

Fri Dec 17, 2022

NORTH JERSEY WRESTLING

Wrestlers to watch in 2021-22

Sean Farrell

NorthJersey.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

Here are the North Jersey wrestlers to watch this season, which begins Friday.

Joe Abill

Clifton junior

Abill is part of a loaded class of North Jersey heavyweights after finishing fourth in the state last season. Football fans may know him better as the sack leader for the North 2, Group 5 champion Mustangs.

Max Acciardi

Paramus Catholic junior

Acciardi gave the Paladins their first state medalist in 17 years with a recent third-place finish at heavyweight. The North 1 region champion went 13-1 and comes back as the centerpiece of a growing state power.

Remy Brancato

Bergen Catholic senior

The Lehigh-bound Brancato (9-2) is a three-time state qualifier who reached last year's final at 220 pounds. He will be one of seven NJSIAA medalists competing for the top-ranked Crusaders.

Joseph Cangro

Bergen Catholic senior

The Harvard signee reached the state podium in each of the last three seasons, including last year with a run to the 126-pound final. The Woodland Park resident owns three region titles and an 82-15 career record.

P.J. Casale

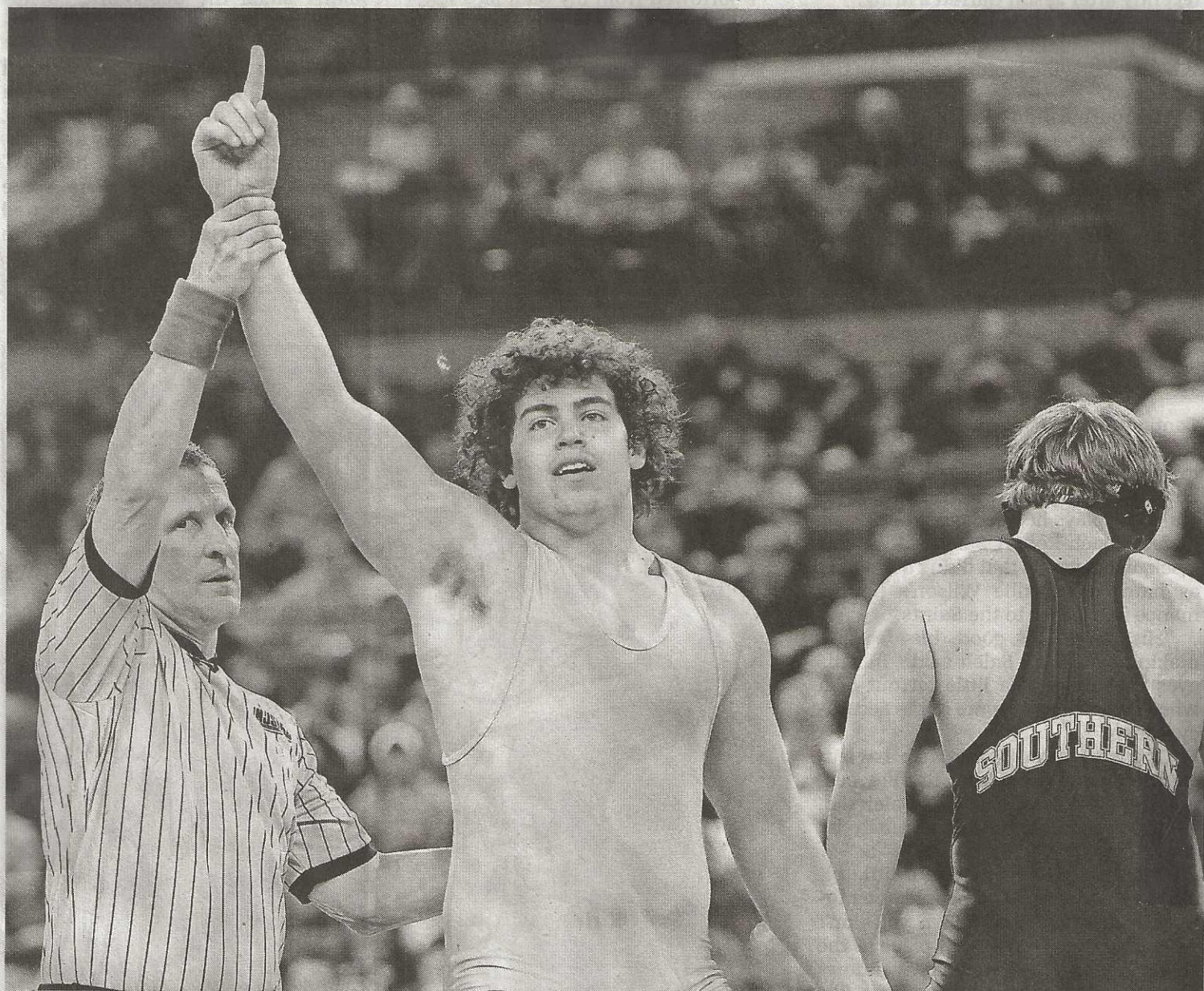
Passaic Valley senior

The Little Falls native and 2020 state champion returns to his hometown school this year after transferring from Delbarton. The 215-pounder is committed to wrestle at Rutgers.

Eric Freeman

Paramus senior

The 165-pounder wrestled back to third last spring to extend the Spartans' state medal streak to 11 years. No other North Jersey public school has sent a wrestler to the podium for more than three straight seasons.



Jim Mullen of St. Joseph Regional defeats J.T. Cornelius of Southern Regional in the 285-pound final of the NJSIAA State Wrestling Championships in 2020. DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/NORTHJERSEY.COM

AJ Fricchione

Bergen Catholic junior

Fricchione (12-2) joins a special group of upperweights at Bergen Catholic a year after reaching the 195-pound state final. His decision to transfer from St. Joseph could reshape the balance of power in North Jersey and Non-Public A.

Laith Hamdeh

Passaic Tech senior

The 150-pounder is a two-time county champion who led the Bulldogs to Passaic and state sectional titles in 2020. He collected even more hardware last year, placing third at the Super Re-

gions and sixth at the state tournament.

Myles Leonard

Waldwick/Midland Park senior

Leonard is the biggest name in the small-school NJIC as a returning state eighth. A series of upsets last year at 138 made him the Warriors' first medalist since 2005.

Olivia Klein

Paramus junior

Klein moved up the ranks in girls wrestling last year with Bergen County and Region North titles. She went undefeated until the state final while earning nine of her 10 wins by fall.

Taisei Kurachi

River Dell senior

Kurachi picked up his first state medal last spring by placing seventh at 106 pounds. He rolls into his final scholastic season with an 89-13 career record.

Jim Mullen

St. Joseph junior

The super-athletic heavyweight is ranked second in the country by *The Open Mat* and eighth on their overall pound-for-pound board. A 2020 state champion, Mullen skipped last year's postseason to compete at the Cadet Nationals.

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WRESTLING

Team-by-team previews for 2021-22

Sean Farrell

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Take a team-by-team look at wrestling teams from the Big North Conference and North Jersey Interscholastic Conference.

Big North American

Cliffside Park/Ridgefield

Wrestlers to watch: senior Kevin Chica, juniors Jonathan Soto, Victor Ayluardo and Jonathan Viton.

Outlook: Enthusiasm is high in Cliffside Park (4-5) after forming a new co-op with its border town. The hope is to be competitive despite a slew of first-year starters.

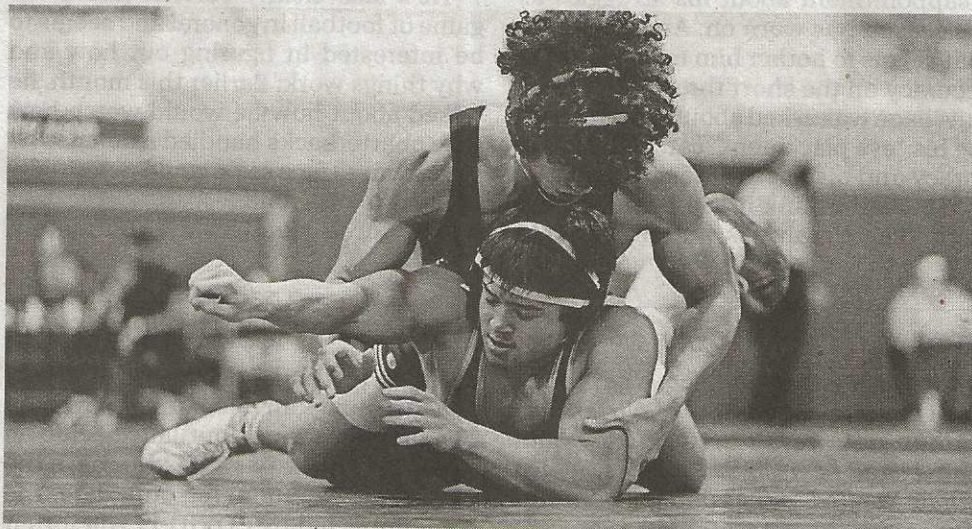
Dumont

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Zach Lizzi and Zach Cetera, junior Aidan McKenna, sophomore Jeremy Quezada.

Outlook: The Huskies (5-10) could be on the rise with seven wrestlers who received first or second-team Big North American honors. That athleticism will fuel Dumont in its chase for a league title and state tournament berth.

Big North Freedom

Indian Hills



Eric Freeman of Paramus, top, wrestles Nicholas Franco of Paramus Catholic in the 160-pound final during the North 1 Region wrestling meet on April 18.

DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/NORTHJERSEY.COM

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Konnor Kovalcik and Dimitri Rainey, sophomore Nico Nucifora, freshman Tristan Valletero.

Outlook: The Braves (7-6) earned some respect last season by inching over .500 and fighting hard against ranked competition. The core is still in place after graduating three wrestlers.

Northern Highlands

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Justin Gradzki, Logan Hurwitz, Brendan Connolly and Jacob McCoy.

Outlook: The Highlanders will vie

for another double-digit win season after finishing the COVID year at 11-0. They need to replace key scorers in the middle, but have a good group of seniors to fall back on.

Paramus

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Eric Freeman, Daniel Hong and Matt Field, junior Chris Hong.

Outlook: The Spartans lost state champion Aaron Ayzerov to graduation but have a capable understudy in

See TEAMS, Page 6S

WRESTLING: PRESEASON TEAM RANKINGS

Get ready for what could be one of the most unpredictable wrestling seasons. Picking the top teams is hardly an exact science but especially so this year with no recent county, district or sectional tournaments to glean from. Luckily, all those events are back on the table this year, giving high school wrestlers a little more to compete for. With that in mind, it's time to reveal the North Jersey preseason Top 25 for the 2021-22 season.

Top 25 rankings

- 1 Bergen Catholic 3-0
- 2 St. Joseph 5-0
- 3 Paramus Catholic 5-0
- 4 Northern Highlands 11-0
- 5 Passaic Tech 4-2
- 6 River Dell 14-0
- 7 Emerson/Park Ridge 8-0
- 8 Paramus 5-4
- 9 Pascack Hills 11-2
- 10 Ridgewood 9-2
- 11 Clifton 5-4
- 12 Hawthorne 12-1
- 13 West Milford 7-6
- 14 Don Bosco 2-5
- 15 Pascack Valley 7-2
- 16 Lakeland 7-2
- 17 Butler 9-4
- 18 Westwood 6-5
- 19 Ramsey 8-4
- 20 Hasbrouck Heights 9-3
- 21 Cresskill 9-5
- 22 Passaic Valley 7-1
- 23 Pompton Lakes 10-5
- 24 Demarest 8-2
- 25 Rutherford 8-3

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former medalist Eric Freeman at 165. His experience fortifies a strong group of middle to upper weights for this league and sectional contender.

Ramapo

Wrestlers to watch: senior Stefano Bruni, juniors David Rozenblum and Tom Shokoff, freshman Zak Darwish.

Outlook: While the Raiders (3-5) closed last season with three straight wins, there's more rebuilding to do in a challenging division. Darwish speeds up that process at 170 after a promising middle-school career.

Ridgewood

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Bobby Turso, Holeman Pride and Philip Micale, sophomore Yunte Trattner.

Outlook: The Maroons (9-2) have the balance to remain in the upper-echelon of Bergen County. Whether they produce bonus points will be an X-factor.

Big North Independence

Fair Lawn

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Guy Ben-Sadigh and Jake Sheiner, juniors Natan Tsyrlin and Matthew Muri.

Outlook: New coach Vince Di Mitri will try to right the ship with the Cutters (4-6), who are coming off a rare losing season. Having a few proven wrestlers up the middle will point them in the right direction.

Lakeland

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Dom Schinina, David Hammerle and Joseph Ribitzki.

Outlook: The Lancers (5-1) will be hard to beat with nine returning starters, including three Super Region qualifiers. Their lower-weights are a strength.

Wayne Hills

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Jack Oseback, Mohammed Suliman, Jake Santers and Shane Santers.

Outlook: The Patriots (4-6) are looking to finish over .500 and book a spot in the state tournament. Passaic County champion Jack Oseback will be the cornerstone at 144 or 150 pounds.

West Milford

Wrestlers to watch: senior Aidan McGuire, junior Tyler Schaffer, sophomores Ben Marchetto and Colin Menier.

Outlook: The Highlanders (7-6) turned the corner last year and will continue the chase for conference and county titles. The roster is sprinkled with veterans who have multiple years of varsity experience.

Passaic Valley

Wrestlers to watch: seniors P.J. Casale and Jaidon Castaneda, juniors Connor Kerwin and Michael Post.

Outlook: The Hornets (7-1) have to reload the lineup after losing 12 seniors from their division championship team. State champion and Rutgers commit P.J. Casale will give them a huge lift at 215 pounds after transferring from Delbarton.

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Big North Liberty

Clifton

Wrestlers to watch: senior Jacob Maldonado, juniors Joe Abill and Deven Desai, sophomore Najati Salim.

Outlook: The Mustangs are poised to contend on all fronts with state medalist Joe Abill (285) joined by two other region qualifiers. Filling out the supporting cast will be key after losing half the starting lineup.

Passaic Tech

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Alex Vertedor, Laith Hamdeh and Luke Tully, junior Ricardo Balanzategui.

Outlook: The Bulldogs are favored to win a second-straight Passaic County title with a quartet of returning champions in the heart of the lineup. Defending the North 1, Group 5 crown will also be front and center on coach Luis Colon's agenda.

Big North National

Bergenfield

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Andy Beras, Jeffrey Valencia and Lucas Rodriguez, sophomore Nathan Quinones.

Outlook: The Bears will go through a "foundational



River Dell's Gabe Case won his 145-pound bout against Pascack Valley's Ray Kohan on opening night of last wrestling season on March 16.

AMY NEWMAN/NORTHJERSEY.COM/USA TODAY NETWORK

year" under new coach Mike Fenner, a former assistant and county medalist at Bergenfield. His goal is to shift the team culture and expectations after a three-win season.

Fri Dec 17, 2021

Demarest

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Kubrick Hilton and Ziv Goldenberg, junior George Tzoulafis, sophomore Jake Wacha.

Outlook: The Norsemen (8-2) look to keep the momentum going after their first winning season in seven years. The depth and experience in the upper weights will help Demarest as it reloads half the lineup.

Old Tappan

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Matt Olivo and Jake Smith, junior Sam Bodnar, freshman Johnny Rotolo.

Outlook: The Golden Knights (4-2) will be one of the younger teams around, yet still plan on being competitive. There's a large pool of freshmen and several of them will be called into action.

Pascack Valley

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Drew Petaccia and Noah Martin, juniors Nate Lewis and Ray Kohan.

Outlook: Pascack Valley has a new head coaching tandem in Steven Schneider and former assistant Gary Beyer, who begins his second stint in charge. The Panthers (7-2) were hit hard by graduation, losing 10 seniors, but have a strong JV program to fill the gaps.

Tenafly

Wrestlers to watch: senior Kieran Wallach, junior George Binikos, sophomores Peter Binikos and Jeremy Pitcock.

Outlook: The Tigers hope to surpass last year's four victories behind team win leaders Jeremy Pitcock (13-1, 150) and Peter Binikos (12-2, 113). They head up a deep sophomore class that will lay the foundation for years to come.

Big North Patriot

Mahwah

Wrestlers to watch: senior Ryan Kozdra.

Outlook: The Thunderbirds are working to build turnout and score a few wins after finishing 3-11 a year ago. Kozdra (132) gives them a reason to be optimistic after placing sixth at the Super Regions.

Pascack Hills

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Pat Cahill and Michael Frangos, juniors Hunter Morton and Alejandro Camarena.

Outlook: The Broncos (11-2) are riding high as the Bergen County Small School Team of the Year, but must account for the loss of two county finalists. What's left is a solid dual meet lineup with the depth and quality to score all over the board.

Ramsey

Wrestlers to watch: juniors Xavier Delgado and Sean Hali, sophomores Van Schoening and Anthony Cadacina.

Outlook: The Rams (8-4) kick off the year in a good spot after turning in their third straight winning season. While some of the biggest names are gone, there's still a balanced lineup that is capable of success.

River Dell

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Taisei Kurachi, Gabe Case, Joe Boyle and Noah Krakower.

Outlook: The Golden Hawks remain one of the top public schools in North Jersey after completing their first perfect season. Kurachi anchors the lineup as a state seventh.

Westwood

Wrestlers to watch: senior Anthony Rambaldi, junior Conner Sklavounos, sophomores Gavin Seiler and RJ Usher.

Outlook: The Cardinals (6-5) hope to battle it out for league and county group titles despite losing state medalist Ethan Fernandez. The lightweights will lead the way for coach Paul Castellini, who needs six wins to reach 200.

Big North United

Bergen Catholic

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Joseph Cangro and Remy Brancato, junior Christopher Bacchioni, sophomore Ryan Ford.

Outlook: The Crusaders begin the year as the No. 1 team in North Jersey with a star-studded cast of middle to upper-weights. Coach Dave Bell graduated only one of his nine state qualifiers and added Wyoming Seminary transfer Nick Fea, along with NJSIAA finalist AJ Fricchione from rival St. Joseph.

DePaul

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Nick Bottazzi and Jake Gerish, sophomores Josh Turner and Brandon Veneziano.

Outlook: DePaul coach Frank Cagnina enters his second season with a very young team that looks to get better as the year goes on. Scoring from the upper-weights will keep the Spartans (2-8) in matches.

Don Bosco

Wrestlers to watch: juniors Logan Garcia and Gustavo Alarcon, sophomores Marco Alarcon and Jaydon Brown.

Outlook: The Ironmen (2-5) could be the sleeping giant of North Jersey under second-year coach Jim Azolina. The question is how quickly their young stars will develop with as many as nine underclassmen starting.

