

# LaBella Shows His Resolve in Reaching Final

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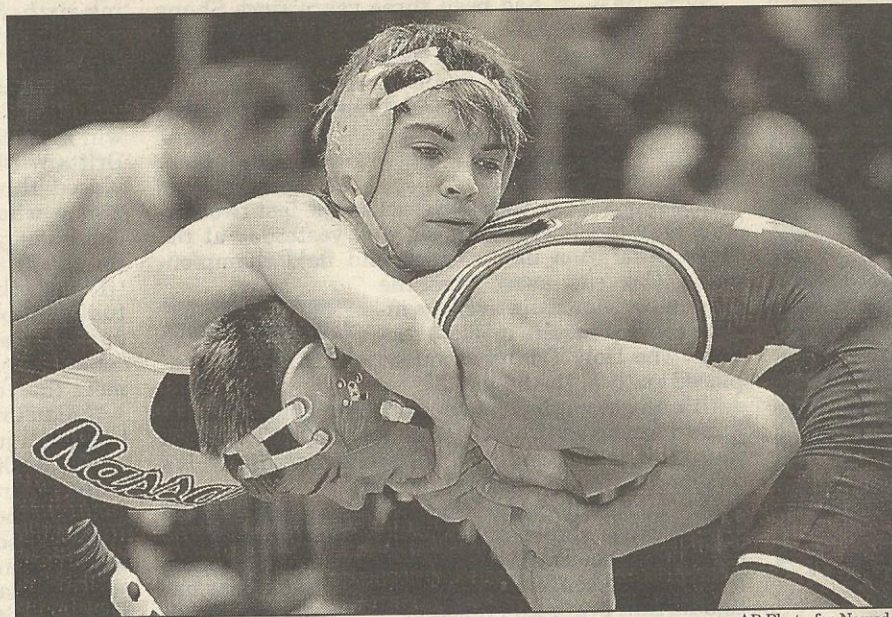
Syracuse — Mike LaBella hardly could speak through the hacking, huffing and hearty cough. The Massapequa senior held up one finger, paused for a moment and drank cherry Gatorade before he could complete his thought.

If LaBella could barely complete a sentence, it was a wonder the 6-1, 189-pounder could complete a six-minute bout. Yet there was LaBella, weakened throughout the past week with a sore throat and flu-like symptoms, going the distance in his 6-4 semifinal victory over Mike Hadley of Section III's Carthage at the state wrestling championships yesterday in the Onondaga War Memorial. LaBella advanced to face Section II champ Mike Sanacore in the final late last night.

## STATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

"I wasn't going to pull out just because I have been sick," LaBella said. "I was going to be here no matter what. Even if I had a broken nose, it wasn't going to stop me. I have been dreaming about this for my whole life."

LaBella overcame his physical sluggishness as he avoided a takedown in the final 1:24 to hold on for the win. He escaped to take a two-point lead after he suffered a takedown three seconds earlier. LaBella, with a 5-2 advantage,



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Division's Chris Hagmaier (130) grabs Webster-Schroeder's Andrew Krieger in 9-3 loss.

started the final period in a neutral position after he converted a shot to score the decisive takedown with 48 seconds left in the second period.

"He is a hard-nosed type of kid that never complains," Massapequa coach Gary Mims said. "He is a prime example of what it takes to be mentally tough, and he hasn't made any excuses."

Plainedge's Jamie Sgaglione (119)

and MacArthur's Gian Villante (215), returning place-winners, also advanced to the finals, as Nassau stood in fourth place after the semifinals with 113 points. Suffolk is third with 114½.

Sgaglione recorded his second takedown with 1:30 left to build a four-point lead en route to a 5-2 victory over Eddie Ortiz of New Rochelle (Section I) in a quarterfinal bout. Villante

worked Zach Zerniak of Franklin Academy (X) with five takedowns and two sets of near-fall points for an 18-9 victory in his quarterfinal. Villante faced Mike Patterson of Wayne (V) late last night. Patterson defeated Villante in last year's semifinal.

"It's not over until my last match," Villante said. "I'm flowing right now, but without one more win, it won't mean anything to me."

East Meadow's Al Tropiano (96), Division's Chris Hagmaier (130), Long Beach's Jose Rodriguez, MacArthur's Adam Molano (152) and Farmingdale's Steve Panarelli (171) lost in the semis.

Kevin Smith of Mexico (III) used two takedowns and a reversal to beat Tropiano, 6-1. Hagmaier allowed two takedowns and two near-fall points in his 9-3 loss to Andrew Krieger of Webster-Schroeder (V). Bay Shore's John Cummings rolled Rodriguez to his back for a pin 39 seconds into the second period. Josh Glenn of Johnson City (IV) built a 5-0 lead before he pinned Molano in 3:03.

Panarelli could not escape in the final 51 seconds and fell, 5-4, to Elliot Smith of Gouverneur (X). Panarelli gave up a controversial takedown at the edge of the mat in the final minute to lose his one-point lead. He also allowed a reversal nine seconds into the second period to fall behind 3-2.34 gain