

Four new No. 1's take over in latest poll *Wed Jan 25, 2023*

WRESTLING: NORTH JERSEY INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM RANKINGS

Sean Farrell

NorthJersey.com USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

Four weight classes have a new No. 1 after a massive shakeup to the North Jersey individual wrestling rankings this week.

The first is DePaul transfer and state champion Adrian DeJesus. He moved to the top of the list at 120 pounds after making his season debut last week.

St. Joseph sophomores Ryan Burton (165) and Rocco Dellagatta (175) climbed their way up, too, by beating the previous No. 1 on Sunday in the Bergen County tournament.

Another big switch comes at 215 pounds. Clifton senior Joseph Abill leapfrogs Bergen Catholic's AJ Fricchione, who lost to CBA's Robert Canterino.

All but three weight classes changed in some capacity due to county tournament results or wrestlers moving to a new spot in the lineup.

West Milford's Benjamin Marchetto (113) and Don Bosco's Ben Garcia (150) both return at their respective weights.

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106 pounds

1 Johnathon McGinty, St. Joseph

21-4

2 Jack Bergmann, Lakeland 21-2

3 Nathan Braun, Bergen Catholic

15-3

4 Gennaro Marzocca, Paramus Catholic 11-5

5 Jonathan Rotolo, Old Tappan 16-3

113 pounds

1 VincentPaino,St.Joseph20-5

2 DevinRyan,NewMilford21-2

3 MalikAsfour,Lodi11-6

4 Benjamin Marchetto, West Milford 18-2

5 Ethan Smith, Paramus Catholic

16-7

120 pounds

1 AdrianDeJesus,DePaul5-0

2 DylanRoss,ParamusCatholic7-3

3 Santino Rodriguez, Don Bosco

17-4

4 Connor Kerwin, Passaic Valley

16-3

5 Ismael Vertedor, Passaic Tech

24-1

126 pounds

1 Brian Melamud, Bergen Catholic

8-3

2 RyanLangenmayr,Lakeland22-2

3 MarcoAlarcon,DonBosco16-7

4 SowzrawcaTsay,WayneHills20-1

5 JamesSloan,St.Joseph13-13

132 pounds

1 DonnyAlmeyda,St.Joseph15-6

2 RyanHartung,NewMilford17-4

3 ColinMenier,WestMilford17-3

4 Dean Costantino, Secaucus 23-2

5 JoeyRondinelli,DonBosco3-1

Notes: County third Rondinelli fills a vacant spot with Langenmayr dropping down a weight.

138 pounds

1 Mateo Sgambellone, St. Joseph

18-7

2 August Hibler, Bergen Catholic

10-3

3 ChristianFojon,Ramsey25-1

4 Adam Hamdeh, Passaic Tech18-1

5 GeorgeBinikos,Tenafly25-2 Notes: Binikos, another county third, makes his first appearance with Paramus Catholic star George Hufnagel out for the season.

144 pounds

1 YannisCharles,St.Joseph11-3

2 RyanFord,BergenCatholic12-3

3 Louden Mazzeo, Emerson/Park Ridge 20-1

4 KyleReiter,ParamusCatholic17-7

5 JeremyQuezada,Dumont17-3

150 pounds

1 Chris Bacchioni, Bergen Catholic

17-2

2 JohnQuinonez,ParamusCatholic

17-6

3 FrankDiBella,St.Joseph8-4

4 Ben Garcia, Don Bosco13-6

5 Jake Wacha, Pascack Hills 15-5 Notes: Quinonez joins this weight class after trading spots with teammate Zach Ballante (157).