St. Joseph

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Alex Almeyda and Joe Manno, juniors Jim Mullen and Michael Dellagatta.

Outlook: The Golden Knights are a state power once again and appear to have some of the balance that was previously missing. The aforementioned wrestlers are all state medalists and another three are returning Super Region qualifiers.

Paramus Catholic

Wrestlers to watch: senior Kosta Mavrikidis, junior Max Acciardi, sophomores Dylan Ross and Dan Rella.

Outlook: Coach Jon Piela has put the Paladins on the statewide map and wants to crack the top five this season. Virtually the entire lineup is back led by state medalist Max Acciardi (285).

NJIC Division 1

Becton/Wood-Ridge

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Tommie Lee Minaya and George Kasper, junior Elijah Bell, sophomore Jordan Stallone.

Outlook: Becton has started a co-op this season with Wood-Ridge, which was previously linked up with New Milford. The new partnership and an influx of freshmen has grown the roster to more than 30 athletes.

Bogota/Ridgefield Park

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Adam Albino, Andrew Vargas, Mathew Carvajal and Gabe Nunez.

Outlook: The Scarlet Bucs will push for a winning record with good senior leadership and almost everyone back from last season. Captain Adam Albino will provide much-needed bonus points at 113 pounds as a two-time district champion.

Emerson/Park Ridge

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Kenny Brouwer and Ayden Giacomelli, junior Loudon Mazzeo, sophomore Ryan Messick.

Outlook: Stan Woods begins the year needing nine wins to become the state's first wrestling coach to reach 900 wins. That milestone could come soon with nine starters back for the four-time defending conference champ.

Leonia/Palisades Park

Wrestlers to watch: senior Greg Hadoulis, juniors Ryan Armstrong and Matthew Espinal, sophomore Stav Fronimos.

Outlook: Leonia is back on the mat after temporarily dropping the program last year, a move that led Palisades Park to team up with Fort Lee. The co-op will re-unite and rebuild under new coach T.J. Kroncke, who also runs the Lions football program.

Lyndhurst/North Arlington

Wrestlers to watch: senior Eddie Ortiz, juniors Mike Simeone and Damian Weaver, sophomore Kieran McNeil.

Outlook: The Golden Bears (9-2) are young but fairly talented thanks to a pair of Super Region qualifiers in Weaver and McNeil. A large turnout should help the co-op navigate the dual meet season.

Waldwick/Midland Park

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Myles Leonard and Connor Haroutunian, junior Aaron Kim, sophomore Colin Fowler.

Outlook: State medalist Myles Leonard bolsters the lineup for the Warriors who expect to take a step forward after a 2-10 season. A freshman class with plenty of rec experience will make an instant impact.

NJIC Division 2

Garfield

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Nathaniel Tylki and Evan Peterson, juniors Taylor Peterson and Ryan Cortez.

Outlook: The Boilermakers are determined to climb over .500 and qualify for the state tournament. The challenge is to overcome some inexperience as Garfield was held to five matches last year.

Glen Rock

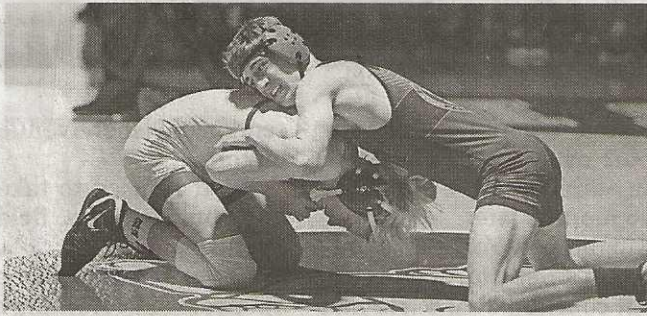
Wrestlers to watch: senior Nolan Clark, juniors Liam Manning, Ryan Hoza and Davian Gekman.

Outlook: The Panthers (3-8) want to return to their pre-pandemic form when they had four straight 15-plus win seasons. It will require some heavy lifting from younger wrestlers with only one senior on the team.

Lodi

Wrestlers to watch: senior Ryan McGuire, junior Malik Asfour, sophomore Omar Asfour.

Outlook: The Rams continue to rebuild with a sophomore-laden roster after a winless season shortened by COVID. Despite those challenges, coach Dale Fava labeled his team "hard-working and disciplined" in its bid for a turnaround.



Emerson/Park Ridge's Loudon Mazzeo is hoping to make a splash during his junior season.

MICHAEL KARAS/NORTHJERSEY.COM

Rutherford

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Vincent Keeler and JJ Herninko, juniors Anthony Tardibuono and Zach Herninko.

Outlook: Coach Jeff Rehai begins his 30th season with a well-rounded dual meet team. Almost all the top scorers are back for the Bulldogs (8-3) after earning a division title.

NJIC Division 3

Elmwood Park

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Tyler Kario and Kevin Mondati, junior Devin Longaker.

Outlook: The Crusaders need to overhaul the lineup after a four-win season, but have impressed coach Tom Mulligan with their toughness and energy. "This team has really jelled together in the past few weeks and we are ready to make some serious strides throughout the season," the Elmwood Park alum said.

Hawthorne

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Andrew Morzetta, Brandon Massey and Hudson Testa, sophomore Kaleb Ambrose.

Outlook: Ninth-year coach Joe Mazzacca is optimistic with 10 starters returning from his best season. The Bears' (12-1) elite talent up top makes them the team to beat in this division.

Pompton Lakes

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Zack Maksimiak and Miftar Istrefi, junior Bassel Elmorsy, sophomore Nick Laccitiello.

Outlook: The Cardinals (10-5) always put out a competitive product under coach Scott Mahoney, who enters the year with 397 wins. That tradition will continue with a senior-led team that will make noise in the league and sectional race.

Secaucus

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Joe Leon, Dylan Formisano and Tyler Giraldo, junior Dean Costantino.

Outlook: First-year coach Evan Pope takes over an experienced lineup with 10 returning starters for the Patriots (3-6). Their veteran core helped set a program single-season wins record two years ago.

NJIC Division 4

Butler

Wrestlers to watch: senior Brett Redner, junior Wyatt Frawley, freshman Jason Chrostowski.

Outlook: The Bulldogs (9-4) will look to uphold their reputation as one of the best programs in the NJIC. This year's team returns seven starters, including an outstanding building block in Brett Redner at 120.

Cresskill

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Sid Hamburger, Luke Stein, Dylan Kim and Bryan Park.

Outlook: The Cougars (9-5) kept a solid foundation after graduating only four wrestlers, although one was region qualifier Luis Abreu. Hamburger (14-0) led the team in wins last season and reclaims his spot at 132 pounds.

Saddle Brook

Wrestlers to watch: senior Gent Huli, juniors Andy Ivanovski, Enzo Russo and Pierre Aguilar.

Outlook: Saddle Brook expects to be more competitive this season and could win a handful of matches. Falcons coach Matthew Jacobson loves the talent and depth of his newcomers.

Hasbrouck Heights

Wrestlers to watch: seniors Michael Calabrese and Hunter Freschi, sophomores Connor Sculla and Anthony Cummings.

Outlook: It's the start of a new era this year with former assistant Kurt Freund replacing longtime coach Craig Messery. The Aviators (9-3) can contend for the division title and become a tough matchup due to their balance.

Girls wrestling

Immaculate Conception

Wrestlers to watch: juniors Jenna Filieri and Carmela Velasco, freshmen Marley Jackson and Ava Filieri.

Outlook: Jenna Filieri (152) will be the headliner for the Blue Wolves as a 2020 county champion and two-time medalist.

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WRESTLING: NORTH JERSEY INDIVIDUAL RANKINGS

Sean Farrell

NorthJersey.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

It's time to unveil the first edition of the North Jersey individual wrestling rankings.

Bergen Catholic leads the pack with 12 selections, including seven ranked No. 1 at their respective weights. Paramus Catholic is also well-represented with eight on the list, followed by Big North United rival St. Joseph with seven.

While the teams headlining the rankings were the usual suspects, the process of selecting the top athletes was trickier than ever. There is much less criteria to draw from with last year's state tournament scaled back and with this season's Bergen County Tournament moved from the holiday season to Jan. 22-23.

That should lead to plenty of movement in the weeks to come as the newcomers rise to the top.

Note: Wrestlers who have not appeared in a match this season are not included.

See **RANKINGS, Page 7S**

Rankings

Continued from Page 6S

106 pounds

- 1 Brian Melamud, Bergen Catholic 9-2
- 2 Benjamin Marchetto, West Milford 8-2
- 3 Kaleb Ambrose, Hawthorne 3-0
- 4 Jason Chrostowski, Butler 6-0
- 5 Jack Bergman, Lakeland 4-0

113 pounds

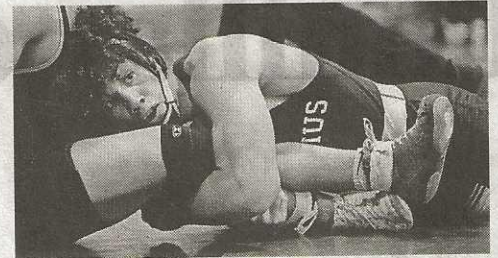
- 1 Dylan Ross, Paramus Catholic 8-3
- 2 Chris Nucifora, Bergen Catholic 6-3
- 3 James Sloan, St. Joseph 5-3
- 4 Brandon Massey, Hawthorne 2-0
- 5 Chris Hong, Paramus 6-2

120 pounds

- 1 Taisei Kurachi, River Dell 6-1
- 2 Brett Redner, Butler 5-0
- 3 Connor Kerwin, Passaic Valley 5-1
- 4 Adam Albino, Bogota/Ridgefield Park 4-0
- 5 Najati Salim, Clifton 5-1

126 pounds

- 1 Joe Manno, St. Joseph, 2-0
- 2 Aidan Wallace, Bergen Catholic 6-2
- 3 Daniel Hong, Paramus 6-1



Paramus' Eric Freeman

- 4 Brian Vargas, Hackensack 3-1
- 5 Ryan Hartung, New Milford 4-1

132 pounds

- 1 Ryan Ford, Bergen Catholic 7-3
- 2 Ryan Kozdra, Mahwah 4-0
- 3 Mateo Sgambellone, St. Joseph 3-0
- 4 George Hufnagel, Paramus Catholic 5-5
- 5 George Binikos, Tenafly 4-0

138 pounds

- 1 Joe Cangro, Bergen Catholic 10-2
- 2 Alex Almeyda, St. Joseph 5-2
- 3 Loudon Mazzeo, Emerson/Park Ridge 3-0
- 4 Attila Valy, Wayne Valley 4-1
- 5 Nick Bottazzi, DePaul 1-2

144 pounds

- 1 Chris Bacchioni, Bergen Catholic 2-2

Wed
Jan 5
2022

- 2 Zach Ballante, Paramus Catholic 9-3
- 3 Austin Yalowitz, Fort Lee 7-0
- 4 JJ Herninko, Rutherford 4-0
- 5 Brendan Connolly, Northern Highlands 4-0

150 pounds

- 1 Myles Leonard, Waldwick/Midland Park 3-0
- 2 Daniel Rella, Paramus Catholic 7-2
- 3 Damian Weaver, Lyndhurst/North Arlington 7-0
- 4 Eric Broadie, Bergen Catholic 6-3
- 5 Jack Oseback, Wayne Hills 1-1

157 pounds

- 1 Nick Fea, Bergen Catholic 9-0
- 2 Shawn Mastropierro, New Milford 3-0
- 3 Mike Simeone, Lyndhurst/North Arlington 2-1
- 4 Jordan Stallone, Becton/Wood-Ridge 2-0
- 5 Hunter Morton, Pascack Hills 1-1

165 pounds

- 1 Eric Freeman, Paramus 7-0
- 2 Laith Hamdeh, Passaic Tech 3-0
- 3 Roberto Padilla, St. Joseph 4-2
- 4 Kosta Mavrikidis, Paramus Catholic 6-3
- 5 Hunter Freschi, Hasbrouck Heights 7-1

175 pounds

- 1 Michael Dellagatta, St. Joseph 7-2
- 2 Justin Onello, Bergen Catholic 8-2
- 3 Jacob Maldonado, Clifton 4-2
- 4 Eddie Terrieri, Paramus Catholic 4-5
- 5 Tyler Wisnewski, West Milford 6-3

190 pounds

- 1 AJ Fricchione, Bergen Catholic 7-4
- 2 Jacob Gerish, DePaul 2-2
- 3 Xavier Williams, Paramus Catholic 8-5
- 4 Drew Petaccia, Pascack Valley 3-0
- 5 Cole Hughes, Emerson/Park Ridge 3-0

215 pounds

- 1 Remy Brancato, Bergen Catholic 8-4
- 2 Joe Boyle, River Dell 7-0
- 3 Andrew Morzetta, Hawthorne 3-0
- 4 Alex Marte, Wayne Valley 2-1
- 5 Daniel Elyash, Paramus 4-0

285 pounds

- 1 Jim Mullen, St. Joseph 7-1
- 2 Max Acciardi, Paramus Catholic 8-0
- 3 Joseph Abill, Clifton 5-2
- 4 Dominick Brogna, Bergen Catholic 8-3
- 5 Robby Chetirkin, Wayne Valley 2-1

(Records are through Monday)
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| SATURDAY, JANUARY 15, 2022 | THE RECORD

Wrestling: Changes coming to BCCA tourney

Sean Farrell

NorthJersey.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

The oldest county wrestling tournament in the state will get a new look this year — and it's not only the return of national power Bergen Catholic.

Champions will be awarded over two days at the Bergen County Tournament, which is scheduled for Jan. 22-23 at Hackensack High School.

The first seven weights will wrestle exclusively on Saturday, followed by the seven upper weights on Sunday. It's a way to keep attendance down at a time when COVID cases are rising across the state.

Tournament director Brad DiRupo said Wednesday he's "very confident" the event will go on as scheduled, despite recent postponements in Essex and Union counties.

"It's huge for the wrestling community," Paramus Catholic coach Jon Piella said. "If a tournament of this stature

can run, it gives us hope that the districts, the regions and the states are definitely going to happen this year."

Wrestling is expected to run from 10 a.m. to around 5 p.m. on both days. As usual, all six mats at Hackensack will be in use. DiRupo said wrestlebacks will need to be tweaked to comply with state rules on daily match limits.

There aren't any restrictions on the number of spectators, but fans and athletes are required to wear a mask.

"This is a school event so you should have a mask on, unless you're on the mat wrestling," DiRupo said.

The Bergen County Coaches Association canceled last season's tournament due to COVID, pausing an annual tradition that began in 1960. The popular event returns this winter with several changes, including new weight classes adopted by the NJSIAA.

The BCCA also agreed last spring to permanently move its championships from the holiday season to late

January. One incentive was to give athletes enough time to prepare for the rigorous showcase.

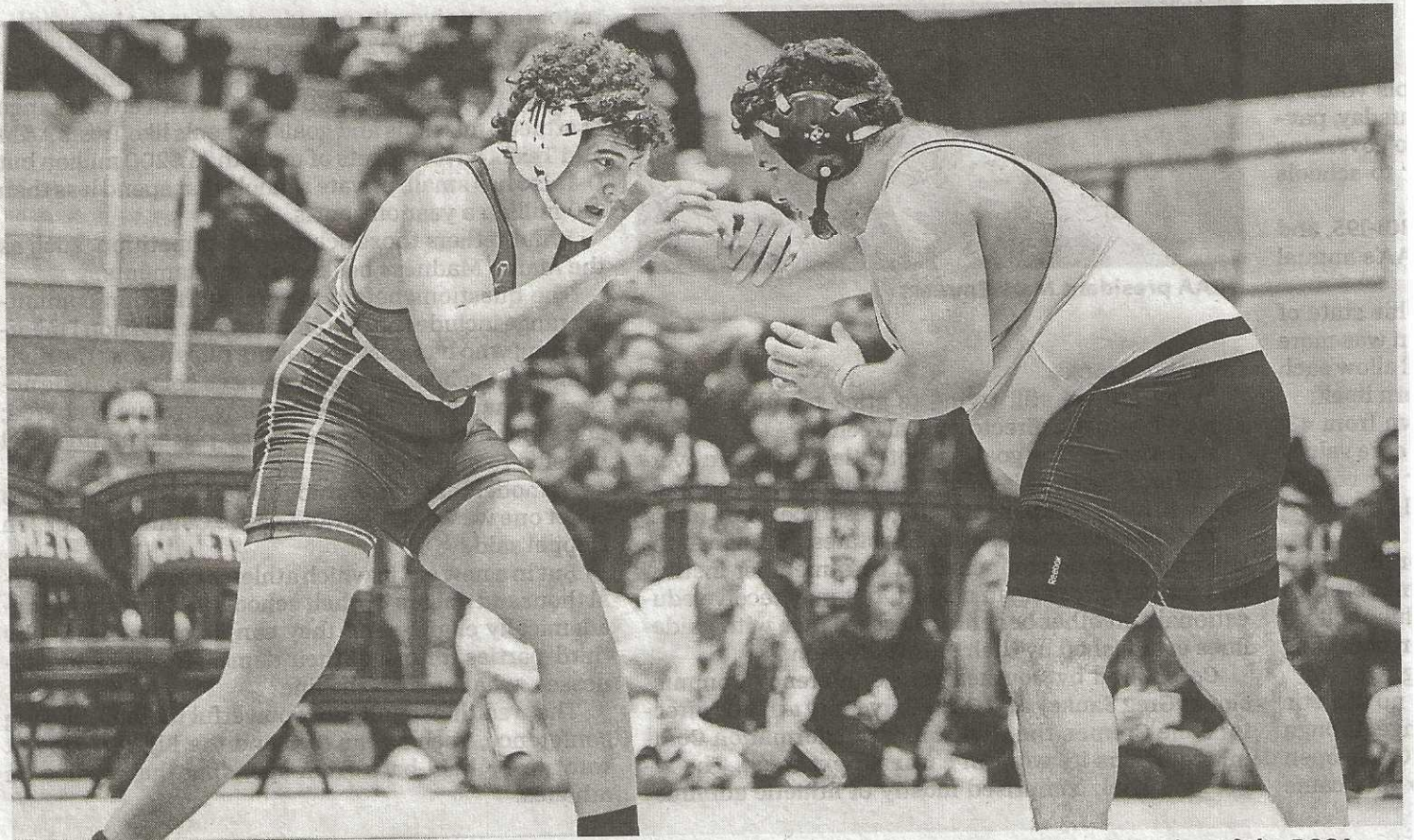
"It was overwhelming," said DiRupo, who estimated about 95% support. "The coaches felt like for such a difficult competition, to have it early in the season was not fair to the kids."

The competition will be fierce with athletes from 41 teams, including North Bergen of Hudson County and two-time defending champion St. Joseph.

