

Sachem East is making noise

■ The "other" Sachem is also doing well at the state wrestling meet

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ALBANY — There was a time when the Sachem wrestling program was one of the most feared in the state. Coach Jack Mahoney built a winning legacy over a 32-year period and crowned 37 county champions in that span.

STATE DIVISION I CHAMPIONSHIPS

Then came the fall of 2004, his 33rd year, and the opening of Sachem East High School as the district split its students among two high schools, the aforementioned and Sachem North.

Mahoney saw wrestlers he'd coached since the KID wrestling program moved over to Sachem East. And he knew they'd be in good hands.

"We're all still Sachem and all the coaches are guys I've coached and we all do the same thing," he said. "We all pull for each other."

So it wasn't really odd to see Sachem North assistant coach Ray Pickersgill in the same corner with Sachem East coach Sean O'Hara and his assistant Isaac Ramaswamy as heavyweight Matt Ferber battled his way to a 7-2 victory over Arlington's Noel Clarke in a quarterfinal bout of the Division I state wrestling championships Friday before a crowd of 5,200 at Pepsi Arena.

"[Pickersgill] trains Ferber and he's a big part of Matt's development," O'Hara said. "Matt worked throughout the entire offseason and he's so physically gifted. His mental makeup is extraordinary and when the pressure is on, he performs at the top of his game. He wrestled very well [Friday]."

Ferber (36-2), Sachem East's first county champion, will meet Matt Daniels (28-2) of Niagara-Wheatfield (Section VI) in Saturday's 215-pound semifinal round at 11 a.m.

"Ferber is the first and the start of a new tradition at Sachem East," O'Hara said. "And it's a great thing to get a county champion in our first year."

If Ferber wins two more Saturday, he'll also be the school's first state champion.

"We're two teams but we all work together," said Mahoney, who will be inducted into the

National Wrestling Hall of Fame in Stillwater, Okla., on April 15. "It's all Sachem, anyway you look at it."

Sachem North had Chris Iorio, Suffolk's county champion at 125 pounds, who earned the most outstanding wrestler award in the county tournament. Iorio's workout partner was Ramaswamy, even though he coached at Sachem East. Iorio was Mahoney's 38th county champion in 33 years. If Mahoney wanted, he could take a

half credit on Ferber — so make it 38½ champs.

Iorio let a 4-2 lead slip away and lost in a quarterfinal bout.

He's one of eight Suffolk wrestlers alive in the wrestleback rounds.

"He missed a few takedowns in the first period," Mahoney said. "And the kid got an escape and a dump late in the match to beat him."

Notes & quotes: Suffolk moved eight wrestlers into the semifinals, including defending state champ Alton Lucas (34-0) of West Babylon at 160 ... Andre Harrison (34-2) of Freeport used an escape with one second left in double overtime for a 2-1 victory over Andrew Stella of Sweet Home (VI) at 130 ... East Meadow's undefeated Matt DeLuca (37-0) needed double overtime to beat Eric VanPatten of Scotia-Glenville (II), 7-6, in a quarterfinal ... Islip's Ryan Patrovich (34-2) has not allowed a point in two impressive wins at 152.