157 pounds

1 Aidan Wallace, Bergen Catholic 15-2

2 Zach Ballante, Paramus Catholic

17-4

3 Damian Weaver, Lyndhurst/ North Arlington 21-2

4 Gustavo Alarcon, Don Bosco 13-8

5 Gavin Seiler, Westwood 20-3

165 pounds

1 Ryan Burton, St. Joseph 23-7

2 Daniel Rella, Paramus Catholic

15-7

3 Eric Broadie, Bergen Catholic 14-3

4 Ray Kohan, Pascack Valley 22-1

5 Michael Fuccilli, Don Bosco 15-7

175 pounds

1 Rocco Dellagatta, St. Joseph 22-6

2 Eddie Terreri, Paramus Catholic

18-6

3 Justin Onello, Bergen Catholic

15-5

4 Nevin Mattessich, Don Bosco 12-11

5 Nick Doktor, Clifton 22-0

190 pounds

1 Michael Dellagatta, St. Joseph

24-3

2 XavierWilliams,ParamusCatholic 18-5

3 LeoVarga,BergenCatholic17-5

4 Dante DeLuca, Don Bosco14-9

5 Ethan Mendel, Northern Highlands 20-2

215 pounds

1 JosephAbill,Clifton17-0

2 AJ Fricchione, Bergen Catholic

17-2

3 AidanSchlett,St.Joseph17-7

4 Robert Ekins, Don Bosco13-8

5 Alejandro Camarena, Pascack Hills 19-4

285 pounds

1 JimMullen,St.Joseph27-1

2 Max Acciardi, Paramus Catholic

20-3

3 Benjamin Shue, Bergen Catholic

18-3

4 Daniel Elyash, Paramus 21-3

5 Matthew Lehman, Wayne Hills

19-1

North Jersey team rankings

1 BergenCatholic12-0

2 St.Joseph13-2

3 ParamusCatholic8-3

4 DonBosco3-3

5 Clifton11-2

6 PassaicTech11-3

7 OldTappan11-2

8 PascackHills11-4

9 Emerson/ParkRidge9-5

10 Butler14-3

11 Ridgewood7-3

12 RiverDell7-7

13 Paramus9-4

14 Ramapo10-6

15 PascackValley8-7

16 Westwood8-5

17 HasbrouckHeights11-4

18 NorthernHighlands8-5

19 Rutherford11-2

20 WestMilford8-3

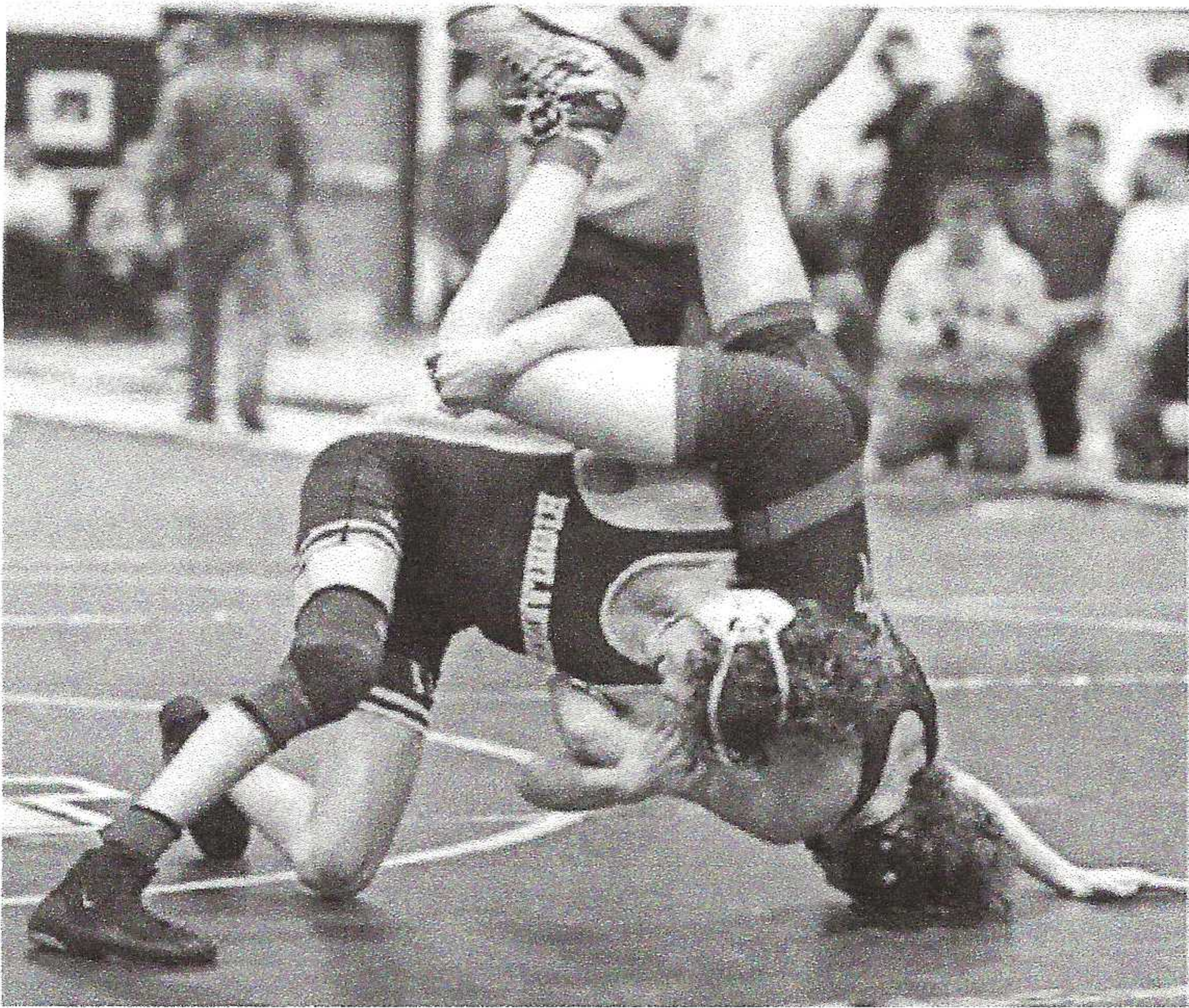