No. 1-ranked Bergen Catholic is also back in the field for the first time since 2015, when it won a fourth-straight team title. That will give wrestling lovers some of the juicy matchups they were missing in past years.

"It's not like it was in the past, but it's about giving kids the opportunity to wrestle against high-level competition," DiRupo said. "That's what we're trying to provide."

NORTH JERSEY SPORTS



St. Joseph's Jim Mullen beat Garfield's Michael Alfonso in the 285-pound match to become the champion of the BCCA Holiday Wrestling Tournament at Hackensack High School in 2019. ANNE-MARIE CARUSO/NORTHJERSEY.COM

What to watch for at BCCA tourney

Fri Jan 21, 2022

COVID concerns splits wrestling event into separate sessions

Sean Farrell

NorthJersey.com

USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

The BCCA Holiday Wrestling Tournament returns this weekend over two days at Hackensack High School. It's the 61st edition and the first since December 2019.

Due to concerns over COVID, the lower and upper weights will be split into separate sessions, similar to what was used at last year's state championships.

The first seven weights will wrestle down to a champion on Saturday. The next seven weights will follow suit on Sunday on six mats. Wrestling is scheduled to start at 10 a.m. on both days.

Make sure to follow NorthJersey.com and Varsity Aces for live updates from the mat.

Returning champions

Three defending champions are back in the field, including the 1-2 punch of St. Joseph juniors Michael Dellagatta and Jim Mullen.

Both were freshman at the 2019 holiday tournament, with Dellagatta placing first at 145 pounds and Mullen foreshadowing a state title run with gold at 285.

Mullen returns to Hackensack with a chance to become only the second

wrestler in 25 years to win back-to-back Bergen County titles at heavy-weight. (St. Joseph's Kevin Wilkins accomplished the feat most recently back in 2012 and 2013.)

River Dell senior Taisei Kurachi will also look to repeat after a breakout performance at 106.

St. Joseph senior Joe Manno goes for his second career title, having captured gold as a freshman.

Defending team champion

St. Joseph produced five individual champions – including four straight in the middle weights – to secure its second straight team title in 2019.

The Green Knights finished with 210.5 points to fend off runner-up Paramus Catholic (185) and third-place Westwood (135.5). It was the 10th straight season that the Sal Cascio Team Championship went to a non-public power.

Team preview

Bergen Catholic will be the clear favorite after re-entering the tournament for the first time since 2015. The Crusaders currently hold the all-time lead with 19 team titles, including a record 13 under coach Dave Bell.

This year's lineup features six wrestlers who are ranked No. 1 in North Jer-

sey, headlined by state finalists Joe Cangro and AJ Fricchione.

St. Joseph and Paramus Catholic both have the depth and star-power to hang around the top. Paramus will score plenty of points in the upper-weights and tops a long list of public schools who are capable of a top-five finish.

Top weight class

What happens at heavyweight will command the attention of wrestling fans across the state. That's because Mullen and Paramus Catholic standout Max Acciardi are currently ranked 1-2 in the state, making Sunday a potential preview for Atlantic City.

Mullen has not lost to a New Jersey wrestler in his high school career, although Acciardi came close in 2020 when he bumped up from 220 pounds and lost 2-1. To set up another meeting, they'll have to navigate a loaded field that features Bergen Catholic's Dominick Brogna and Northern Highlands' Justin Gradzki.

Another state medal showdown could be on deck at 138 between Cangro and St. Joseph's Alex Almeyda. The Ivy League recruits squared off at the Powerade Tournament this season with Cangro winning, 3-2, in an ultimate tie-break.

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For the first time in more than two years, wrestling champions are being crowned in Bergen County. This year's BCCA George Jockish Tournament looks a little different, being held in late January with seven weight classes on Saturday and seven weight classes on Sunday. Here are Saturday's results

Opening Round

106 pounds

Anthony Lavezzola (Westwood) Dec Omar Asfour (Lodi), 6-2.
 Mark Calderio (Fair Lawn) Dec Evan McGinnity (Hackensack), 8-6.
 Preston Montague (Paramus Catholic) Maj-Dec Evan McNeil (Lyndhurst/North Arlington), 16-3.
 Jake Demeester (Garfield) Maj-Dec Brayden Morgan (Pascack Valley), 9-0.
 Ryan Haynes (Don Bosco Prep) Fall Zach Lizzi (Dumont), 4:57.

113 pounds

James Sloan (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Matthew Mertz (Dumont), 0:42.
 Conner Sklavounos (Westwood) Fall Matt Daniels (Pascack Hills), 3:03.
 Anthony Landi (Bogota/Ridgefield Park) Fall Ethan Camacho (Hackensack), 0:53.
 Anthony Cummings (Hasbrouck Heights) Fall Kyle Davis (Demarest), 1:32.
 Joe Langschultz (New Milford) Fall Peter Binikos (Tenafly), 3:25.
 Daniel Olivo (Old Tappan) Dec Joey Fulco (Ramapo), 7-1.
 Colin Burns (Ridgewood) Fall John Allmers (Pascack Valley), 2:20.
 Marco Alarcon (Don Bosco Prep) Fall Nico Nucifora (Indian Hills), 2:15.
 Malik Asfour (Lodi) Fall Davian Gekman (Glen Rock), 0:10.
 Ghali Chah (Becton Reg/Wood Ridge) Dec Gabrielle Artizzone (Garfield), 6-5.
 Devin Longaker (Elmwood Park) Tec-Fall Nick Kelly (River Dell), 16-1 5:54.
 Anthony Cadicina (Ramsey) Fall Matt Constante (Emerson/Park Ridge), 3:53.

120 pounds

Andrew Zweremann (Demarest) Fall Kyle Semone (Tenafly), 2:31.
 Ryan Cortez (Garfield) Dec Justin Morrissey (Old Tappan), 8-6.
 Anthony Tardibuono (Rutherford) Fall

Ibraheem Khan (Bergenfield), 0:25.
 Ryan Armstrong (Leonia/Palisades Park) Fall Jorge Jara (Cliffside Park/Ridgefield), 1:56.
 Van Schoening (Ramsey) Fall Matt Merlino (Ramapo), 3:05.
 Jake Farrington (Emerson/Park Ridge) Fall Brody Bogues (Fair Lawn), 1:26.
 Tyler Dimone (Hasbrouck Heights) Fall Christian Kovalcik (Indian Hills), 3:09.
 Amir Algabyali (Northern Highlands) Maj-Dec Eric Reznikov (Glen Rock), 10-1.
 Patrik Rendon (Fort Lee) Fall Athan Stamis (Pascack Hills), 6:00.

126 pounds

Joe Manno (St. Joseph) Fall Andrew Ivanovski (Saddle Brook), 2:44.
 Matt Robertelli (Don Bosco Prep) Fall Kristian Hernandez (Ramsey), 3:55.
 Noah Martin (Pascack Valley) Fall Anthony Digiacomo (Northern Highlands), 0:44.
 Vincent Keeler (Rutherford) Fall Ryan Hoza (Glen Rock), 1:36.
 Patrick Cahill (Pascack Hills) Fall Sean Lee (Garfield), 1:01.
 Abraham Zaretsky (Paramus Catholic) Fall James Ramundo (Cliffside Park/Ridgefield), 3:33.
 Luke Stein (Cresskill) Dec Hayden Blair (Ridgewood), 4-0.

Ryan Hartung (New Milford) Fall Ryan Mastrofilipo (Lodi), 1:56.
 Brian Vargas (Hackensack) Fall Sam Hur (Fort Lee), 1:20.
 Kubrick Hilton (Demarest) Fall Derek Rodriguez (Bogota/Ridgefield Park), 5:24.

Daniel Hong (Paramus) Fall Guy Ben-Sadigh (Fair Lawn), 0:42.
 Anthony Rambaldi (Westwood) Tec-Fall Derek Fermin (Hasbrouck Heights), 16-1, 3:08.
 Greg Hadoulis (Leonia/Palisades Park) Fall Tiiko Chintedza (Tenafly), 0:52.
 Konnor Kovalcik (Indian Hills) Fall Sam Bodnar (Old Tappan), 3:19.
 Luis Salomon (Becton/Wood-Ridge) Tec-Fall Colin Fowler (Waldwick/Midland Park), 19-4, 4:11.
 Aidan Wallace (Bergen Catholic) Fall Ori Young (Ramapo), 2:41.

132 pounds

Jonathon Cherba (Paramus) Fall Andrew Parente (Hasbrouck Heights), 2:51.
 Nick Savariego (Pascack Valley) Fall Nathan Quinones (Bergenfield), 5:50.
 Noah Krakower (River Dell) Fall Matteo Martinez (Garfield), 0:51.
 George Binikos (Tenafly) Fall Anthony Leone (Glen Rock), 4:36.
 Jeremy Quezada (Dumont) Dec Natan Tsyrlin (Fair Lawn), 7-2.
 Sharbel Nicolas (Pascack Hills) Fall Elad Fronimos (Leonia/Palisades Park), 0:54.
 George Hufnagel (Paramus Catholic) Fall Enzo Russo (Saddle Brook), 3:49.
 Logan Garcia (Don Bosco) Fall Justin Dario (Northern Highlands), 1:13.
 Andrew DiGia (Old Tappan) Fall Ziv Goldenberg (Demarest), 3:55.
 Mateo Sgambellone (St. Joseph) Fall Tommy Kousis (Westwood), 4:12.
 Sid Hamburger (Cresskill) Fall Yandel Mateo (New Milford), 1:41.
 Christian Fojon (Ramsey) Fall Nicholas

Castaneda (Lodi)
 Kenny Brouwer (Emerson/Park Ridge) Fall Gabe Alcocer (Elmwood Park), 0:41.
 AJ Tretola (Ridgewood) Fall Brandon Dimase (Becton Reg/Wood Ridge), 3:16.
 Ryan Kozdra (Mahwah) Fall Gio Blake (Hackensack), 1:40.

138 pounds

Declan Jaeger (Old Tappan) Dec Andy Beras (Bergenfield), 9-5.
 Brady Dransfield (Indian Hills) Fall Max Greenberg (Ramsey), 2:43.
 Stefano Bruni (Ramapo) Fall Alex Guerriero (Paramus), 2:38.
 Jake Sheiner (Fair Lawn) Fall Agustin Grillo (Glen Rock), 0:18.
 Aaron Kim (Waldwick/Midland Park) Dec Mike Kozdra (Mahwah), 10-9.
 Jake Wacha (Demarest) Fall Ben Grater (Saddle Brook), 5:48.
 Sutter Totaro (New Milford) Dec Logan Cantone (Don Bosco), 3-1.
 Zach Herninko (Rutherford) Dec Antonio Cedeno (Pascack Valley), 7-4.
 Max Unger (Pascack Hills) Fall Kevin Silva (Lyndhurst), 1:53.
 Jacob McCoy (Northern Highlands) Fall Marco Greco (Hackensack), 3:12.
 Thomas Malone (Ridgewood) Fall Jordan Twiss (Tenafly), 3:05.
 Tayo Amusan (Westwood) Dec Jake Urso (Dumont), 8-2.
 Dylan Mullen (River Dell) Fall Jona Kim (Cresskill), 2:44.

144 pounds

Michael Lombardo (Elmwood Park) Dec Jacob Moskovitz (Mahwah), 8-7.
 Connor Sculla (Hasbrouck Heights) Fall Ethan Barrow (Ramsey), 1:35.
 Dimitri Rainey (Indian Hills) Fall Ryan Carlson (Pascack Valley), 2:23.
 Alexander Naddeo (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Martin Coombes (Emerson/Park Ridge), 0:31.
 Benjamin Garcia (Don Bosco Prep) Maj-Dec Liam Osder (Demarest), 9-0.
 Tyler Nisler (North Bergen) Fall Nick Rotolo (Old Tappan), 4:20.
 Brendan Connolly (Northern Highlands) Fall Paul Mielke (Bergenfield), 0:19.
 Austin Yalowitz (Fort Lee) Fall Andrew Zimmerman (Glen Rock), 1:08.
 Gavin Seiler (Westwood) Fall Matt Lantigua (Fair Lawn), 4:56.
 Eddie Ortiz Jr (Lyndhurst) Fall Cavan Hughes (River Dell), 1:56.
 Randall Gonzalez-Manzanero (Paramus) Dec Pablo Villa (Hackensack), 7-0.
 Jacob Herninko (Rutherford) Fall Jason Brantly (Ramapo), 1:44.
 Michael Frangos (Pascack Hills) Dec Gabriel Nunez (Bogota/Ridgefield Park), 5-2.
 Zach Cetera (Dumont) Fall Jordan Coffee (Teaneck), 3:13.
 Zachary Ballante (Paramus Catholic) Fall Matthew Pacheco (Lodi), 2:37.

Round of 64

126 pounds

Andrew Ivanovski (Saddle Brook) Fall Paul Coombes (Emerson/Park Ridge), 0:29.
 Sam Hur (Fort Lee) Fall Brian Alvarez (North Bergen), 2:48.

Saturday January 22, 2022

Finals

106 pounds: Brian Melamud (Bergen Catholic) Maj-Dec Vincent Paino (St. Joseph), 16-6.

113 pounds: Dylan Ross (Paramus Catholic) Tec-Fall Malik Asfour (Lodi), 15-0, 4:12.

120 pounds: Donny Almeyda (St. Joseph) Dec Mason Ketcham (Don Bosco), 7-4.

126 pounds: Aidan Wallace (Bergen Catholic) Dec Joe Manno (St. Joseph), 3-1 (UTB).

132 pounds: Ryan Ford (Bergen Catholic) Dec Ryan Kozdra (Mahwah), 5-1.

Semifinals

106 pounds: Brian Melamud (Bergen Catholic) Fall Devin Ryan (New Milford), 2:42.

Vincent Paino (St. Joseph) Dec Chris Hong (Paramus), 8-7.

113 pounds: Dylan Ross (Paramus Catholic) Tec-Fall Evan Cabrera (North Bergen), 16-0, 6:00.

Malik Asfour (Lodi) Dec Chris Nucifora (Bergen Catholic), 12-7.

120 pounds: Mason Ketcham (Don Bosco) Medical Forfeit Taisei Kurachi (River Dell).

Donny Almeyda (St. Joseph) Fall Adam Albino (Bogota/Ridgefield Park), 3:02.

126 pounds: Joe Manno (St. Joseph) Maj-Dec Ryan Hartung (New Milford), 14-4.

Aidan Wallace (Bergen Catholic) Dec Daniel Hong (Paramus), 5-2.

132 pounds: Ryan Ford (Bergen Catholic) Fall George Hufnagel (Paramus Catholic), 0:29.

Ryan Kozdra (Mahwah) Fall Mateo Sgambellone (St. Joseph), 4:46.

138 pounds: Alex Almeyda (St. Joseph) Medical Forfeit Loudon Mazzeo (Emerson/Park Ridge).

Jake Wacha (Demarest) Maj-Dec Stefano Bruni (Ramapo), 11-3.

144 pounds: Christopher Bacchioni (Bergen Catholic) Fall Brendan Connolly (Northern Highlands), 4:53.

Zachary Ballante (Paramus Catholic) Dec Austin Yalowitz (Fort Lee), 5-2.

Quarterfinals

106 pounds: Brian Melamud (Bergen Catholic) Tec-Fall Charles Shaddow (Ridgewood), 20-5, 2:08.

Devin Ryan (New Milford) Maj-Dec Jonathan Rotolo (Old Tappan), 14-4.

Chris Hong (Paramus) Maj-Dec Evan Krakower (River Dell), 13-5.

Vincent Paino (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Jake Demeester (Garfield), 1:01.

113 pounds: Dylan Ross (Paramus Catholic) Fall Conner Sklavounos (Westwood), 3:47.

Evan Cabrera (North Bergen) Dec

Anthony Cummings (Hasbrouck Heights), 10-3.

Malik Asfour (Lodi) Fall Kieran McNeil (Lyndhurst/North Arlington), 2:22.

Chris Nucifora (Bergen Catholic) Fall Devin Longaker (Elmwood Park), 1:54.

120 pounds

Taisei Kurachi (River Dell) Dec Anthony Tardibuono (Rutherford), 4-2.

Mason Ketcham (Don Bosco) Dec Noah Kochman (Bergen Catholic), 4-2.

Donny Almeyda (St. Joseph) Maj-Dec Joseph Cappello (Paramus Catholic), 16-8.

Adam Albino (Bogota/Ridgefield Park) Dec Jerzey Ryan (New Milford), 9-4.

126 pounds

Joe Manno (St. Joseph) Dec Noah Martin (Pascack Valley), 3-1.

Aidan Wallace (Bergen Catholic) Fall Greg Hadoulis (Leonia/Palisesades Park), 1:51.

132 pounds: Ryan Ford (Bergen Catholic) Fall Noah Krakower (River Dell), 2:19.

George Hufnagel (Paramus Catholic) Dec Jeremy Quezada (Dumont), 4-2.

Mateo Sgambellone (St. Joseph) Tec-Fall Logan Garcia (Don Bosco), 15-0, 5:46.

Ryan Kozdra (Mahwah) Maj-Dec Christian Fojon (Ramsey), 11-2.

138 pounds

Stefano Bruni (Ramapo) Medical Forfeit Joe Cangro (Bergen Catholic).

Jake Wacha (Demarest) Maj-Dec Jake Sheiner (Fair Lawn), 13-3.

Louden Mazzeo (Emerson/Park Ridge) Dec Max Unger (Pascack Hills), 10-8.

Alex Almeyda (St. Joseph) Tec-Fall Thomas Malone (Ridgewood), 17-2, 2:07.

144 pounds

Christopher Bacchioni (Bergen Catholic) Fall Connor Sculla (Hasbrouck Heights), 1:55.

Brendan Connolly (Northern Highlands) Fall Benjamin Garcia (Don Bosco), 1:03.

Austin Yalowitz (Fort Lee) Dec Eddie Ortiz Jr. (Lyndhurst/North Arlington), 9-4.

Zachary Ballante (Paramus Catholic) Dec Jacob Herninko (Rutherford), 3-1.

Round of 16

106 pounds

Charles Shaddow (Ridgewood) Maj-Dec Anthony Lavezzola (Westwood), 8-0.

Jonathan Rotolo (Old Tappan) Fall Mark Calderio (Fair Lawn), 0:41.

Devin Ryan (New Milford) Fall Kyle Von Seidelmann (Hasbrouck Heights), 1:56.

Chris Hong (Paramus) Fall Preston Montague (Paramus Catholic), 3:49.

Evan Krakower (River Dell) Maj-Dec Derek Bauernschmidt (Bogota/Ridgefield Park), 15-2.

