships late Saturday night at the Onondaga County War Memorial before 7,328 fans.

And when it was over, a variety of feelings had swept over the enormous standing-room-only crowd that packed this small hockey rink in upstate New York. Once again, Suffolk County was the dominant region as 11 of its 15 wrestlers placed in the tournament and the section won the team title for the 10th time in 19 years.

Only one of three defending state champions from Long Island was able to repeat, but three other wrestlers were elated to grab a crown. East Islip junior Rob Vaccaro won his second straight title, this one at 103 pounds; Bellport's Dan Roberts earned the top spot at 130 pounds, Amityville's Uthman Jackson took the 140-pound title and Islip's Mike Patrovich claimed the 152-pound crown.

Vaccaro pinned St. Anthony's Keith Eckert in 2:50, but not before the Friars senior recorded a takedown against the undefeated East Islip junior. Vaccaro hadn't allowed a point throughout the tournament before facing Eckert, who had a fabulous run at the state title.

The elation from Vaccaro's victory hadn't even worn off when Huntington's Pat Flynn took the mat against Monroe-Woodbury's Mike Mormile in the 112-pound final. Flynn beat Mormile for the 103-pound crown a year ago and said he would find himself embroiled in a wild rematch.

Suffolk's smiles were wiped away quickly when Mormile stunned the crowd, throwing the previously unbeaten Flynn to his back for a first-period pin in 1:31. The victory earned Mormile the tournament's most outstanding wrestler award.

The move might have surprised the officials on the mat. Television replays showed that Flynn's shoulders were not on the mat and that the call might have come too quickly.

As Flynn's camp tried to console the fallen Blue Devil, St. Anthony's junior Lucas Magnani tried to become the first CHSAA wrestler to win two state public school titles. Magnani dropped a 13-9 decision to Medina's rugged J.R. Roberts, who overpowered the slick Magnani throughout the match. Magnani trailed 11-9 with five seconds left and missed a headlock, giving up two more points for the final margin.

Bellport's Roberts got Suffolk back in the winner's circle when he dumped Lowville's Josh Herzig, 6-2, at 130 pounds. Roberts (35-0), who bench-presses 325 pounds, was too strong for Herzig, and he became the school's first state champ.

"He can't even enjoy this [tonight] because all he's talking about is the nationals," Bellport coach Rick Herrmann said. "He's just so excited. He told me last year after he finished fourth that he'd come back and win it. And he kept that promise."

After Hauppauge's Justin Iannello dropped a 7-2 decision in the 135-pound final, Amityville's Jackson engaged in a memorable brawl with Hicksville's Mike Williams at 140 pounds.

Jackson allowed three takedowns and what appeared to be two back points on a Granby roll and somehow managed to come out an 8-7 winner. Jackson led 5-1 before Williams, who forced the action throughout the match, gained a reversal to make it 5-3 and rolled Jackson to his back.

No points were awarded, to the dismay of the Hicksville coaching staff and the crowd, which booed lustily. Jackson also was penalized two points for stalling and Williams, frustrated by the officiating and Jackson's stall tactics, lost his composure. He was

called for fleeing the mat and penalized a point for throwing his headgear late in the third period.

"That was the worst officiating I've ever seen," Hicksville coach Tom Glen said. "They stole the title from him. It's just terrible when a kid does everything to get here and then has it taken away. It's very frustrating."

To Williams' credit, he hugged Jackson at center mat.

"This wasn't the way it was supposed to go," Williams said. "I thought I had him a few times. I shouldn't have thrown the gear . . . everyone agreed that I got [cheated]."

With the Williams-Jackson bout finished, Islip's undefeated Patrovich stepped to the mat against Joe Mazzurco of Mahopac in the 152-pound final. Mazzurco edged Patrovich in double overtime in last year's championship.

Revenge was sweet for Patrovich. The Bucs senior dominated the entire bout and came away with a 7-2 decision. The win gave the Patrovich family its first state champ. Mike's brother Joe was state runner-up for Connetquot in 1999 at 160 pounds.

"While the other kids were headed over to Fire Island this summer, Mike was going out to Michigan to wrestle," said Islip coach Joe Patrovich, Mike's father. "He's lived for this for a year."

Patrovich scored two early takedowns and Mazzurco found no open shots late in the bout. "This was the culmination of all the things he did throughout the offseason," Joe Patrovich said. "He earned this."

**Notes & Quotes:** All six Suffolk finalists entered the finals with undefeated records. Suffolk was so overwhelming that its 13th team crown was captured before the third-place round was wrestled . . . The CHSAA had two finalists for the first time since the sectional team joined the public schools tournament in 1981 . . . Amityville's Uthman Jackson was the first Warrior to reach the finals since 1968, when coach Norm Maisel was a rookie. Maisel's son, Billy, is in his fourth year coaching at Amityville . . . Huntington coach Lou Gianì has a state record 40 place-winners, including 19 champions. Sachem's Jack Mahoney has presided over 28 state place-winners . . . Sayville's Chris Gugliotta was the school's first state place-winner since 1983, when Peter Yozzo won the title at 132 pounds. Gugliotta finished fourth.