21 PassaicValley9-3

22 WayneHills9-6

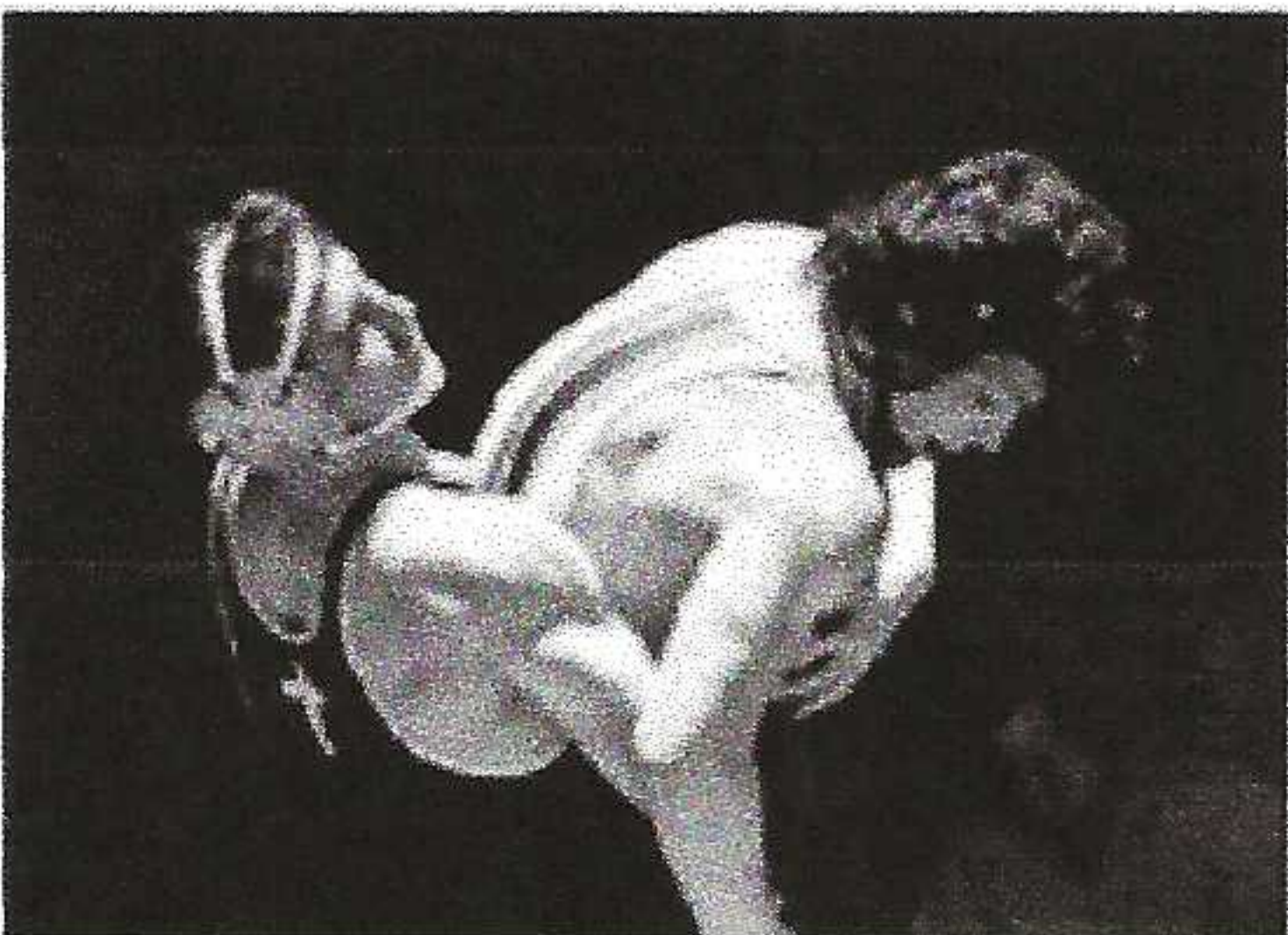
23 CliffsidePark/Ridgefield10-1

24 Bogota/RidgefieldPark10-4

25 Lakeland5-8



West Milford’s Benjamin Marchetto defeated Lakeland’s Anthony Nyhuis in their 113-pound match at the Passaic County Wrestling Championships at West Milford High School on Saturday. MICHAEL KARAS/NORTHJERSEY.COM



Zach Ballante, of Paramus Catholic, takes control on his way to defeating Frank DiBella, of St. Joseph, in their 157-pound match on Jan. 18. MICHAEL KARAS/NORTHJERSEY.COM

Here are the 2023 All-North Jersey teams

Sunday, March 19, 2023

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS WRESTLING

Sean Farrell

NorthJersey.com USA TODAY NETWORK –
NEW JERSEY

After an exciting season, the following wrestlers have been selected to the 2023 All-North Jersey wrestling teams.

FIRST TEAM Nathan Braun

Bergen Catholic freshman, 106 pounds The Rockaway native placed higher than any other freshman at the state tournament, finishing second at his weight while dealing with a sprained left thumb. Braun (28-6) won district and region titles during his high school debut.

Devin Ryan

New Milford sophomore, 113 pounds Ryan (35-8) led the charge for the division champion Knights, winning a Bergen County title and placing sixth at Boardwalk Hall. He gave the Knights their first state medalist in six years and joined Paramus' Daniel Elyash as the only Bergen public-schoolers on the podium.

Adrian DeJesus