Jake Demeester (Garfield) Dec Chris Weaver (Indian Hills), 12-8.

Vincent Paino (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Ryan Haynes (Don Bosco Prep), 0:46.

113 pounds

Dylan Ross (Paramus Catholic) Maj-Dec James Sloan (St. Joseph Regional), 10-0.

Conner Sklavounos (Westwood) Fall

Anthony Landi (Bogota/Ridgefield Park), 4:39.

Anthony Cummings (Hasbrouck Heights) Fall Joe Langschultz (New Milford), 0:57.

Evan Cabrera (North Bergen) Fall Daniel Olivo (Old Tappan), 1:49.

Kieran McNeil (Lyndhurst) Fall Colin Burns (Ridgewood), 0:51.

Malik Asfour (Lodi) Dec Marco Alarcon (Don Bosco Prep), 8-2.

Devin Longaker (Elmwood Park) Dec Ghali Chah (Becton Reg/Wood Ridge), 6-1.

Chris Nucifora (Bergen Catholic) Dec Anthony Cadicina (Ramsey), 7-0.

120 pounds

Taisei Kurachi (River Dell) Maj-Dec Andrew Zwernemann (Demarest), 13-3.

Anthony Tardibuono (Rutherford) Fall Ryan Cortez (Garfield), 5:41.

Noah Kochman (Bergen Catholic) Fall Ryan Armstrong (Leonia/Palisesades Park), 0:47.

Mason Ketcham (Don Bosco) Tec-Fall Van Schoening (Ramsey), 16-0 4:26.

Donny Almeyda (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Jake Farrington (Emerson/Park Ridge), 0:51.

Joseph Cappello (Paramus Catholic) Fall Tyler Dimone (Hasbrouck Heights), 0:31.

Jerzey Ryan (New Milford) Fall Amir Algabyali (Northern Highlands), 5:14.

Adam Albino (Bogota/Ridgefield Park) Dec Patrik Rendon (Fort Lee), 9-8.

126 pounds

Joe Manno (St. Joseph) Tec-Fall Matt Robertelli (Don Bosco), 21-5, 2:51.

Noah Martin (Pascack Valley) Fall Vincent Keeler (Rutherford), 2:30.

Abraham Zaretsky (Paramus Catholic) Dec Patrick Cahill (Pascack Hills), 2-1.

Ryan Hartung (New Milford) Dec Luke Stein (Cresskill), 7-4.

Brian Vargas (Hackensack) Maj-Dec Kubrick Hilton (Demarest), 16-6.

Daniel Hong (Paramus) Tec-Fall Anthony Rambaldi (Westwood), 17-2, 2:46.

Greg Hadoulis (Leonia/Palisesades Park) Dec Konnor Kovalcik (Indian Hills), 6-4. (SV).

Aidan Wallace (Bergen Catholic) Tec-Fall Luis Salomon (Becton/Wood-Ridge), 16-0, 3:49.

132 pounds

Ryan Ford (Bergen Catholic) Fall Jonathon Cherba (Paramus), 1:16.

Noah Krakower (River Dell) Fall Nick Savariego (Pascack Valley), 3:58.

Jeremy Quezada (Dumont) Dec George Binikos (Tenafly), 12-8.

George Hufnagel (Paramus Catholic) Fall Sharbel Nicolas (Pascack Hills), 2:30.

Logan Garcia (Don Bosco) Dec Andrew DiGia (Old Tappan), 5-2.

Mateo Sgambellone (St. Joseph) Maj-Dec Sid Hamburger (Cresskill), 12-2.

Christian Fojon (Ramsey) Fall Kenny Brower (Emerson/Park Ridge), 3:15.

Ryan Kozdra (Mahwah) Fall AJ Tretola (Ridgewood), 1:46.

138 pounds

Joe Cangro (Bergen Catholic) Fall Declan Jaeger (Old Tappan), 5:22.

Stefano Bruni (Ramapo) Fall Brady Dransfield (Indian Hills), 0:59.

Jake Sheiner (Fair Lawn) Fall Aaron Kim

(Waldwick/Midland Park), 1:45.

Jake Wacha (Demarest) Dec Sutter Totaro (New Milford), 6-2.

Louden Mazzeo (Emerson/Park Ridge) Dec Zach Herninko (Rutherford), 6-4.

Max Unger (Pascack Hills) Dec Jacob McCoy (Northern Highlands), 4-3.

Thomas Malone (Ridgewood) Fall Tayo Amusan (Westwood), 1:59.

Alex Almeyda (St. Joseph) Fall Dylan Mullen (River Dell), 3:33

144 pounds

Christopher Bacchioni (Bergen Catholic) Fall Michael Lombardo (Elmwood Park), 1:23.

Connor Sculla (Hasbrouck Heights) Dec Dimitri Rainey (Indian Hills), 4-2.

Benjamin Garcia (Don Bosco) Fall Alexander Naddeo (St. Joseph), 1:43.

Brendan Connolly (Northern Highlands) Fall Tyler Nisler (North Bergen), 0:57.

Austin Yalowitz (Fort Lee) Dec Gavin Seiler (Westwood), 5-3.

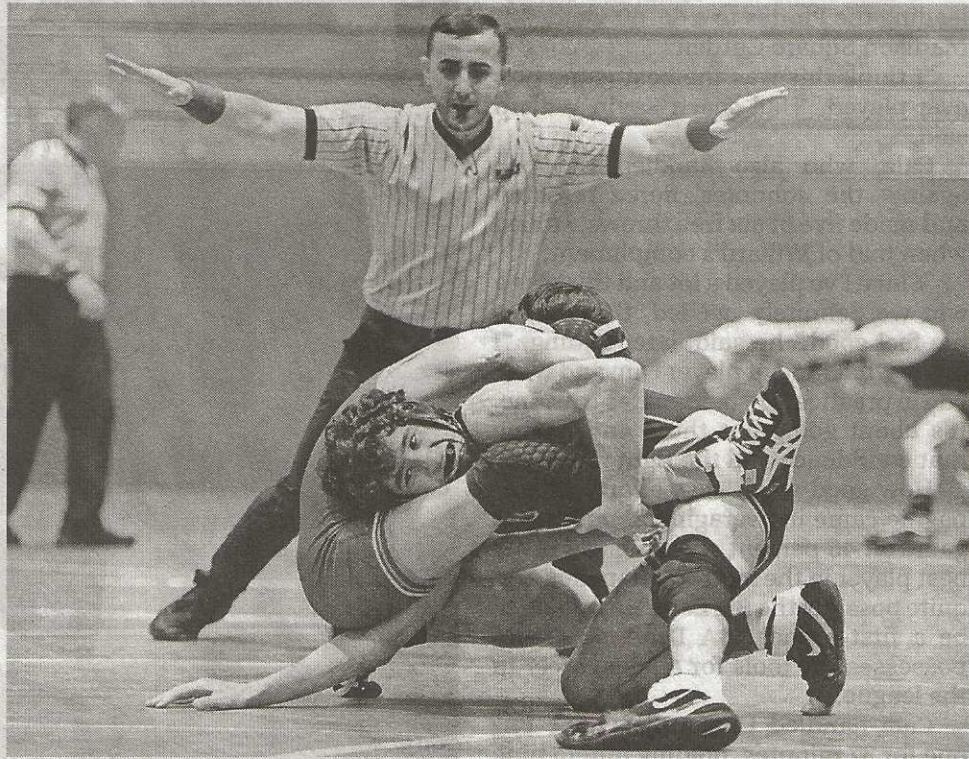
Eddie Ortiz Jr. (Lyndhurst/North Arlington) Dec Randall Gonzalez-Manzanero (Paramus), 5-3.

Jacob Herninko (Rutherford) Maj-Dec Michael Frangos (Pascack Hills), 13-2.

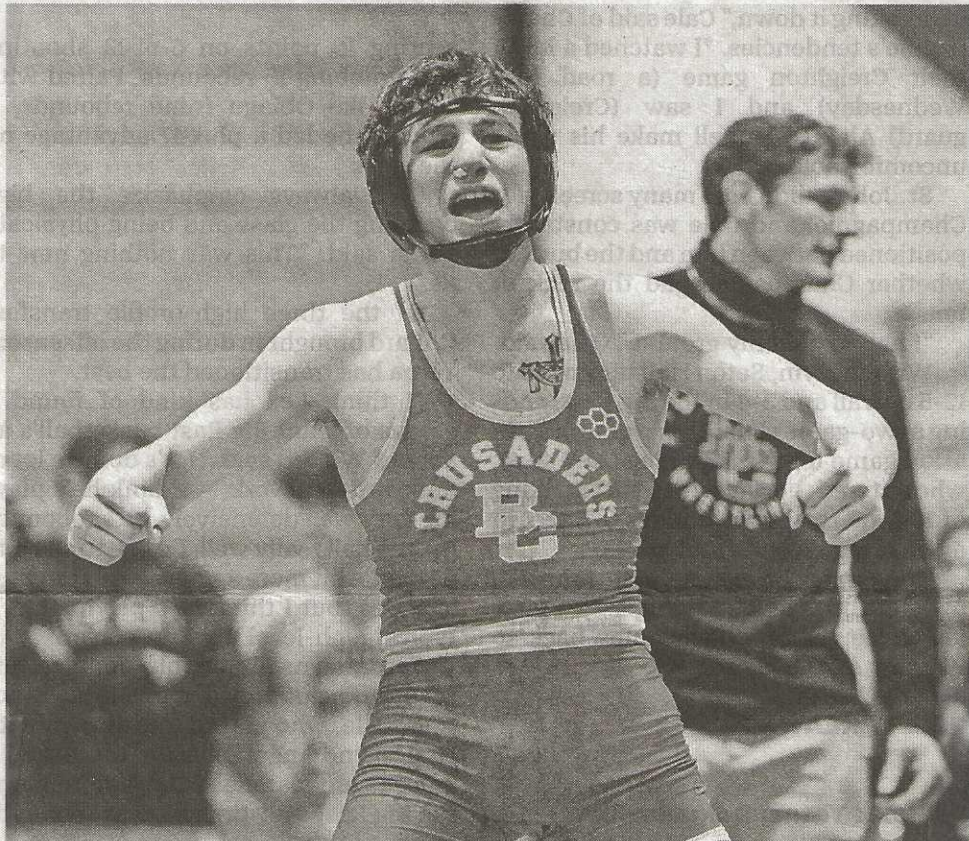
Zachary Ballante (Paramus Catholic) Dec Zach Cetera (Dumont), 8-2.

Saturday January 22, 2022

Best of Bergen



Donny Almeyda of St. Joseph on his way to defeating Mason Ketcham of Don Bosco for the title at 120 pounds on Day 1 of the Bergen County Wrestling Tournament. MICHAEL KARAS/NORTHJERSEY.COM



Bergen Catholic's Aidan Wallace, champ at 126 pounds, was named Saturday's Most Outstanding Wrestler. For complete coverage, visit NorthJersey.com or download the Varsity Aces app. MICHAEL KARAS/NORTHJERSEY.COM

DAY 2 RESULTS OF THE BERGEN COUNTY WRESTLING TOURNAMENT

Sunday January 23, 2022

Adam Liss (Fair Lawn) Maj-Dec Oliver Fermin (Hasbrouck Heights), 12-1.
 Rocco Dellagatta (St. Joseph Regional) Tec-Fall Ryan Mcguire (Lodi), 16-1 6:00.
 Aaron Perlman (Ridgewood) Fall Jason Viray (Bergenfield), 0:37.
 Devon Turner (Dumont) For Brian Gramajo (North Bergen), 0-0.
 Liam Manning (Glen Rock) Tec-Fall Danny Chuqui (Hackensack), 17-0 2:34.
 Aidan Dugan (Westwood) Fall Alex Wilkers (Ramsey), 4:59.
 Hunter Morton (Pascack Hills) Fall Joey Convertino (Waldwick/Midland Park), 0:58.
 Gabe Case (River Dell) Fall Christian Ciriello (Indian Hills), 0:28.
 Tyler Falen (Paramus) Fall Sean Lee (Tenafly), 1:32.
 Nathaniel Tylki (Garfield) Fall Aiden Arias (Elmwood Park), 0:53.
 Jordan Stallone (Becton Reg/Wood Ridge) Fall Ayden Knapp (Emerson/Park Ridge), 0:31.
 Michael Simeone (Lyndhurst) Fall Connor Abel-Lewis (Leonia/Palisesades Park), 1:07.
 Michael Fuccilli (Don Bosco Prep) Tec-Fall Ahmad Halak (Teaneck), 18-3 2:50.
 Liam Kelleher (Demarest) Fall Nick Rossi (Old Tappan), 1:51.
 Kyle Reiter (Paramus Catholic) Fall Jason Sansone (Ramapo), 2:45.

165 pounds

Eric Freeman (Paramus) Fall Michael Lamanna (Don Bosco Prep), 0:43.
 Benjamin Rivera III (Bogota/Ridgefield Park) Dec Joey Tennant (New Milford), 1-0.
 Jake Gray (Northern Highlands) Dec Aidan Fojon (Fair Lawn), 9-7 SV.
 Owen Delgado (Ramsey) Dec Frank Elston (Indian Hills), 10-3.
 Hunter Freschi (Hasbrouck Heights) Fall Davyd Postolaki (Waldwick/Midland Park), 0:16.
 Tommy Montillo (Lyndhurst) Dec Kyle DeMeester (Garfield), 6-5.
 Ryan Baudisch (Pascack Hills) Fall Lior Kohen (Westwood), 0:43.
 Kosta Mavrikidis (Paramus Catholic) Fall Alejandro Ramos (Bergenfield), 2:00.
 Roberto Padilla (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Gabe Jimenez (Fort Lee), 4:00.
 Cole Mogensen (Tenafly) Dec Thomas Yates (Dumont), 7-5.
 Matt Marinich (Demarest) Dec Dylan Kim (Cresskill), 5-0.
 David Rojas (Elmwood Park) Fall Robert Ferrara (Old Tappan), 0:46.
 Ray Kohan (Pascack Valley) Fall Zaid Ayyad (Saddle Brook), 3:27.
 Liam Boyle (River Dell) Fall Quinn Connolly (Ramapo), 1:13.
 John Stallone (Hackensack) Fall O'Maury Gray-Rice (Becton Reg/Wood Ridge), 0:47.
 Justin Onello (Bergen Catholic) Fall Jake Torre (Rutherford), 0:32.

175 pounds

Michael Dellagatta (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Alex Bogush (Ridgewood), 0:44.
 John Makdis (Westwood) Fall Damien Lalama (Hasbrouck Heights), 5:40.
 Glenn Roi (Dumont) Fall Danny Martinez (Lyndhurst), 1:06.
 Zak Darwish (Ramapo) Fall Johanny Tapia (Garfield), 3:16.
 Ethan Mendel (Northern Highlands) Fall Kendrick Gyannfi (Lodi), 1:35.
 George Kasper (Becton Reg/Wood Ridge) Fall Hamza Issa (Saddle Brook), 0:16.
 Cole Totaro (New Milford) Fall Alex Leon (Pascack Hills), 3:37.
 Eddie Terreri (Paramus Catholic) Dec Matthew Valenzuela (Hackensack), 7-0.
 Drew Petaccia (Pascack Valley) Fall Andrew Vargas (Bogota/Ridgefield Park), 3:10.
 Evan Heyn (Ramsey) Dec Owen Windram (River Dell), 7-1.

Sean Fleites (North Bergen) Fall Kalvin Acosta-Jimenez (Bergenfield), 2:55.
 Matt Olivo (Old Tappan) Fall Jake Abramson (Waldwick/Midland Park), 2:51.
 Kevin Carmichael (Paramus) Fall Spiros Salonitis (Cresskill), 0:41.
 Kevin Chica (Cliffside Park/Ridgefield) Fall Dylan Asgarian (Indian Hills), 1:34.
 Holden Pecoraro (Don Bosco Prep) Fall Kypros Lachanaris (Tenafly), 2:49.
 Leo Varga (Bergen Catholic) Dec Jake Shannon (Emerson/Park Ridge), 4-1.

190 pounds

Chad Falcon (St. Joseph Regional) Maj-Dec AJ Rosenberger (Dumont), 13-2.
 Tyler Duffy (Pascack Hills) Fall Nathan Kim (Old Tappan), 4:00.
 Ren Yoshikubo (River Dell) Fall Dominic Wanderlingh (Cresskill), 0:14.
 Evan Peterson (Garfield) Fall Julian Morris (Pascack Valley), 2:29.
 Kai Argyros (Don Bosco Prep) Fall David Alvarado (Cliffside Park/Ridgefield), 0:58.
 Zvon Franklin (Ramsey) Fall Chase Fishman (Northern Highlands), 4:35.
 Max Castro (Hasbrouck Heights) Dec Evan Celaj (Demarest), 5-3.
 Chris Batista (New Milford) Fall Ralph Warner (Waldwick/Midland Park), 0:25.
 Tom Shokoff (Ramapo) Fall Shiv Patel (Hackensack), 1:56.

215 pounds

Michal Kapolka (Garfield) Fall Kevin Basmadjian (Demarest), 5:54.
 Esquire Boyce (Hasbrouck Heights) Fall Josue Linares (New Milford), 1:00.
 Aidan Schlett (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Bryann Mejias-Mancilla (Cliffside Park/Ridgefield), 0:16.
 Alejandro Camarena (Pascack Hills) Fall Alex Falkoff (Pascack Valley), 3:28.
 Jacob McNamee (Ridgewood) Fall Paul Choi (Leonia/Palisesades Park), 0:40.
 Mathew Carvajal (Bogota/Ridgefield Park) Fall Rob Alanaskan (Ramsey), 0:34.
 Ayden Giacomelli (Emerson/Park Ridge) Fall Jake Rickett (Glen Rock), 0:23.
 Nate Marin (North Bergen) Fall Joseph Berrios (Becton Reg/Wood Ridge), 3:48.
 David Costa-Pollando (Cresskill) Dec Albert Ortiz (Teaneck), 8-4.
 Mike Greenbaum (Northern Highlands) Fall Peter Rossi (Lodi), 0:48.
 Joe Boyle (River Dell) Fall Ryan O'Neill (Old Tappan), 2:49.
 Jeff Valencia (Bergenfield) Fall Patrick Flynn Bowie, MD (Westwood), 0:18.
 Steve Pisciotta (Rutherford) Fall Nicola Destefano (Dumont), 1:07.

