

Suffolk Takes State Crown

8 capture individual titles

By Gregg Sarra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Syracuse — It was all Suffolk County at the state wrestling championships last night at the Onondaga War Memorial.

Suffolk crowned eight individual champions and scored 242½ points to win its first team title since 1989. The point total was four shy of the state record set by Suffolk in 1986.

"It was the two weeks of preparation," said Sachem state champion Jason Kraft (155), voted the tournament's most outstanding wrestler. "We were a team pulling for each other."

Added Longwood state champion Duane Thompson (138), "We were separated at the start of the practices and then we came together. It was beautiful. Kraft was my workout partner."

Since when does the Longwood and Sachem wrestlers embrace in a show of togetherness? Last night was a start.

"It wasn't typical Longwood-Sachem rivalry," Kraft said. "It was one team for one goal."

Longwood crowned three champions to tie a state record, shared by Brentwood (1971) and Mepham (1964).

"And all three finished undefeated," Longwood coach Mike Picozzi said. "I'm feeling just great. The kids worked very hard to tie the record and prove they were the best in the state."

That sentiment also was felt at Sachem, where coach Jack Mahoney hadn't had a state champion in three years. Last night, he had titlists in Kraft and 98-pounder John Carvalheira.

Kraft dominated Mitch Clark of Canton with a variety of takedowns for a 13-6 win. Carvalheira won 5-3 over Gary Wolf of Beaver River, surviving an overhead cradle when he was put to his back with five seconds left but somehow kicked his way out of the move.

"It came down to that last move," Mahoney said. "We were dying."

And rightfully so. Carvalheira almost gave up two points on the move but the referee only counted for one second instead of the two needed for the points.

"Luckily I wasn't tired and he couldn't hold me," Carvalheira said. "The extra practice with coach [Mike] Newell paid off."

Herricks Louis DiMaria (126) was the lone state champion for Nassau, which

finished seventh. He used five double-leg takedowns, including a first-period takedown in eight seconds, for a 10-7 win over Baldwinsville's John DeMoors.

"I've always had tough draws in my weight classes and tough breaks my whole career," DiMaria said. "But my brother always told me the breaks even out and to stick with it."

Brian Fischenich (91) became Huntington's 15th state champion under coach Lou Giani, the most of any coach in the state, when he posted a technical fall in 5:44 over Freepport sophomore James Hieronymous.

"He did a great job," Giani said. "Now he's one of the boys."

Giani was referring to the fact that Fischenich's name will be inscribed in a star outside the school mat.

"It's an honor to be a part of the tradition," Fischenich said.

Keith Matias became Centereach's first-ever state champion when he won the 105-pound class. He built a 7-1 first-period lead and beat Bethpage's James Douglas, 7-4.

"He was really strong," Matias said. "If I didn't feel that big move I would've been in trouble."

Matias scored five points after Douglas moved forward and lost his balance and Matias took him down and put him to his back. "He made a mistake and I capitalized," Matias said. "Sometimes you need a little luck."

Luck had nothing to do with the Suffolk team's performance.

NEW YORK STATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS At Onondaga War Memorial In Syracuse Final Results

91 — Brian Fischenich (Huntington) def. James Hieronymous (Freepport) by tech. fall, 5:44. 98 — John Carvalheira (Sachem) def. Gary Wolff (Beaver River, III), 5-3. 105 — Keith Matias (Centereach) def. James Douglas (Bethpage), 7-4. 112 — Alex Croog (Brighton, V) def. Ted Secoolish (Johnson City, IV), 6-3. 119 — Ron Voeburg (Elmira Free Academy) def. Rob Bashaw (Peru, VII), 7-4. 126 — Louis DiMaria (Herricks) def. John DeMoors (Baldwinsville, III), 10-7. 132 — John Morello (Lockport, VI) def. Chad Henkin (Rocky Point), 4-2, in overtime. 138 — Duane Thompson (Longwood) def. Shawn Nautel (Niskayuna, II), 3-0. 145 — John Lange (Longwood) def. Matt Manico (Colonia, II), 6-0. 155 — Jason Kraft (Sachem) def. Mitch Clark (Canton, X), 13-6. 167 — Mike Quaglio (John Jay East Fishkill, I) def. Eric Gross (Medina, VI), 9-2. 177 — Kerry McCoy (Longwood) def. Ryan HammerSmith (Clarence, VI), 5-2. Hvy — Jamie Huntington (Whitehall, II) def. Casey Lamb (Victor, V), 7-3. 250 — Jason Cohen (West Hill) def. Jason Spector (Queensbury, II), 3-2. Most Outstanding Wrestler — Jason Kraft, Sachem.

Team Scores — Suffolk 242½, Albany-Schenectady II 185½, Syracuse III 170, Buffalo VI 134, Westchester I 133, Binghamton IV 129½, Nassau 128, Rochester V 102, St. Lawrence County X 47½, Plattsburgh-Champlain VII 43, Catskills IX 29, CHSAA 25½, PSAL 18.

Unique Title Win for West Islip's Cohen

By Gregg Sarra
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Syracuse — His mother said it was like waiting for someone to have a baby. His father said he was having an anxiety attack.

Their son, West Islip 250-pounder Jason Cohen, said it wasn't a big deal. But it was.

Cohen boarded a police paddy wagon at 3:55 p.m. yesterday with officials, sectional chairmen, coaches and his opponent and left the Onondaga War Memorial, the site of the state wrestling championships, to go to nearby Fowler High School.

Once there, he used a first-period takedown and third-period escape to earn a 3-2 victory over

ship. "It was eerie," West Islip coach Tony Mellino said. "A state title match in a closed gym with 13 people. A very quiet and subdued atmosphere."

"It was an old, run-down gym and you could hear a pin drop when we walked in, so I put on my headphones," Cohen said. "But a match is a match and a mat's a mat. The weird thing was that we sat next to each other on the way there. Do you ever see two football teams going to a game on the same bus? And we were banging heads in five minutes."

Because of a measles outbreak last week in Glens Falls, the matches at 155 and 250 involving two wrestlers from the Glens Falls area were moved to Fowler, in a ruling by Onondaga County Health

Cohen's parents, who were forced to wait at the War Memorial, were not happy with the idea of not being able to watch their son's match and felt deprived of not being able to share in the experience.

"We've watched Jason wrestle since the seventh grade," said his father, Mel. "And now they've taken his crowning achievement away from us. Paul Broderick [video taped] the match for us but it won't be the same. I'm crushed. First or second don't matter, being there did."

Cohen's parents waited in front of the War Memorial for the return of the police vehicle.

Cohen was dropped off across the street, then appeared in a walkway and looked toward his parents