DePaul sophomore, 120 pounds The St. Peter's Prep transfer put on a stellar opening act in Wayne, winning county, district and region championships. DeJesus (30-2) fell to eventual champion Anthony Knox in the state semifinals, but still went back on the podium by getting third.

Ryan Langenmayr

Lakeland sophomore, 126 pounds Langenmayr (37-7) took home his second straight Passaic County championship and helped the Lancers set a school record with three state qualifiers. While he went winless in Atlantic City, that was largely due to a shoulder issue that may require surgery.

Donny Almeyda

St. Joseph sophomore, 132 pounds Almeyda (29-9) locked up his second Bergen County title this year, propelling the Green Knights to a tournament-record eight champions. He pinned his opponent in the district and region finals on the way to becoming a state fourth.

Joey Canova

Bergen Catholic freshman, 138 pounds The former rec state champion proved to be the real deal at the high school level. Canova (23-5) won a Bergen County title, placed seventh in the state and took Delbarton two-time champ Tyler Vazquez to overtime in the quarterfinals at Boardwalk Hall.

Yannis Charles

St. Joseph junior, 144 pounds Charles guided the Green Knights to their first group title in 25 years after moving up from Clover High in South Carolina. Speedy on the mat and charismatic off it, Charles (23-5) hit the ground running as a region champion and state second.

Frank DiBella

St. Joseph junior, 150 pounds Bergen County wound up with three state medalists at this weight with Di-Bella (19-9) leading the way. He wrestled to fourth for the second straight year despite a late start this season due to surgery on a torn meniscus.