285 pounds

Frank Brescia (New Milford) Fall Luciano Mateo-Russo (Rutherford), 0:32.
 RJ Ussher (Westwood) Fall Kylir Alexander (Pascack Hills), 0:16.
 Xavier Delgado (Ramsey) Fall Jon McCreedy (Indian Hills), 0:15.
 Jonathan Viton (Cliffside Park/Ridgefield) Fall Xavier Palacios (North Bergen), 1:38.
 Jake Smith (Old Tappan) Fall Richard Wolf (Becton Reg/Wood Ridge), 0:12.
 Justin Amato (Pascack Valley) Fall Kevin Carranza (Lyndhurst), 1:35.
 Hugo Wang (Bogota/Ridgefield Park) Dec Curtis Reese (River Dell), 6-4 SV

Round of 64

150 pounds

Conor McKenna (Pascack Valley) Fall Sean Rowen (Ramapo), 1:42.
 Stav Fronimos (Leonia/Palisesades Park) Dec Kanbar Tatal (River Dell), 3-2.

157 pounds

Gent Huli (Saddle Brook) Forfeit Thomas Neme (Northern Highlands).
 Jason Sansone (Ramapo) Tec-Fall Jason Kelly (Mahwah), 15-0, 3:03.

Round of 32

150 pounds

Myles Leonard (Waldwick/Midland Park) Fall Conor McKenna (Pascack Valley), 0:52.
 Jeremy Pitcock (Tenafly) Fall Anthony Bonagura (Rutherford), 4:59.
 Liam Fowley (Old Tappan) Fall Dominick Szot (Elmwood Park), 0:21.
 Matthew Field (Paramus) Fall Yunte Trattner (Ridgewood), 1:00.
 Logan Hurwitt (Northern Highlands) Fall Alex Rentas (Hackensack), 3:22.
 Mitch Goodson (Westwood) Fall Elijah Bell (Becton Reg/Wood Ridge), 0:47.
 Sean Hali (Ramsey) Fall Victor Ayuardo (Cliffside Park/Ridgefield), 1:38.
 Damian Weaver (Lyndhurst) Tec-Fall Colin Cottrell (Emerson/Park Ridge), 17-2 2:04.
 Eric Broadie (Bergen Catholic) Fall Markel Stewart (Garfield), 2:32.
 Blake Freschi (Hasbrouck Heights) Dec Jack Stovall (Cresskill), 7-4.
 Christian Funke (Pascack Hills) Maj-Dec Michael Giles (Dumont), 9-0.
 Gustavo Alarcon (Don Bosco Prep) Fall Kwaku Nyamekye (Bergenfield), 1:38.
 Frankie Dibella (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Nick Tufano (Glen Rock), 0:39.
 Matthew Murri (Fair Lawn) Maj-Dec Maksim Tsybulka (Fort Lee), 10-2.
 Nicholas Lewis (Mahwah) Fall Michael Schifano (Indian Hills), 1:20.
 Daniel Rella (Paramus Catholic) Fall Stav Fronimos (Leonia/Palisesades Park), 0:46.
157 pounds
 Nick Fea (Bergen Catholic) Fall Gent Huli (Saddle Brook), 2:27.

For the first time in more than two years, wrestling champions were crowned in Bergen County.

This year's BCCA George Jockish Tournament looked a little different, being held in late January, with seven weight classes on Saturday and seven weight classes on Sunday.

Here are results from the last seven weight classes of the 2022 tournament at Hackensack High School.

Tournament team scores

1. Bergen Catholic, 325; 2. St. Joseph, 289.5; 3. Paramus Catholic, 236; 4. Paramus 144.5; 5. Don Bosco, 140.5; 6. Northern Highlands 101.5; 7. River Dell, 92; 8. Pascack Hills, 91; 9. Pascack Valley, 80; 10. New Milford, 77. 11. Lyndhurst, 71.5. 12. Westwood, 68.5. 13 (tie). Hasbrouck Heights, North Bergen, 66. 15. Ramsey, 65. 16. Ridgewood, 62. 17. Emerson/Park Ridge, 56. 18. Old Tappan, 47. 19. Ramapo, 43.5. 20. Demarest, 42. 21. Garfield, 38. 22. Waldwick/Midland Park, 36. 23. Bogota/Ridgefield Park, 35. 24. Mahwah, 33. 25. Fort Lee, 32.5. 26. Rutherford, 32. 27. Fair Lawn, 30. 28. Indian Hills, 28. 29. Elmwood Park, 26.5. 30. Becton/Wood-Ridge, 25.5. 31. Lodi, 24. 32. Glen Rock, 23.5. 33 (tie). Dumont, Hackensack, 23. 35. Tenafly, 18. 36. Leonia/Palisades Park, 17. 37. Cliffside Park/Ridgefield, 16. 38. Cresskill, 14. 39. Saddle Brook, 8. 40. Teaneck, 7. 41. Bergenfield, 4.

Finals

150 pounds
Damian Weaver (Lyndhurst) Dec. Daniel Rella (Paramus Catholic), 5-2

157 pounds
Nick Fea (Bergen Catholic) TF Gabe Case (River Dell), 26-11

165 pounds
Eric Freeman (Paramus) Dec. Roberto Padilla (St. Joseph Regional), 5-1

175 pounds
Michael Dellagatta (St. Joseph Regional) Dec. Leo Varga (Bergen Catholic), 6-0

190 pounds
Remy Brancato (Bergen Catholic) Dec. Joshua Palacio (North Bergen), 3-2

215 pounds
Aj Fricchione (Bergen Catholic) Dec. Zachery Dolack (Paramus), 7-4

285 pounds
Jim Mullen (St. Joseph Regional) Dec. Max Acciardi (Paramus Catholic), 8-2

Third place matches

150 pounds: Myles Leonard (Waldwick/Midland Park) Fall Gustavo Alarcon (Don Bosco Prep), 2:50.

157 pounds: Kyle Reiter (Paramus Catholic) Dec Hunter Morton (Pascack Hills), 7-2.

165 pounds: Justin Onello (Bergen Catholic) Fall Kosta Mavrikidis (Paramus Catholic), 2:18.

175 pounds: Drew Petaccia (Pascack Valley) Dec Eddie Terreri (Paramus Catholic), 8-2.

190 pounds: Xavier Williams (Paramus Catholic) Kai Argyros (Don Bosco Prep), 3-1:24:8.

215 pounds: Ayden Giacomelli (Emerson/Park Ridge) Dec Mike Greenbaum (Northern Highlands), 6-3.

285 pounds: Justin Gradzki (Northern Highlands) Dec Dominick Brogna (Bergen Catholic), 6-1.

Semifinals

150 pounds
Damian Weaver (Lyndhurst) Dec Myles Leonard (Waldwick/Midland Park), 3-2.
Daniel Rella (Paramus Catholic) Maj-Dec Gustavo Alarcon (Bergen Catholic), 11-0.

157 pounds
Nick Fea (Bergen Catholic) Tec-Fall Hunter Morton (Pascack Hills), 28-13, 1:46.
Gabe Case (River Dell) Dec Kyle Reiter (Paramus Catholic), 5-2.

165 pounds

Eric Freeman (Paramus) Dec Kosta Mavrikidis (Paramus Catholic), 6-0.
Roberto Padilla (St. Joseph) Dec Justin Onello (Bergen Catholic), 3-1.

175 pounds

Michael Dellagatta (St. Joseph) Fall Eddie Terreri (Paramus Catholic), 0:37.
Leo Varga (Bergen Catholic) Fall Drew Petaccia (Pascack Valley), 0:39.

190 pounds

Remy Brancato (Bergen Catholic) Maj-Dec Kai Argyros (Don Bosco Prep), 8-0.

Joshua Palacio (North Bergen) Maj-Dec Xavier Williams (Paramus Catholic), 13-1.

215 pounds

AJ Fricchione (Bergen Catholic) Fall Ayden Giacomelli (Emerson/Park Ridge), 2:26.

Zachery Dolack (Paramus) Maj-Dec Mike Greenbaum (Northern Highlands), 8-0.

285 pounds

Jim Mullen (St. Joseph) Dec Dominick Brogna (Bergen Catholic), 7-2.
Max Acciardi (Paramus Catholic) Tec-Fall Justin Gradzki (Northern Highlands), 16-0, 3:27.

Quarterfinals

150 pounds

Myles Leonard (Waldwick/Midland Park) Maj-Dec Matthew Field (Paramus), 13-3.
Damian Weaver (Lyndhurst) Dec Logan Hurwitt (Northern Highlands), 4-0.

Gustavo Alarcon (Don Bosco) Medical Forfeit Eric Broadie (Bergen Catholic).
Daniel Rella (Paramus Catholic) Fall Frankie DiBella (St. Joseph), 5:39.

157 pounds

Nick Fea (Bergen Catholic) Fall Rocco Dellagatta (St. Joseph), 3:41.
Hunter Morton (Pascack Hills) Dec Liam Manning (Glen Rock), 11-4.

Gabe Case (River Dell) Fall Jordan Stallone (Becton/Wood-Ridge), 1:14.
Kyle Reiter (Paramus Catholic) Fall Michael Simeone (Lyndhurst), 3:54.

165 pounds

Eric Freeman (Paramus) Fall Owen Delgado (Ramsey), 1:08.
Kosta Mavrikidis (Paramus Catholic) Dec Hunter Freschi (Hasbrouck Heights), 5-3.

Roberto Padilla (St. Joseph) Fall David Rojas (Elmwood Park), 2:46.
Justin Onello (Bergen Catholic) Fall Ray Kohan (Pascack Valley), 2:35.

175 pounds

Michael Dellagatta (St. Joseph) Fall Zak Darwish (Ramapo), 0:10.
Eddie Terreri (Paramus Catholic) Dec Ethan Mendel (Northern Highlands), 6-3.

Drew Petaccia (Pascack Valley) Dec Sean Fleites (North Bergen), 5-2.
Leo Varga (Bergen Catholic) Fall Kevin Carmichael (Paramus), 4:37.

190 pounds

Remy Brancato (Bergen Catholic) Fall Tyler Duffy (Pascack Hills), 0:37.
Kai Argyros (Don Bosco) Dec Bobby Turso (Ridgewood), 7-4.

Xavier Williams (Paramus Catholic) Dec Brandon Myack (Paramus), 8-5.
Joshua Palacio (North Bergen) Fall Cole Hughes (Emerson/Park Ridge), 3:16.

215 pounds

AJ Fricchione (Bergen Catholic) Dec Aidan Schlett (St. Joseph Regional), 4-3.
Ayden Giacomelli (Emerson/Park Ridge) Fall Alejandro Camarena (Pascack Hills), 3:17.

Mike Greenbaum (Northern Highlands) Dec Matthew Murray (Paramus Catholic), 3-2.
Zachery Dolack (Paramus) Dec Joe Boyle (River Dell), 4-2.

285 pounds

Jim Mullen (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Connor Haroutunian (Waldwick/Midland Park), 1:55.
Dominick Brogna (Bergen Catholic) Fall

For complete coverage, visit NorthJersey.com or download the Varsity Aces app

Danny Paulino (Teaneck), 0:32.
Justin Gradzki (Northern Highlands) Fall Tyler Kario (Elmwood Park), 2:51.

Max Acciardi (Paramus Catholic) Fall Nolan Clark (Glen Rock) 2:24.

Round of 16

150 pounds

Myles Leonard (Waldwick/Midland Park) Fall Jeremy Pitcock (Tenafly), 0:19.
Matthew Field (Paramus) Maj-Dec Liam Fowley (Old Tappan), 14-2.

Logan Hurwitt (Northern Highlands) Tec-Fall Mitch Goodson (Westwood), 18-3 5:16.

Damian Weaver (Lyndhurst) Fall Sean Hali (Ramsey), 0:52.
Eric Broadie (Bergen Catholic) Fall Blake Freschi (Hasbrouck Heights), 1:12.

Gustavo Alarcon (Don Bosco Prep) Fall Christian Funke (Pascack Hills), 2:59.
Frankie Dibella (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Nicholas Lewis (Mahwah), 3:34.

Daniel Rella (Paramus Catholic) Fall Matthew Murri (Fair Lawn), 3:31.

157 pounds

Nick Fea (Bergen Catholic) Fall Adam Liss (Fair Lawn), 1:52.
Rocco Dellagatta (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Aaron Perlman (Ridgewood), 4:38.

Liam Manning (Glen Rock) Dec Devon Turner (Dumont), 11-6.
Hunter Morton (Pascack Hills) Fall Aidan Dugan (Westwood), 4:00.

Gabe Case (River Dell) Dec Tyler Falen (Paramus), 5-1.
Jordan Stallone (Becton Reg/Wood Ridge) Fall Nathaniel Tylki (Garfield), 3:49.

Michael Simeone (Lyndhurst) Dec Michael Fuccilli (Don Bosco Prep), 3-1.
Kyle Reiter (Paramus Catholic) Fall Liam Kelleher (Demarest), 1:59.

165 pounds

Eric Freeman (Paramus) Fall Benjamin Rivera III (Bogota/Ridgefield Park), 1:04.
Owen Delgado (Ramsey) Dec Jake Gray (Northern Highlands), 6-3.

Hunter Freschi (Hasbrouck Heights) Fall Tommy Montillo (Lyndhurst), 0:39.
Kosta Mavrikidis (Paramus Catholic) Fall Ryan Baudisch (Pascack Hills), 3:36.

Roberto Padilla (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Cole Mogenssen (Tenafly), 0:14.
David Rojas (Elmwood Park) Fall Matt Marinich (Demarest), 0:55.

Ray Kohan (Pascack Valley) Fall Liam Boyle (River Dell), 2:21.
Justin Onello (Bergen Catholic) Fall John Stallone (Hackensack), 0:19.

175 pounds

Michael Dellagatta (St. Joseph Regional) Fall John Makdis (Westwood), 0:12.
Zak Darwish (Ramapo) Fall Glenn Roi (Dumont), 5:32.

Ethan Mendel (Northern Highlands) Fall George Kasper (Becton Reg/Wood Ridge), 2:42.
Eddie Terreri (Paramus Catholic) Fall Cole Totaro (New Milford), 1:09.

Drew Petaccia (Pascack Valley) Fall Evan Heyn (Ramsey), 1:19.
Sean Fleites (North Bergen) Fall Matt Olivo (Old Tappan), 1:12.

Kevin Carmichael (Paramus) Fall Kevin Chica (Cliffside Park/Ridgefield), 0:27.
Leo Varga (Bergen Catholic) Fall Holden Pecoraro (Don Bosco Prep), 0:44.

190 pounds

Remy Brancato (Bergen Catholic) Fall Chad Falcon (St. Joseph Regional), 1:52.
Tyler Duffy (Pascack Hills) Dec Ren Yoshikubo (River Dell), 7-3.

Bobby Turso (Ridgewood) Fall Evan Peterson (Garfield), 2:35.
Kai Argyros (Don Bosco Prep) Dec Tommie Lee Minaya (Becton Reg/Wood

Ridge), 5-1.
Xavier Williams (Paramus Catholic) Fall Zvon Franklin (Ramsey), 5:05.

Brandon Myack (Paramus) Fall Max Castro (Hasbrouck Heights), 1:55.
Cole Hughes (Emerson/Park Ridge) Fall Chris Batista (New Milford), 0:24.

Joshua Palacio (North Bergen) Fall Tom Shokoff (Ramapo), 0:36.

215 pounds

AJ Fricchione (Bergen Catholic) Fall Michal Kapolka (Garfield), 1:39.
Aidan Schlett (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Esquire Boyce (Hasbrouck Heights), 2:15.

Alejandro Camarena (Pascack Hills) Fall Jacob McNamee (Ridgewood), 2:56.
Ayden Giacomelli (Emerson/Park Ridge) Fall Mathew Carvajal (Bogota/Ridgefield Park), 3:13.

Matthew Murray (Paramus Catholic) Dec Nate Marin (North Bergen), 5-1.
Mike Greenbaum (Northern Highlands) Dec David Costa-Pollano (Cresskill), 6-3.

Joe Boyle (River Dell) Dec Jeff Valencia (Bergenfield), 4-1.
Zachery Dolack (Paramus) Maj-Dec Steve Pisciotta (Rutherford), 16-3.

285 pounds

Jim Mullen (St. Joseph Regional) Fall Frank Brescia (New Milford), 0:12.
Connor Haroutunian (Waldwick/Midland Park) Dec Alex Sanmartin (Emerson/Park Ridge), 8-1.

Danny Paulino (Teaneck) Fall RJ Ussher (Westwood), 3:38.
Dominick Brogna (Bergen Catholic) Fall Xavier Delgado (Ramsey), 0:25.

Justin Gradzki (Northern Highlands) Fall Jonathan Viton (Cliffside Park/Ridgefield), 4:57.
Tyler Kario (Elmwood Park) Dec Jake Smith (Old Tappan), 9-3.

Nolan Clark (Glen Rock) Dec Justin Amato (Pascack Valley), 4-2.
Max Acciardi (Paramus Catholic) Tec-Fall Hugo Wang (Bogota/Ridgefield Park), 18-11:26.

Saturday January 22, 2022



St. Joseph's Donny Almeyda beat Don Bosco's Mason Ketcham in their 120-pound match on Day 1 of the Bergen County Wrestling Tournament on Saturday. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL KARAS/NORTHJERSEY.COM

Almeyda brothers join rare group

Both win championships at Bergen County Wrestling



Local Sports

Darren Cooper
NorthJersey.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - N.J.

HACKENSACK — Donny and Alex Almeyda don't share a room, but they will forever share a place in the Bergen County wrestling history book.

The powerful brother combination from St. Joseph Regional became the first brother tandem to win county titles the same year since 1998 on the first day of the Bergen County Wrestling Tournament on Saturday at Hackensack High School.

Due to COVID concerns and looking to alter the format a bit, the BCCA organizers ran the first seven weight classes Saturday and will run the next seven Sunday.

Alex, a senior, cruised to a 24-9 victory in the 138-pound final, while Donny, a freshman, held off Mason Ketcham (Don Bosco) 7-4 to claim the title at 120 pounds.

The BCCA online history page will list the Almeydas as the 21st set of brothers all-time to win county titles. The last to win championships on the same day were Ryan and Steve Hult from Pascack Valley in 1998. Prior to that, same-year brother championships only happened three times.

"I know it's happened," Green Knights coach Tom Farinaro said. "You know I go back to the days of Pascack Hills and the Catalfo brothers [who both won titles in 1976]. Now the Almeydas."

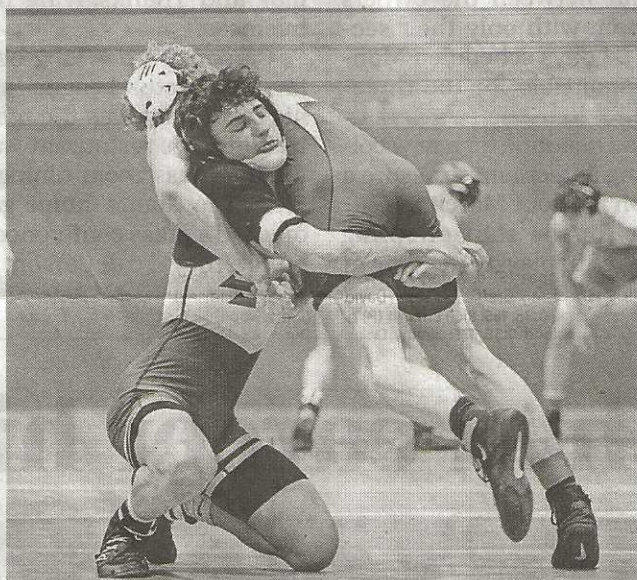
Alex was expected to be in the mix, but the anticipated match-up with Bergen Catholic standout Joe Cangro never took place with Cangro having to take himself out of the tournament Saturday with an ankle sprain.

"We have had some battles," Alex said. "I was preparing for him. It stinks that he got injured. Hopefully, he's OK so we can wrestle on Friday."

St. Joe's and Bergen Catholic are scheduled for a dual meet on Friday.

Cangro's absence opened up the bracket for Alex, who took advantage. He won his first match via second-period pin, then got a tech fall in the quarterfinals. He got another bit of a break when Loudon Mazzeo (Emerson/Park Ridge) couldn't wrestle in the semis.

In the final, Alex was on Jake Wacha (Demarest) from the start, attacking from different angles and finishing off a 24-9 tech fall win late in the third period.



St. Joseph's Alex Almeyda defeats Demarest's Jake Wacha in their 138-pound match on Day 1 of the Bergen County Wrestling Tournament on Saturday.

"I just wanted to go out there and score as many points as possible," Alex said. "Get to my offense and have fun."

Donny's day started with a pin in the Round of 16, then a major decision over Joseph Cappello (Paramus Catholic). In the semis, Donny pinned Adam Albino (Bogota/Ridgefield Park) in the second period and set up to face Ketcham for the second time this season.

Donny got the first takedown and kept Ketcham at bay, including fighting him off just before the second-period buzzer when Ketcham was close to two. At the final whistle, Donny clapped his hands once in celebration.

Alex has gotten used to having his little brother around and said he's glad he's in the Green Knights wrestling room.

"We have the talent in the room to get him better. I like it," he said. "My job as an older brother is to make him the best version of himself."

Farinaro said both wrestlers are different, but chalked it up to experience, saying Alex thinks a few moves ahead, while Donny just attacks. Farinaro also knows the end result.

"They both win."

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Late move reverses Wallace's BCCA fate

Bergen Catholic wrestler wins
county championship at 126

Sean Farrell

NorthJersey.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

HACKENSACK — It was a last-second moment that will live on forever for Aidan Wallace.

Especially since it came in the ultimate tiebreak in the premier bout of the day.

Wallace, a Bergen Catholic junior, scored a reversal with five seconds left to stun Joe Manno (St. Joseph), 3-1, on Saturday in the BCCA 126-pound final. It was a riveting battle of state medalists that enraptured the crowd at Hackensack High School.

When the dust settled, the Mahwah native felt exhausted but proud to win his first county title.

"That's why I love wrestling," said Wallace, who was named the Most Outstanding lower-weight. "Because of moments like that."

"No other sport can compare to this physically, mentally, emotionally. People say that's an opinion, but I think it's a fact. So for me to have the success like that, it's literally the best feeling."

Bergen Catholic was clearly the best on the mat Saturday when it produced four champions, including Brian Melamud (106), Ryan Ford (132) and Christopher Bacchioni (144). The tournament record for single-season titles is seven, and the Crusaders will have a chance to match that Sunday with three expected No. 1 seeds. The Crusaders also head in to the final day with a 10-point lead over St. Joseph.

While Bergen Catholic is certainly accustomed to wrestling success, the experience at Hackensack is brand new for a program that has not entered the field since 2015. For Wallace, it gave him a chance to

Wrestler

Continued from Page 8S

atone for a one-point loss in last year's Region semifinals.

"Today, he almost took me down but I was able to fight out," said Wallace, who placed eighth in the state last year and seventh as a freshman.

"That was definitely a game-changer. I was getting my attacks a little more today which was good for me."

At times, it looked like Manno was on his way to another narrow victory. The refs awarded him a go-ahead takedown early in the third, only to reverse the call after the next stoppage. Manno put Wallace in a vulnerable position in sudden victory, but couldn't quite seal the match. When neither escaped in the next two overtime period, it left Wallace with a choice.

"Originally I was thinking of choosing top," said Wallace, of the tiebreaker. "But I had a stall call and he was getting to his feet pretty easily. So I didn't know if I could ride him out. I was like, I got to go bottom and get out, give everything I have. This is the last shot."

Wallace managed to back down Manno to the mat after a restart with 12 seconds left.

Sweet taste of victory

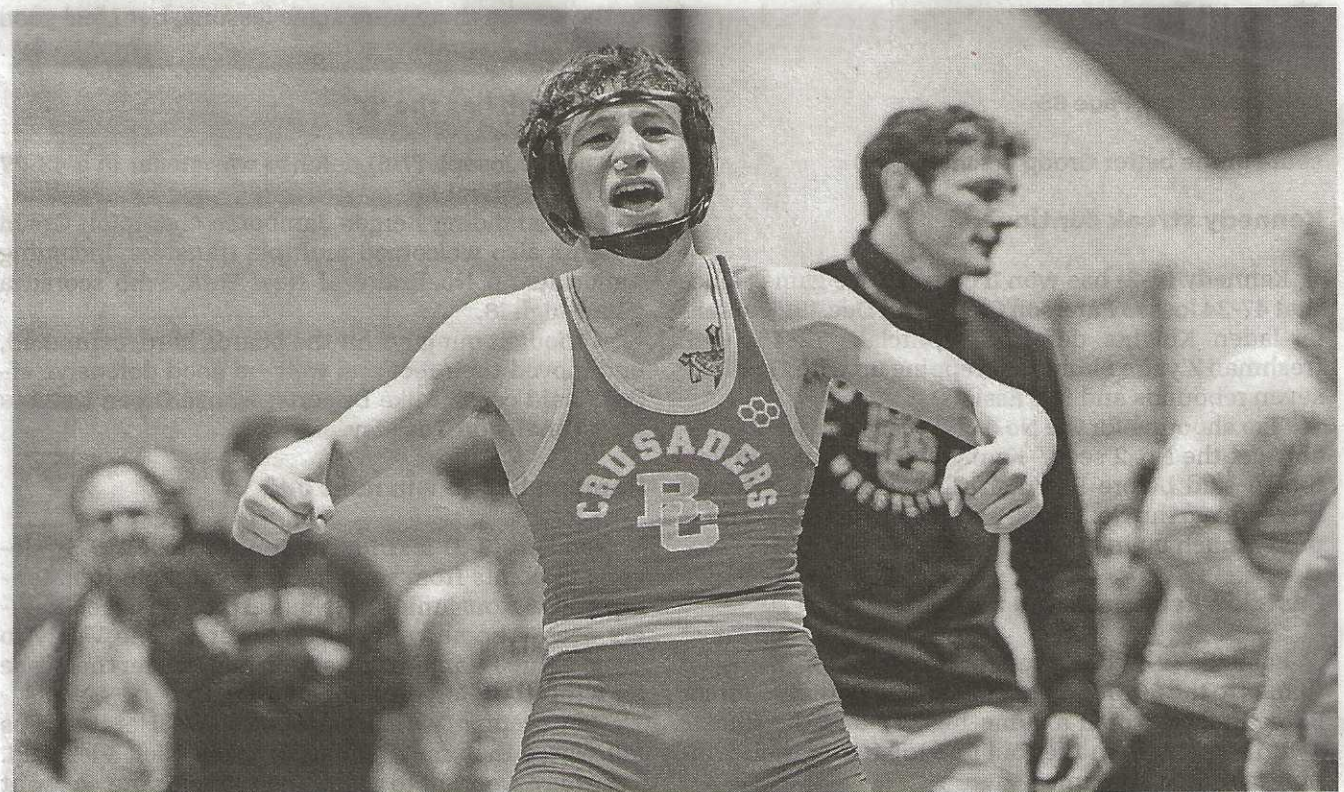
Chris Bacchioni got over the hump at the expense of a friendly rival.

Bacchioni capped off the day by knocking off Paramus Catholic's Zach Ballante, 3-2, to earn the county title.

Before sharing six minutes on the mat, the 144-pound wrestlers were on the phone "pretty much all week" in the lead-up to the tournament.

"Me and Zach have been wrestling for years together," said Bacchioni, of Wayne. "We went to the same club and trained together. It was great to compete out

Saturday January 22, 2022



Aidan Wallace, of Bergen Catholic, celebrates after defeating St. Joseph's Joe Manno in their 126-pound match of the Bergen County Wrestling Tournament at Hackensack High School on Saturday.

MICHAEL KARAS/NORTHJERSEY.COM

there. We had fun together and I think I'll see him again this year."

This was actually the first high school championship for Bacchioni, who placed fifth in the state last year after a prestigious rec career. He wrestled sparingly last year due to COVID shutdowns and missed his entire freshman year due to a head injury.

Bacchioni could hardly wait to wear the Crusader

colors after training with alums Robert Howard and Nick Kayal on the club level.

"Having that downfall freshman year was a major setback," Bacchioni said. "I feel like I've had to put in double the time now and work extra. But it's starting to pay off now, which feels good."

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Bergen Catholic wrestling team wins county championship with 7 champs

Sean Farrell

NorthJersey.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

HACKENSACK – Remy Brancato was thrilled to carry on two winning traditions on Sunday.

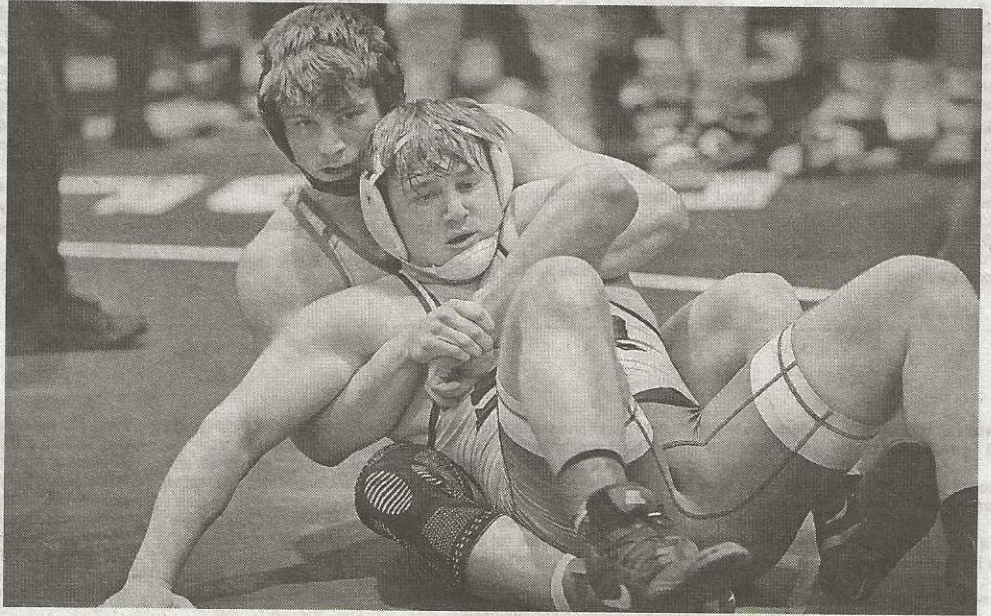
One for his family. The other for Bergen Catholic.

The top-seeded Brancato picked up his first BCCA championship, at 190 pounds, and lifted the Crusaders to the overall team title at the Bergen County Wrestling Tournament. A one-point win against Joshua Palacio (North Bergen) made Brancato the third wrestler in his family to win county gold.

Along the way, the Crusaders tied the tournament record with seven champions to go with an unprecedented 14 medalists. It was the perfect way to bounce back after losing to national power Blair Academy earlier this month.

“We needed to make a statement,” Brancato said. “We had a bad taste in our mouth and said that we need to get better every day. Not worrying about weight. Not worrying about who we got next. Just worrying about getting better as a team and loving each other and being there for one another.”

Bergen Catholic crowned another



Aj Fricchione of Bergen Catholic is on his way to beating Aidan Schlett of St. Joseph Regional in the 215-pound quarterfinal of the Bergen County Wrestling Tournament Day 2 on Sunday. MITSU YASUKAWA/ NORTHJERSEY.COM

three champions in the upper-weight session on Sunday, including Nick Fea at 157 and AJ Fricchione at 215.

Fea put on an offensive blitzkrieg in the final when he scored at least 20 points for the fourth time in five matches.

The title by Fricchione was impressive in other ways – he weighed in at only 183 pounds, but had to bump up after losing a wrestle-off. In the final, Fricchione used his agility to get the

See WRESTLING, Page 7S

Wrestling

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first takedown and roll past Zach Dolack (Paramus), 7-4.

"I think we're one of the hardest-working teams in Bergen County," Fricchione said. "Our room is like no other."

The room in Oradell is flush with talent with Brancato being one of three returning state finalists.

Brancato first started wrestling to get better at football, but eventually got hooked on the mat. His uncles, Tony and Bryan DiPasquale, both won county titles at heavyweight while wrestling for Elmwood Park in late-80's.

As luck would have it, Bryan DiPasquale was at Hackensack on Sunday to present the award at 190 to Brancato.

"My uncle acted like a father figure to me," said Brancato, who is committed to wrestle at Lehigh. "He would take me to practice. He would pay for club. He would take me around the country. Having him as my support system my entire life has been awesome."

For Bergen Catholic, it's the 20th county title in program history and the first since their most recent tournament appearance back in 2015.

The Crusaders decided to return this year, partially due to uncertainty around COVID and national events. They re-affirmed that decision last week despite a short turnaround from a

Friday dual against CBA.

"It was up in the air during the week," Brancato said. "I said you know what guys, we're going to counties. We need to make a statement. Everyone was like, let's go. We were all so enthused."

Bergen Catholic finished the two-day competition with 325 points – a few points shy of its own 2013 scoring record – to fend off Big North rival St. Joseph.

The Green Knights placed second with 289.5 points after repeat titles from Michael Dellagatta (175) and Jim Mullen (285) on Sunday. Paramus earned the most points by a public school and fourth overall thanks to a gold medal run from Most Outstanding Upper-Weight Eric Freeman (165).

Lyndhurst produced its first county

champion since 2000 when Damian Weaver (150) upset each of the top two seeds. Weaver scored his second straight win over a state qualifier with a 5-2 decision over Paramus Catholic's Dan Rella in the final.

In the end, no one was stronger or deeper than Bergen Catholic.

"It was nice to come back and make an impact," assistant coach Donny Spataro said. "It's nice to get the underclassmen exposed to this tournament. It's a tradition in Bergen County and it's good that they're starting to learn about it."

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**WRESTLING:
LIST OF MEDALISTS FROM
2022 BCCA TOURNAMENT**

Sean Farrell

NorthJersey.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

Here is the complete list of medalists at the 2022 BCCA Holiday Wrestling Tournament.

Bergen Catholic won the overall team race after tying the tournament record with seven champions.

106 pounds

- 1-Brian Melamud (Bergen Catholic)
- 2-Vincent Paino (St. Joseph)
- 3-Devin Ryan (New Milford)
- 4-Chris Hong (Paramus)
- 5-Evan Krakower (River Dell)
- 6-Charles Shaddow (Ridgewood)
- 7-Jonathan Rotolo (Old Tappan)
- 8-Jake DeMeester (Garfield)

113 pounds

- 1-Dylan Ross (Paramus Catholic)
- 2-Malik Asfour (Lodi)
- 3-Evan Cabrera (North Bergen)
- 4-Chris Nucifora (Bergen Catholic)
- 5-Kieran McNeil (Lyndhurst/North Arlington)
- 6-Conner Sklavounos (Westwood)
- 7-Anthony Cummings (Hasbrouck Heights)
- 8-Devin Longaker (Elmwood Park)

120 pounds

- 1-Donny Almeyda (St. Joseph)
- 2-Mason Ketcham (Don Bosco)
- 3-Adam Albino (Bogota/Ridgefield Park)
- 4-Taisei Kurachi (River Dell)
- 5-Noah Kochman (Bergen Catholic)
- 6-Joseph Cappello (Paramus Catholic)
- 7-Jerzey Ryan (New Milford)
- 8-Anthony Tardibuono (Rutherford)

126 pounds

- 1-Aidan Wallace (Bergen Catholic)
- 2-Joe Manno (St. Joseph)
- 3-Daniel Hong (Paramus)
- 4-Ryan Hartung (New Milford)
- 5-Brian Vargas (Hackensack)
- 6-Noah Martin (Pascack Valley)
- 7-Abraham Zaretsky (Paramus Catholic)
- 8-Greg Hadoulis (Leonia/Palisades Park)

132 pounds

- 1-Ryan Ford (Bergen Catholic)
- 2-Ryan Kozdra (Mahwah)
- 3-Mateo Sgambellone (St. Joseph)
- 4-George Hufnagel (Paramus Catholic)
- 5-Christian Fojon (Ramsey)
- 6-Noah Krakower (River Dell)

- 7-Logan Garcia (Don Bosco)
- 8-Jeremy Quezada (Dumont)

138 pounds

- 1-Alex Almeyda (St. Joseph)
- 2-Jake Wach a (Demarest)
- 3-Stefano Bruni (Ramapo)
- 4-Louden Mazzeo (Emerson/Park Ridge)
- 5-Jake Sheiner (Fair Lawn)
- 6-Thomas Malone (Ridgewood)
- 7-Max Unger (Pascack Hills)
- 8-Joe Cangro (Bergen Catholic)

144 pounds

- 1-Christopher Bacchioni (Bergen Catholic)
- 2-Zachary Ballante (Paramus Catholic)
- 3-Brendan Connolly (Northern Highlands)
- 4-Austin Yalowitz (Fort Lee)
- 5-Benjamin Garcia (Don Bosco)
- 6-Jacob Herninko (Rutherford)
- 7-Connor Scuillea (Hasbrouck Heights)
- 8-Eddie Ortiz Jr (Lyndhurst/North Arlington)

150 pounds

- 1-Damian Weaver (Lyndhurst/North Arlington)
- 2-Daniel Rella (Paramus Catholic)
- 3-Myles Leonard (Waldwick/Midland Park)
- 4-Gustavo Alarcon (Don Bosco)
- 5-Frankie DiBella (St. Joseph)

- 6-Matthew Field (Paramus)
- 7-Logan Hurwitt (Northern Highlands)
- 8-Eric Broadie (Bergen Catholic)

157 pounds

- 1-Nick Fea (Bergen Catholic)
- 2-Gabe Case (River Dell)
- 3-Kyle Reiter (Paramus Catholic)
- 4-Hunter Morton (Pascack Hills)
- 5-Rocco Dellagatta (St. Joseph)
- 6-Jordan Stallone (Becton/Wood-Ridge)
- 7-Liam Manning (Glen Rock)
- 8-Michael Simeone (Lyndhurst/North Arlington)

165 pounds

- 1-Eric Freeman (Paramus)
- 2-Roberto Padilla (St. Joseph)
- 3-Justin Onello (Bergen Catholic)
- 4-Kosta Mavrikidis (Paramus Catholic)
- 5-Hunter Freschi (Hasbrouck Heights)

175 pounds

- 1-Michael Dellagatta (St. Joseph)
- 2-Leo Varga (Bergen Catholic)
- 3-Drew Petaccia (Pascack Valley)
- 4-Eddie Terreri (Paramus Catholic)
- 5-Kevin Carmichael (Paramus)
- 6-Ethan Mendel (Northern Highlands)
- 7-Sean Fleites (North Bergen)
- 8-Zak Darwish (Ramapo)
- 6-Ray Kohan (Pascack Valley)

190 pounds

- 1-Remy Brancato (Bergen Catholic)
- 2-Joshua Palacio (North Bergen)
- 3-Xavier Williams (Paramus Catholic)
- 4-Kai Argyros (Don Bosco)
- 5-Cole Hughes (Emerson/Park Ridge)
- 6-Tyler Duffy (Pascack Hills)
- 7-Brandon Myack (Paramus)
- 8-Bobby Turso (Ridgewood)
- 7-David Rojas (Elmwood Park)
- 8-Owen Delgado (Ramsey)

215 pounds

- 1-AJ Fricchione (Bergen Catholic)
- 2-Zach Dolack (Paramus)
- 3-Ayden Giacomelli (Emerson/Park Ridge)
- 4-Mike Greenbaum (Northern Highlands)
- 5-Aidan Schlett (St. Joseph)
- 6-Matthew Murray (Paramus Catholic)
- 7-Joe Boyle (River Dell)
- 8-Alejandro Camarena (Pascack Hills)

285 pounds

- 1-Jim Mullen (St. Joseph)
- 2-Max Acciardi (Paramus Catholic)
- 3-Justin Gradzki (Northern Highlands)
- 4-Dominick Brogna (Bergen Catholic)
- 5-Nolan Clark (Glen Rock)
- 6-Connor Haroutunian (Waldwick/Midland Park)
- 7-Tyler Kario (Elmwood Park)
- 8-Danny Paulino (Teaneck)

NORTH JERSEY WRESTLERS OF THE WEEK

Sean Farrell

NorthJersey.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

With another exciting week of the high school wrestling season behind us, it's time to look back on the best performances.