Aidan Wallace

Bergen Catholic senior, 157 pounds The Duke commit was a steady, fourtime state medalist who placed fifth in his final trip to Boardwalk Hall. Wallace (30-6), of Mahwah, finished with 103 wins, including three district titles and one county title.

Ryan Burton

St. Joseph sophomore, 165 pounds The DePaul transfer (36-9) rolled to county, district and region titles and captured his first state medal by securing the bronze. His arrival was a big reason why the Green Knights vaulted up to No. 1 in New Jersey.

Rocco Dellagatta

St. Joseph sophomore, 175 pounds Dellagatta (36-9) made a trip to the Boardwalk Hall podium and helped the Green Knights shatter a school record with 10 state medalists. He placed fourth in arguably the toughest weight class after title runs in the district and region tournaments.

Michael Dellagatta

St. Joseph senior, 190 pounds Dellagatta (39-3 season, 122-12 career) went out on top this year, beating St. Peter's Prep's Anthony Harris, 6-3, in the state finals. It was the cherry on top for the three-time county, district and region champ who completed a shocking upset over Delbarton in this year's Non-Public A final.

Joseph Abill

Clifton senior, 215 pounds The Marist football commit turned out to be North Jersey's top public school wrestler after dropping down from 285. Abill (41-1) pinned his way through the Passaic County tournament and became a three-time state medalist by placing third.

Jim Mullen

St. Joseph senior, 285 pounds Mullen (42-1, 116-6 career) will go down as maybe the greatest heavyweight in New Jersey history after winning the 285-pound state title in all three tries. The Kearny native capped it off by beating close friend Max Acciardi (Paramus Catholic), 5-3, on a last-second takedown to finish unbeaten in his career against NJSIAA opponents. Perhaps the only thing that kept the Virginia Tech commit from being a fourtimer was his decision to bypass the tournament in 2021 for Cadet Nationals.

SECOND TEAM

Johnathon McGinty, St. Joseph freshman, 106 pounds Ethan Smith, Paramus Catholic senior, 113 pounds Santino Rodriguez, Don Bosco freshman, 120 pounds Noah Kochman, Bergen Catholic junior, 126 pounds Joey Rondinelli, Don Bosco freshman, 132 pounds Mateo Sgambellone, St. Joseph senior, 138 pounds

Ryan Ford, Bergen Catholic junior, 144 pounds
Christopher Bacchioni, Bergen Catholic senior,
150 pounds Zach Ballante, Paramus Catholic
sophomore, 157 pounds Daniel Rella, Paramus
Catholic junior, 165 pounds Edward Terreri,
Paramus Catholic junior, 175 pounds Xavier
Williams, Paramus Catholic sophomore, 190
pounds Aidan Schlett, St. Joseph junior, 215
pounds Max Acciardi, Paramus Catholic senior,
285 pounds

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HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

Nick Gantaifis

NorthJersey.com USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

Winning a New Jersey individual wrestling title is one of the hardest feats to accomplish in all of high school sports. Just reaching a state final is an accomplishment in its own right.

Every March, only 14 wrestlers are left standing by the time the crowd disperses at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City. (There were only 12 weight classes prior to 1987 and there were 13 from 1988-1995.)

We've compiled an extensive list of the best wrestlers in North Jersey history to never win a state title, dating back to 1980. In our final installment of this series, we look at the best at the upper weights (161 pounds-heavyweight).

Jonathan Becker

Bergen Catholic – sixth place (2007), second place (2008), sixth place (2009) Becker earned three state medals and reached the 189-pound final in 2008, falling to eventual four-time state champion, freshman Andrew Campolattano of Bound Brook. A two time region champion, Becker won a freestyle Fargo National Championship and went on to wrestle for North Carolina State.

Anthony DiPasquale

Elmwood Park – fifth place (1988), fourth place (1987) DiPasquale was one of the top heavyweights in the state near the tail end of the 1980s. He won a Bergen County title and a region championship in 1988.

Lou Fontana

Passaic Valley – fifth place (1989), sixth place (1990) The state heavyweight brackets were chock-full of talent in the late '80s and early '90s, and Fontana was right in the mix. A dominant heavyweight in North Jersey, Fontana reached the state podium in his junior and senior years at Princeton's Jadwin Gym. He won a region title in 1989.