Joe Abill

Clifton junior

Abill pinned Eastside's Arthur Edmonds in 4:28 in the Passaic County heavyweight final to avenge one of his only two losses. He advanced to the final by downing state qualifier Robby Chetirkin, 4-0, in the semis.

Alex Almeyda

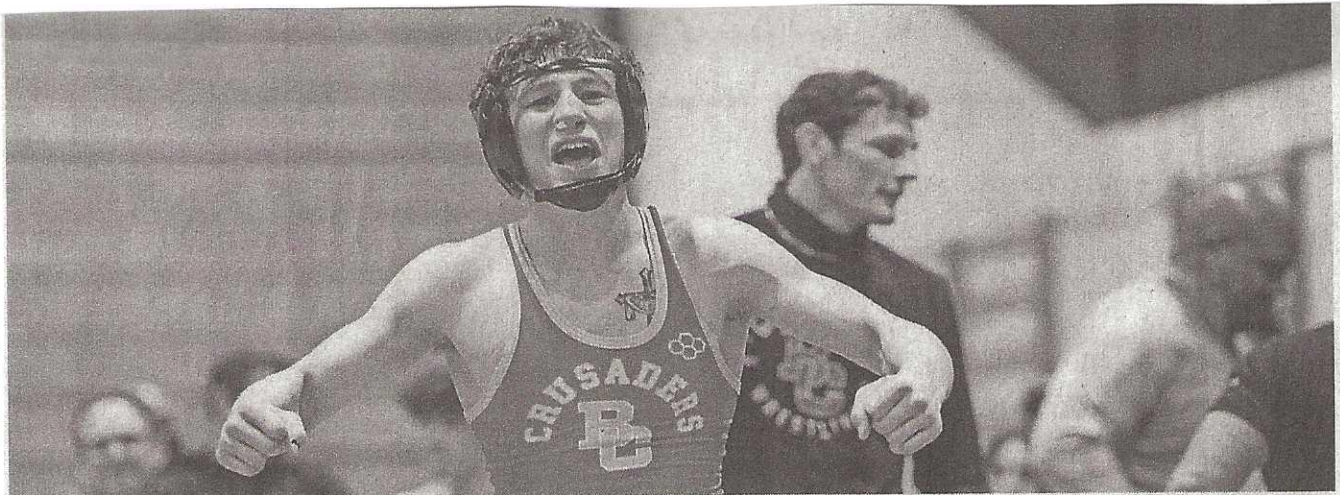
St. Joseph senior

The 138-pound wrestler won his first Bergen County title on Saturday by beating Jake Wacha (Demarest), 24-9, in 5:33. The technical fall made Alex and Donny Almeyda the first brother tandem to win BCCA titles in the same year since 1998.

Taylor Peterson

Garfield junior

Peterson pinned her way to gold last Sunday to earn Most Outstanding Wrestler honors at the BCWCA tournament. In the 145-pound final, she knocked off state bronze medalist Alexa Firestone of Kingsway in 3:35.



Aidan Wallace (Bergen Catholic) celebrates after defeating Joe Manno (St. Joseph) in their 126-pound match during Day 1 of the Bergen County Wrestling Tournament at Hackensack High School on Saturday.

MICHAEL KARAS/NORTHJERSEY.COM

Dylan Ross

Paramus Catholic sophomore

The Paladins 113-pounder did not allow a single point in four straight wins at the Bergen County Tournament. Ross completed his first title run by scoring a 15-0 technical fall over Lodi's Malik Asfour in the final.

Aidan Wallace

Bergen Catholic junior

Wallace reversed Joe Manno (St. Joseph) late in an

ultimate tiebreak to complete a 3-1 win in 126-pound BCCA final. The Mahwah native was named the Most Outstanding Lower-Weight after beating a fellow state medalist.

Theresa Zeppetelli

Bogota/Ridgefield Park junior

Zeppetti captured the BCWCA title at 107 by pinning Litzy Argueta (Lakewood) in 27 seconds. All three of her tournament wins came by fall.

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Mullen still on top in Bergen County

St. Joseph junior wins battle of heavyweights

Nick Gantaifis

NorthJersey.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

HACKENSACK — For any wrestler standing at the sport's summit, they're well aware that they're constantly being targeted by the chasing pack.

And for St. Joseph junior Jimmy Mullen, there's only room for one at the top.

Mullen, the state's top-ranked heavyweight, claimed his second county title on Sunday, defeating second-ranked Max Acciardi of Paramus Catholic at the 61st BCCA Wrestling Tournament at Hackensack High School.

The longtime rivals entered the weekend ranked No. 1 and No. 2 in the state at 285 pounds, with Mullen maintaining the top position since winning a NJSIAA title as a freshman in 2020.

"Winning this tournament means just as much to me as any other tournament I've competed in. I have a lot of hometown family around here that came out to support me today," said Mullen, a Kearny resident. "All of my St. Joseph family is in the stands today and you can hear them when they call my name. People that live next door to me or towns over from me came here to watch me wrestle. It means a lot."

Mullen went 4-0 on the day with two wins by fall. He scored a 7-2 decision over Dominick Brogna of Bergen Catholic in the semifinals and defeated Acciardi, 8-2 in the final.

Mullen estimates that he's competed against Acciardi 10 or so times before high school. The two have a storied and familiar rivalry that goes back to the early days of grade school and has evolved over time.

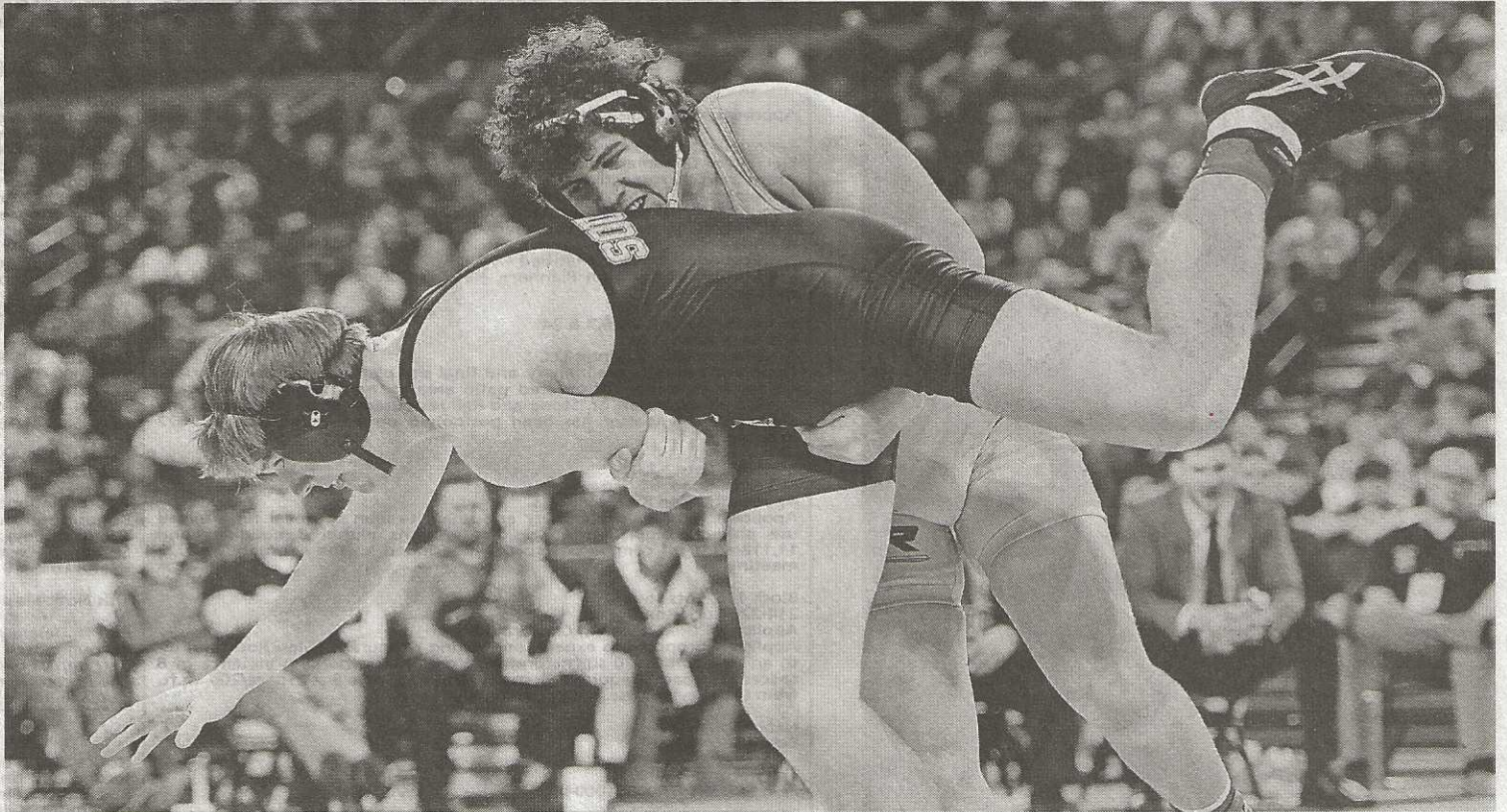
But prior to this weekend, Mullen and Acciardi have only faced off once before in high school, in a dual match when they were freshmen two years ago. They were expected to meet on

Thursday when St. Joseph and Paramus Catholic met in a scheduled dual match in Paramus, but the highly-anticipated encounter never happened as the Green Knights rolled to a convincing 50-22 victory.

"I really don't care what everyone was posting about and how they thought I ducked him and stuff. I had to do what I had to do. Instead of wrestling him on Thursday, I wrestled him on Sunday. Four days isn't going to make a difference about who gets better in four days," said Mullen, who is undefeated against New Jersey competition in his career. "I waited for my time in the finals and I'll leave it there. There's other kids in this weight bracket that I also have to think about. I have to worry about the whole state. There's a lot of kids in New Jersey that are tough."

In the finals, Mullen scored all of his points on takedowns and held a 4-1 lead heading into the third before taking down Acciardi one last time.

"My game plan was to just wrestle like Jimmy Mullen. Same style I've used since I was 4 years old. Non-stop moving and get into my offense," Mullen said. "Acciardi and I go back to kindergarten days. I think we competed in the states when we were in third grade. I love the family. We practice together throughout the summer. We know if you want to wrestle the best competition you have to train with the best competition. We were right there with each other. Nothing but respect for him."



Jim Mullen of St. Joseph Regional, top, and J.T. Cornelius of Southern Regional wrestle in the 285-pound final of the NJSIAA State Wrestling Championships at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City in 2020. DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/NORTHJERSEY.COM

Paramus' Eric Freeman wins first title

Paramus senior Eric Freeman claimed his first Bergen County title on Sunday when he scored a 5-1 victory over St. Joseph senior Roberto Padilla in the 165-pound final.

"This keeps me up there with the best of the best. I'm going to continue working hard to reach my main goal of winning a state title," said Freeman, who

was named the tournament's Most Outstanding Wrestler for the upper weights. "Every tournament is a grind, but as the day goes on, I feel like I get better every time."

Freeman, the top seed, recorded three pins in his first three matches and earned a 6-0 victory against Kosta Mavrikidis of Paramus Catholic in the semi-finals.

Last March, Freeman wrestled back to finish third in the state to extend the

Spartans' state medal streak to 11 years.

Paramus won the Group B team title on Sunday and was the highest scoring public school, finishing fourth overall with 144.5 points.

"Our team is really coming along. Some first-year wrestlers took second and we had a few place winners," Freeman said. "We're shooting for a team state title."

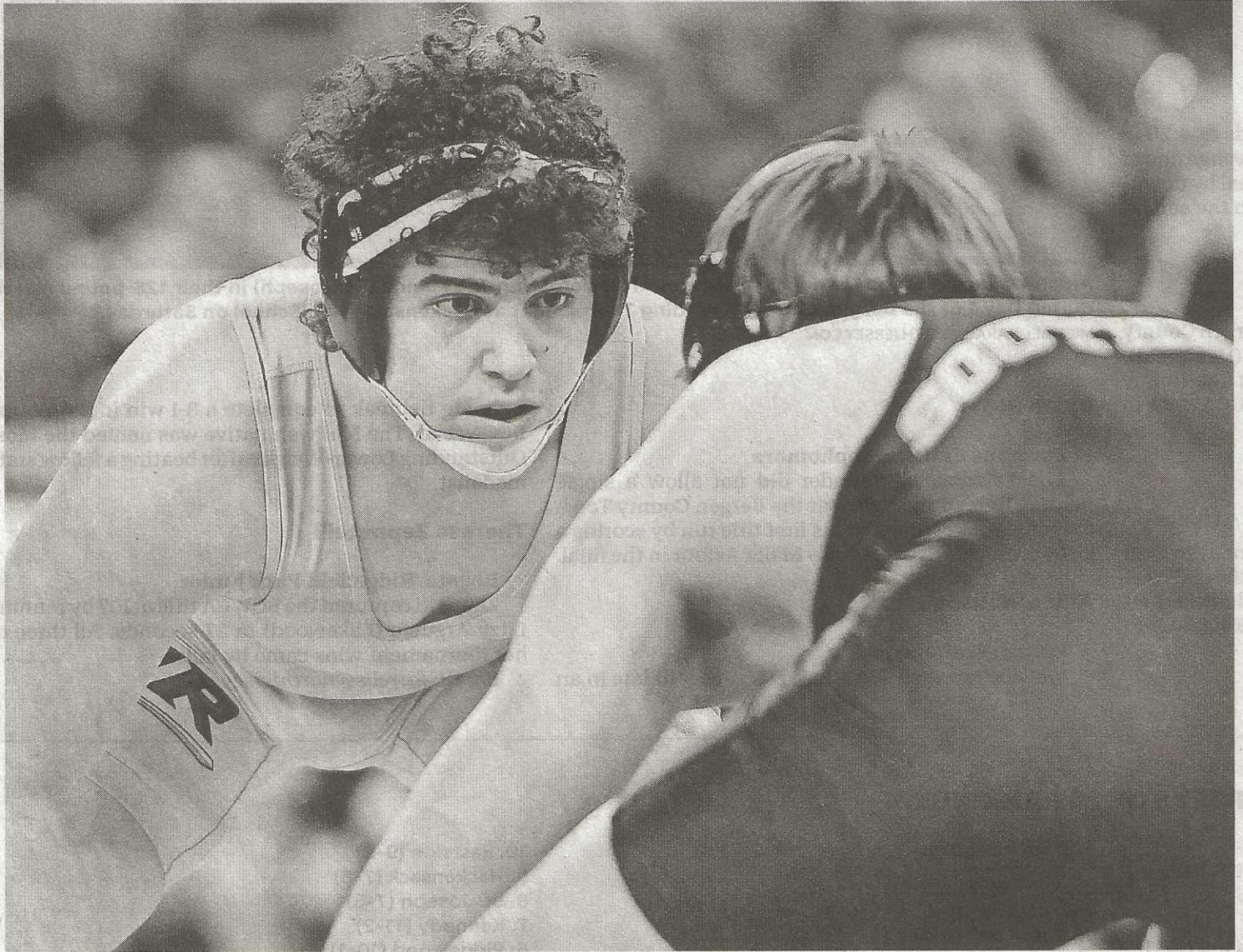
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NORTH JERSEY SPORTS



Jim Mullen of St. Joseph Regional, left, faces J.T. Cornelius of Southern Regional in the 285-pound final of the NJSIAA State Wrestling Championships at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City in March. DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/NORTHJERSEY.COM

North Jersey star a state pioneer

Wrestler wants to Eat Clean and win state titles, Bro



Local Sports

Darren Cooper

NorthJersey.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - N.J.

Jimmy Mullen is wrestler first, and football player, well, also first.

The St. Joseph junior heavyweight, fresh off a Bergen County title Sunday in Hackensack, is also New Jersey's first high school athlete with a name, image and likeness (NIL) deal.