Eric Freeman

Paramus – third place (2021), third place (2022) A two-time state bronze medalist, Freeman finished his senior season with

44 wins, a Bergen County title and a district title. He helped Paramus to a state sectional crown in 2022. He's currently in his first year at Rutgers.

Kyle Jacob

Paramus – second place (2019), second place (2020) One of Paramus' great all-around athletes, Jacob was a two-time state finalist. In his first title match, Jacob dropped a 6-3 decision to two-time state champion Jacob Cardenas of Bergen Catholic. Jacob won a region title as a senior and finished his career with 125 wins. He currently plays football at the U.S. Naval Academy.

Dominick Mandarino

Don Bosco – seventh place (2015), third place (2016), second place (2017) Mandarino improved each year he qualified for the state tournament. A two-time region champion, Mandarino was a Beast of the East finalist and third-place finisher. He wrestled at Stanford, helping the Cardinals win their first Pac-12 title in program history in 2019.

Ardian Ramadani

Garfield – fifth place (2000), seventh place (2001), third place (2002) Ramadani always finished his season with a win, taking fifth and seventh before wrestling all the way back for third in his final season in 2002. He won a region title as a sophomore and wrestled collegiately for Kent State.

Dan Rinaldi

Lodi – seventh place (2006), fourth place (2007), third place (2008) A three-time state medalist, Rinaldi earned his way to a bronze medal in his senior season. Rinaldi won three region titles and went on to become a four-time NCAA qualifier at Rutgers, recording a 109-38 collegiate record, good for seventh in program history.

Griffith receives love from wrestling fans

Monday March 20, 2023

Steven Falk

Asbury Park Press USA TODAY NETWORK –
NEW JERSEY

The fans at the BOK Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for Saturday's medal round of the NCAA Division 1 Wrestling Tournament wanted to thank Stanford's Shane Griffith and tell him how much he has meant to them and the sport the last three years.

They gave him a standing ovation as he left the mat after his 4-1 win over Wisconsin's Dean Hamiti in the 165-pound fifth-place bout — an appreciation of the large role he played in saving the Stanford program by winning the 165-pound national championship in 2021.

The Stanford program was going to be dissolved after the 2021 season. The school's administration had made that announcement in the summer of 2020. Pleas and monetary donations to save the program had fallen mostly on deaf ears until Griffith won his title in St. Louis.

The momentum from Griffith's title became an unstoppable locomotive.

"He was the catalyst for the movement to keep Stanford wrestling," longtime wrestling analyst Tim Johnson said Saturday on the ESPN U broadcast. "Thankfully, the wrestling world rallied, and here he is in a Stanford uniform."

"There's a lot of guys who have won national championships, but very few who have saved a wrestling program," ESPN reporter Quint Kessenich said to Griffith.

Griffith was wiping tears from his eyes when he was asked about the ovation and his legacy by Kessenich.

"I did what I was taught to do since I was a little kid," Griffith said. "Just being

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able to take care of business and do what I had to do meant the world to me and my family. It's awesome just to think you can kind of touch and move people and do something bigger than yourself."

The Stanford program, which has a great tradition, is alive and well with its second life. Its head coach is the legendary Rob Koll, who completed his second season at Stanford after a highly successful 28-season career at Cornell.

Griffith was the runner-up at 165 last season after a 6-5 defeat by Missouri's Keegan O'Toole. He got to the quarterfinal this season before he was defeated 2-1 on the riding time point by 2021 157-pound champion David Carr of Iowa State. Griffith, a three-time NJSIAA champion at Bergen Catholic, is just the third three-time All-American in Stanford's history.

Quincy Monday concludes special career

Quincy Monday will forever be remembered as one of the all-time greats in the history of the Princeton University program after he concluded his career with a third-place finish in the loaded 165-pound weight class.

He is only Princeton's third threetime All-American. He was second at 157 last season and a National Wrestling Coaches All-American in 2020, when the NCAA Tournament was canceled because of the pandemic.

The other three-time All-Americans are four-timers Pat Glory and Matt Kolodzik.

Monday is one of four wrestlers in Princeton's history to be a two-time toptthree finisher. The others are Glory, who was second last season, Bradley Glass (first at heavyweight in 1951 and third at 191 in 1953) and John Orr (second at 142 in 1984 and '85).

As he left the mat, Monday exchanged hugs with all the members of the Princeton coaching staff, including head coach Chris Ayres. He slapped hands with children sitting in the first row and looked up at his father and mother, who were wiping away tears.

Monday's father, Kenny, is one an iconic figure in wrestling. He was a national champion at 150 pounds

for Oklahoma State at the Meadowlands in 1984 and an Olympic gold medalist at 74 kilograms in Seoul, South Korea, in 1988. Kenny Monday is now the head coach at Morgan State University, which reinstituted its program this season.

“He’s taught me so many life lessons in the sport of wrestling: discipline, courage and to believe in myself,” Monday said about his father in an interview with ESPN U as he was leaving the mat after his 3-2 win over Michigan’s Cam Amine in the third-place bout. “I really believe I can do pretty much anything if I put my mind to it.”

Of his parents, he said, “They’ve provided so much support to me over the years. I wouldn’t be where I am today without them.”

Monday may join his father’s coaching staff at Morgan State sometime in the near future.

“There’s a good chance. I’m not exactly sure what I’m doing yet. I would love to help him build that up,” he said. “I’m still at Princeton. I would love to see that program develop a little more. I’ve got to figure out what I want to do.”

Monday was defeated 6-5 by Carr on the riding time point in the semifinal. Saturday, he defeated Wisconsin’s Dean Hamiti for the second time this season before the bout with Amine.

“I wanted a national title, nothing less,” Monday said. “But it takes heart to come back and finish third. That’s how I wanted to end my career — on top.”

Shayne Van Ness and Chris Foca both finish third

It was an outstanding tournament for both Penn State redshirt freshman Shayne Van Ness and Cornell junior Chris Foca.

Van Ness came from the No. 12 seed to finish third at 149. Foca finished third at 174.

It was a wild tournament for Van Ness, a former Blair Academy star and Somerville native. He rallied from large deficits to win two of his first three bouts.

He then had Cornell University’s three-time champion Yianni Diakomihalis on the ropes in the semifinal before Diakomihalis rallied for an 8-3 win.

Van Ness defeated Arizona State's Kyle Parco 7-2 in the third-place bout. He defeated Virginia Tech's Caleb Henson 5-3 in the wrestleback semifinal.

Foca, the 2019 NJSIAA 182-pound champion at Bergen Catholic, defeated Virginia Tech's Mekhi Lewis on riding time in the first tiebreaker period in the third-place bout. Foca advanced to the third-place bout with a 7-2 win over Iowa's Nelson Brands in the wrestleback semifinal.

He had advanced to the semifinal before he was defeated by Penn State's two-time champion Carter Starocci.

Lewis, a two-time NJSIAA champion at Bound Brook, added a fourth-place medal to the 165-pound title he won in 2019 and the runner-up finish to Starocci last season.

He was defeated in sudden victory by Nebraska's Mikey Labriola in the semifinal before he defeated Oklahoma State's Dustin Plott in the wrestleback semifinal.

Rider's Ethan Laird finished sixth at 197 pounds. He is the Broncs' second medalist in three seasons and was their second semifinalist in that time span. He was defeated by Pitt's Nino Bonaccorsi in the semifinal.

A great tournament for Eddie Ventresca

Seeds are just a number. They are not the be all, end all.

Virginia Tech redshirt freshman 125-pounder Eddie Ventresca proved that with a seventh-place finish after he was seeded 27th.

Ventresca, the 2019 120-pound state champion at Pope John, advanced to the quarterfinal with wins over the No. 6 and 11 seeds. He was close to the semifinal before he was defeated 3-1 in sudden victory by No. 3 seed and fifth-place finisher Liam Cronin of Nebraska in the quarterfinal.

He clinched All-American honors with a win over Wisconsin's two-time All-American Eric Barnett on Friday night.

In the seventh-place bout, Ventresca rallied for a 7-6 win over West Virginia's Killian Cardinale, who also

showed seeds are just a number. He was the No. 28 seed.

Cornell junior Jacob Cardenas, a twotime NJSIAA champion at Bergen Catholic, came in eighth. He was defeated 4-2 by Penn State's 2022 champion Max Dean in the seventh-place bout.

Cardenas won three wrestleback bouts Friday to clinch his medal after he was defeated in the pre-quarterfinal by finalist Tanner Sloan of South Dakota State.