Mullen's deal is with Eat Clean Bro, a company that specializes in providing and delivering nutritious food. The company, which lists kitchens in Freehold and Atlanta, is popular among ath-

letes. Mullen liked some Eat Clean Bro posts online and the company reached back out to him via direct message.

Mullen agreed to the deal, which took effect Jan. 1. NIL bro. That fast.

"They told me they would love for me to be the first high school athlete to do it from New Jersey," Mullen said last week. "I knew I wanted to do something that would help me on the mat. I didn't want to do a show, or a T-shirt, that's really cool, but I wanted to do something that would help me on the mat."

NIL deals are a sponsorship in a way. It's advertising in a way. It's a 21st century way for young athletes to profit off their ability. Some worry it will be the end of sports as we know it.

College athletes have been able to

ink these deals since July 1 of last year. The New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association followed suit with an NIL proposal that took effect on the first of this month.

There's no doubt Mullen is a star. Two years ago, he became the first freshman to win the state title at heavyweight. He's currently ranked No. 2 in the nation at his weight class. He will be a four-year starter for the Green Knights football team on the defensive line. He's agile, strong and being recruited by a bunch of Division I schools to wrestle ... or play football.

"I really don't know what sport I want to play in college," Mullen said. "I

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Cooper

Continued from Page 5S

am still deciding between the football and wrestling opportunities. Right now, I probably have more looks for wrestling, but playing college football ... that's every little kids' dream."

Those dreams and his skills make the 17-year old marketable. This is where it gets different. Mullen has an Instagram following of almost 6,000 people. (For the older crowd, Instagram is a social media platform that mainly consists of pictures and short video clips. People, especially young people, use it to connect, see what is happening and who it's

sports helps) and more than anything, his potential.

"They're not asking for much," Mullen said. "I couldn't be more grateful. They are helping me out more than I am helping them out. They just want me to post on Instagram a couple of times and that's it."

Everyone else is wondering what type of impact NIL deals will have on the modern athlete. The most followed college athlete on Instagram is Olivia Dunne, an LSU gymnast who is from Hillsdale, and yes, she has NIL deals too.

If athletes are getting some compensation on the side from a company like Eat Clean Bro, will that impact their loyalty to their school and teammates?

Mullen said he's thought about that.

happening to.)

Eat Clean Bro asks Mullen to post on his Instagram about their products once a month, three times in his Instagram stories. They send Mullen food in return. He likes it, by the way.

"They have been supplying me with stuff for weeks," Mullen said. "I go from practice in school to club practice and it's great to have as a meal and I can heat it up in my trainers room, instead of stopping for fast food. This sets me up for the rest of the day."

There's a special discount code (Mullen23), and when it gets used, Mullen gets a piece of that commission.

That's how an NIL works. Eat Clean Bro likes Mullen's stature in the New Jersey sports community (playing two

He said there's no way he's going to skip football season in the fall. He likes his deal because competing is still the priority.

"This is the perfect opportunity," he said. "They aren't asking me to do a photo shoot on the weekend. They were like, 'do your posts on Instagram and worry about winning.' I can do this in my spare time and focus on wrestling."

The Kearny native laughs at any thought that being a pitchman for a product could override his desire to win. His main goal is to win another state title. The world of athletics is evolving every day, but the best kids still want to win.

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WRESTLING: INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM RANKINGS

County tournaments shake up rankings

Sean Farrell

NorthJersey.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

One of the burning questions last week was what the county tournaments would tell us about the state of wrestling in North Jersey.

Now, we have an answer.

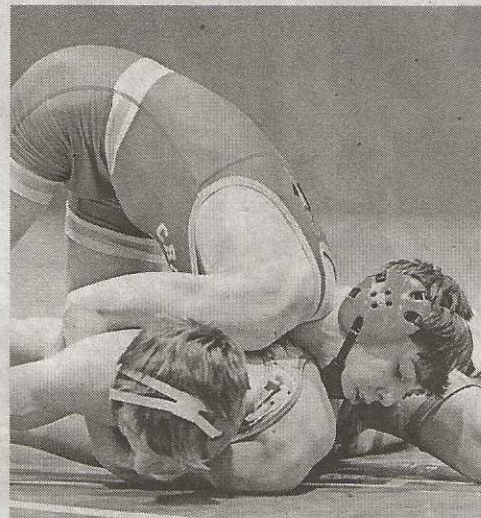
Three new wrestlers have ascended to No. 1 in the latest individual rankings after taking home some gold.

The first one comes at 126 pounds, where Bergen Catholic's Aidan Wallace leapfrogged Joe Manno (St. Joseph) by prevailing in an ultimate tiebreak in the BCCA finals.

Passaic Tech's Laith Hamdeh drops down a weight class for the second straight week and assumes the top spot at 150. The unbeaten Hamdeh sealed his fate by winning his third career Passaic County title on Saturday.

Bergen Catholic's Remy Brancato tops the list at 190 pounds after switching spots in the lineup with teammate AJ Fricchione.

Up and down the board, there's plenty of other movement caused by weight changes or breakout performances. In fact, 12 wrestlers made the rankings for the first time, including PCT champions Ryan Langenmayr of Lakeland and Ryan Burton of DePaul.



Bergen Catholic's Ryan Ford controls the action in defeating Mahwah's Ryan Kozdra during their 132-pound match at the Bergen County Wrestling Tournament on Saturday.

126 pounds

OM

- 1 Aidan Wallace, Bergen Catholic 11-3
- 2 Joe Manno, St. Joseph 13-4
- 3 Ryan Langenmayr, Lakeland 16-0
- 4 Daniel Hong, Paramus 16-5
- 5 Brian Vargas, Hackensack 14-3

132 pounds

- 1 Ryan Ford, Bergen Catholic 15-3
- 2 Ryan Kozdra, Mahwah 17-1
- 3 Attila Valy, Wayne Valley 17-2
- 4 Mateo Sgambellone, St. Joseph 14-3
- 5 George Hufnagel, Paramus Catholic 12-9

138 pounds

- 1 Joe Cangro, Bergen Catholic 15-3
- 2 Alex Almeyda, St. Joseph 16-4
- 3 Loudon Mazzeo, Emerson/Park Ridge 17-0
- 4 Jake Wacha, Demarest 16-2
- 5 Christian Fojon, Ramsey 18-2

144 pounds

- 1 Chris Bacchioni, Bergen Catholic 10-3
- 2 Zach Ballante, Paramus Catholic 18-5
- 3 Brendan Connolly, Northern Highlands 16-3
- 4 Austin Yalowitz, Fort Lee 15-2
- 5 Benjamin Garcia, Don Bosco 6-4

150 pounds

- 1 Laith Hamdeh, Passaic Tech 19-0
- 2 Damian Weaver, Lyndhurst/North Arlington 20-0
- 3 Daniel Rella, Paramus Catholic 16-4
- 4 Myles Leonard, Waldwick/Midland Park 20-1
- 5 Eric Broadie, Bergen Catholic 10-5

106 pounds

- 1 Brian Melamud, Bergen Catholic 17-2
- 2 Benjamin Marchetto, West Milford 18-2
- 3 Jason Chrostowski, Butler 22-0
- 4 Vincent Paino, St. Joseph 15-5
- 5 Jack Bergmann, Lakeland 14-1

113 pounds

- 1 Dylan Ross, Paramus Catholic 18-3
- 2 Malik Asfour, Lodi 16-1
- 3 Chris Nucifora, Bergen Catholic 10-6
- 4 James Sloan, St. Joseph 9-6
- 5 Kieran McNeil, Lyndhurst/North Arlington 15-3

120 pounds

- 1 Taisei Kurachi, River Dell 17-2
- 2 Brett Redner, Butler 21-0
- 3 Connor Kerwin, Passaic Valley 16-1
- 4 Donny Almeyda, St. Joseph 14-2
- 5 Mason Ketcham, Don Bosco 12-7

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157 pounds

- 1 Nick Fea, Bergen Catholic 17-0
- 2 Ryan Burton, DePaul 13-5
- 3 Gabe Case, River Dell 20-1
- 4 Shawn Mastropiero, New Milford 11-0
- 5 Kyle Reiter, Paramus Catholic 13-6

165 pounds

- 1 Eric Freeman, Paramus 23-0
- 2 Roberto Padilla, St. Joseph 16-7
- 3 Justin Onello, Bergen Catholic 15-4
- 4 Kosta Mavrikidis, Paramus Catholic 14-6
- 5 Hunter Freschi, Hasbrouck Heights 19-2

175 pounds

- 1 Michael Dellagatta, St. Joseph 21-3
- 2 Leo Varga, Bergen Catholic 11-4
- 3 Drew Petaccia, Pascack Valley 19-1
- 4 Luke Tully, Passaic Tech 7-0
- 5 Eddie Terrieri, Paramus Catholic 10-9

190 pounds

- 1 Remy Brancato, Bergen Catholic 16-5
- 2 Jacob Gerish, DePaul 12-3
- 3 Xavier Williams, Paramus Catholic 16-6
- 4 Kai Argyros, Don Bosco 9-5
- 5 Cole Hughes, Emerson/Park Ridge 14-2

215 pounds

- 1 P.J. Casale, Passaic Valley 7-0
- 2 AJ Fricchione, Bergen Catholic 16-4
- 3 Aidan Schlett, St. Joseph 16-6
- 4 Zach Dolack, Paramus 19-5
- 5 Jaydon Brown, Don Bosco 5-1

285 pounds

- 1 Jim Mullen, St. Joseph 18-2
- 2 Max Acciardi, Paramus Catholic 17-1
- 3 Joseph Abill, Clifton 19-2
- 4 Justin Gradzki, Northern Highlands
- 5 Dominick Brogna, Bergen Catholic 13-7

Top 25 team rankings

- 1 Bergen Catholic 4-1
 - 2 St. Joseph 5-0
 - 3 Paramus Catholic 6-1
 - 4 Paramus 9-3
 - 5 Passaic Tech 10-4
 - 6 Don Bosco 4-3
 - 7 Emerson/Park Ridge 7-3
 - 8 Pascack Hills 8-2
 - 9 River Dell 11-5
 - 10 Old Tappan 9-1
 - 11 Ridgewood 9-3
 - 12 Northern Highlands 6-6
 - 13 Pascack Valley 10-4
 - 14 Bogota/Ridgefield Park 10-1
 - 15 Pompton Lakes 10-1
 - 16 Butler 15-4
 - 17 Lakeland 4-6
 - 18 Clifton 5-8
 - 19 Passaic Valley 7-5
 - 20 Westwood 8-7
 - 21 Ramsey 6-7
 - 22 Wayne Hills 7-6
 - 23 Demarest 8-2
 - 24 Hawthorne 6-4
 - 25 Garfield 6-3
- (Records through Monday)

Bonus points

One of the key subplots at the Bergen County Wrestling Tournament was the race for county group titles. Public schools are broken down into five sections based on enrollment and this year's winners were as follows: **Northern Highlands (Group A), Paramus (B), River Dell (C), Pascack Hills (D) and New Milford (E).**

New Milford collected its first-ever piece of county hardware despite being without star middle-weight Shawn Mastropiero. The Knights sent three wrestlers to the county podium this year in Ryan Hartung (fourth at 126), Devin Ryan (third at 106) and Jerzey Ryan (seventh at 120).

The good news for coach Ray Cottiers is that the latter two are freshmen, as is Sutter Totaro, who finished 4-1 in his tournament debut. It's a remarkable turnaround for the Knights, who have built a roster of 19 wrestlers after rolling with just five in last year's COVID-shortened season.

Pascack Hills leaned on its young stars en route its first county group title in eight years. All four of the Bronco placewinners are sophomores or juniors, including Max Unger (138), Hunter Morton (157), Tyler Duffy (190) and Alejandro Camarena (215). The Broncos are currently a game up in the Big North Patriot thanks to Ryan Baudisch's walk-off pin against River Dell.

Dumont (5-5) became the outright champion in the Big North American by sweeping its three league rivals. The Huskies finished the job Friday with six pins against Cliffside Park, including falls from seniors Glenn Roi and Zach Cetera.

"The senior class put a lot of work in the offseason and the first and second-year guys are buying into the program," coach Michael Rooney said.

The matchups are set at the fifth-annual NJIC Tournament with the four division winners competing in the semi-final round Wednesday. Defending-champion Emerson/Park Ridge heads to Garfield at 5 p.m., and Butler will host Pompton Lakes in the other semi at 7 p.m.

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OF THE WEEK



**DAMIAN
WEAVER
OF LYNDDHURST**

CHARLIE McBRIDE 2-4-22

Weaver makes small town proud with county title

Sean Farrell

NorthJersey.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

Damian Weaver has been on a mission since April 18, 2021.

Almost a year later, it's still the last time someone beat him in a high school wrestling match.

That day, the Lyndhurst star was sent home in the North 2 Region tournament after reaching Atlantic City as a freshman. The fact that he was stuck in a pandemic-boosted bracket with eight other state qualifiers didn't exactly numb the pain.

"It motivated me a lot," Weaver said. "It wasn't that I was upset with myself but I was more disappointed in myself that I didn't make it to states. I have something to prove to myself, my family, my friends. And to everyone in the state."

Since then, Weaver has achieved wrestling nirvana. He dropped down two weight classes, knocked off 21 straight opponents and secured the 150-pound title at the Bergen County tournament. The fourth-seeded Weaver completed an uphill climb to the top by beating friend Daniel Rella of Paramus Catholic, 5-2.

It's the first time the Golden Bears have produced a county champion since Dennis McSweeney in 2000.

On hand to watch the final was his older brother Dylan, who's currently a freshman on the Rutgers wrestling team.

"I loved it," Damian Weaver said. "I think me and him wrestle exactly alike."

For the younger Weaver, his transformation began in the summer when he trained three to four times per week, even during the height of football training camp.

All that cardio (and yes, the 6:45 wake-up calls) came in handy last Sunday when BCCA tournament directors condensed the championships from two days to one. It forced Weaver to wrestle five matches in seven hours, including the last three that went the distance. Perhaps no one had a tougher path to the title.

"It was really challenging," Weaver said. "But I think it was my conditioning. I truly believe that I'm one of the best

Damian Weaver

Sport: Wrestling

School: Lyndhurst

Class: Junior. Age: 17

Accomplishment: Weaver became the Golden Bears' first county wrestling champion in 22 years after beating state qualifier Daniel Rella (Paramus Catholic) in the 150-pound final.

Also nominated: Shawn Reckley of Hackensack, Evan Meberg of Bogota, Ben Gordon of Pompton Lakes, and Michael Featherstone of Ramsey for basketball; Nick Fea of Bergen Catholic, Joe Abill of Clifton, and Ben Marchetto of West Milford for wrestling; Amiri Whittle of Hackensack and Jessier Soriano of Passaic Valley for track and field; Luke Hulbert of Wayne for ice hockey; and Liam Bas of Fair Lawn and Michael Chabot of Ramapo for fencing.

conditioned wrestlers in the state and I could really wrestle for 10 minutes. It was a mindset that I'm just not losing."

On the mat, the Weavers are one of the premier families of Bergen County. His dad, Scot, is the head coach at Lyndhurst and the former bench boss at non-public power Queen of Peace. Damian Weaver is the youngest of three (including twin sister Madison) and started wrestling when he was 3 years old.

Surprisingly, one of the only encounters between the Weaver brothers came on the first day of practice in Damian's freshman year.

"I think it was actually the first live go, I went with Dylan," the junior said. "We got into a little fight."

"So that was the last time we wrestled live."

Wrestlers often use their seed as motivation, but Weaver said he wasn't bothered by his spot in the county pecking order. Weaver understood that either way, he would need to go through at least two elite wrestlers: state medalist Myles Leonard of Waldwick/Midland Park and another state qualifier in Rella.

In the final, Weaver scored two take-downs in the last 45 seconds to break a 1-1 tie.

WRESTLING: FINAL NORTH JERSEY RANKINGS FOR 2021-22 SEASON

Sean Farrell

NorthJersey.com

USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

The No. 1 team in the state is the No. 1 team in North Jersey.

Bergen Catholic finished on top of the North Jersey wrestling rankings after knocking off three of its biggest rivals on the way to the Non-Public A crown. The Crusaders started the postseason with wins over Don Bosco and St. Joseph before squeaking past Delbarton (on criteria) in a sectional final that will be talked about for ages.

Paramus earned the top spot for a public school at fourth overall by winning the North 1, Group 3 crown.

No. 23 Dumont enters the poll for the first time all year thanks to a late-season upset over Ridgewood.

Final team rankings

- 1 Bergen Catholic 12-1
- 2 St. Joseph 7-3

- 3 Paramus Catholic 12-3
- 4 Paramus 15-4
- 5 Passaic Tech 15-6
- 6 River Dell 17-9
- 7 Don Bosco 8-7
- 8 Old Tappan 16-3
- 9 Emerson/Park Ridge 11-8
- 10 Pascack Hills 17-5
- 11 Pascack Valley 13-5
- 12 Ridgewood 11-8
- 13 Clifton 15-11
- 14 Northern Highlands 8-9
- 15 Westwood 14-9
- 16 Passaic Valley 16-7
- 17 Lakeland 15-6
- 18 Ramsey 13-9
- 19 Wayne Hills 13-10
- 20 Butler 20-8
- 21 Hasbrouck Heights 17-9
- 22 Pompton Lakes 16-4
- 23 Dumont 14-8
- 24 Bogota/Ridgefield Park 17-8
- 25 New Milford 9-11

Banner winners

Bergen Catholic captured the Bergen County title and produced nine state medalists, including champion Joe Canagro (138) and runners-up Nick Fea (165) and Dominick Brogna (285).

Butler set a team record for single-season wins (20) and topped NJIC Division 4 for its fifth division title in sixth year.

Dumont won nine of its last 11 meets and swept the Big North American behind region medalist Devon Turner at 157 pounds.

Emerson/Park Ridge made another trip to the sectional finals and gave coach Stan Woods his record 800th career win by fending off Butler in the NJIC championship.

Garfield (11-7) posted double-digit wins for the third time in four years en route to the NJIC Division 2 title.

Old Tappan ran the table in the Big North National while starting five freshmen, including its two region qualifiers Jonathan Rotolo (106) and Daniel Olivo

(113).

Paramus and state third Eric Freeman brought home plenty of hardware with league, sectional, county group and Big North Duals championships.

Pascack Hills returned to the top of the Big North Patriot after landing its first county group championship in eight years.

Passaic Tech repeated as county champions, won the Big North Liberty and produced its first state finalist, senior Laith Hamdeh, in coach Luis Colon's final year before retirement. Rutgers-bound P.J. Casale led **Passaic Valley** to an unbeaten record in the Big North Independence despite returning only two starters.

Pompton Lakes handed coach Scott Mahoney his 400th win and went on to beat all four league rivals in NJIC Division 3.

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