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Proposed changes go against what wrestling all about

Wednesday Mar 22, 2023

No one involved in the sport of wrestling ever looks for a shortcut.

Ever.

This is the sport that gave us the Blood Round, unparalleled discipline and sacrifice.

Which is why I don't understand the idea of creating a non-public "Region 9" that's being passed around by public school wrestling coaches.

I get it. The better wrestlers go to the non-public schools. Period.

You think they're being enticed under the table, with NIL deals or whatever, and it's wrecking the sport. It's ruining what makes the sport interesting to the large audience, destroying its roots.

It doesn't just happen in North Jersey. Yes, we have our superpowers here – I don't need to tell you who they are – and guess what, they're only getting better.

So now wrestling coaches want to change it. They want to funnel the nonpublic schools into their own region to dilute their ranks when it comes to the individual state tournament. It won't change the fact that the best kids will win, but it will open the door for more public school wrestlers to advance.

And isn't that what wrestling is all about? Shortcuts? Ducking opponents? Making sure your path is easier than the other guy when you are sure the other guy is cheating?

Public school coaches want the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association to step in and re-do the math. The NJSIAA may try, but they know it's unlikely anything official will pass the Commissioner of Education, because New Jersey won't allow a split. Besides, the NJSIAA already leveled the playing field. Haven't you been paying attention? The NJSIAA just threw out the rules on recruiting

middleschool athletes. This summer, if the legislation passes, every eighth grader in New Jersey will be recruitable. It's just a matter of time before someone makes a list of top 40 fourth grade wrestling recruits in NJ. (Please, no one ever do that.)

You may not want to hear this, but public-school coaches should recruit wrestlers too. In fact, same goes for public school football coaches, basketball coaches and baseball coaches. It's OK. I know it wasn't part of your job description, but it is now. You can do it.

In fact, I'm going to tell you how to make your program more attractive to the best kids. Here's your sales pitch:

Free is me

There you go. Reason No. 1 to try to sway a talented prospect from attending a non-public school and wrestling: Your school is free. I've been in nonpublic wrestling rooms. Aside from maybe Bergen Catholic and Delbarton's, they're all the same – smelly, small and oozing with sweat.

You can offer kids something no other non-public school can. The chance to stay home and go to school with their friends. Tell them when they win a state title, they'll get a parade in the streets and a police escort home from Atlantic City. I respect the heck out of the non-public schools, but Morristown doesn't usually throw parades for a state champ from Delbarton. That's not a knock, it's just reality.

And it's free.

Schedule up

Why do you think Clifton, Northern Highlands, Wayne Hills and Wayne Valley have traveled out of state for football games over the last few years? Because they recognize that the trips and the chance to face quality out-ofstate competition is a lure for talented kids.

Can public schools do this every year? Yep. Raise the money. Show you care. Tell your best wrestling prospects you're going to the Beast of

the East in Delaware in two years. (Paramus has done this.) What do you have to lose? Heck, create your own New Jersey All-Star event at American Dream mall, and invite only public schools to come. You want separation, do it yourself.

Buy new singlets. Kids love that stuff, they want cool colors, cool designs. Get on social media and highlight everything your kids do. They'll come.

Stop complaining

Every time a public school coach whines about the advantage of a nonpublic school, they feed right into the problem. If you win, especially in wrestling, you deserve it. The right attitude is everything. The sport doesn't give you what you don't deserve. If you go in already acknowledging you're going to lose, then you already did.

You're all the same

No one school is really better than another. It's the truth. My oldest son is in high school now and does he ever talk about how great the robotics department is? Or the field trips? Nope. You know what he does talk about? The teachers that he likes and the ones that challenge him. This year it's world history.

Saying one school has a better offerings than another is ridiculous. If one school has an amazing drama program, that's great, but if kids don't like the teacher, that really doesn't help.

Follow the map

Public school coaches, the road map is there. You don't need Region 9 to whittle out non-public kids. All the tools are in front of you. I know you already work hard. I know. You're overlooked and overworked, all just to watch some All-Star team come in and steal the glory and the headlines.

But the sport has evolved. You have to change what you do to get with it. Compete. Make your program great.

You don't offer your wrestlers shortcuts, so why
are you looking for one?

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