

CHRISTIANO, WEISS PLACE SECOND; MURRAY GETS THIRD; MARKOVITCH GETS FOURTH

Cannon, Kalimtzis, Tufaro Jacobs Win UCT Mat Titles

By DAVID B. CORBIN

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Persistence overcame resistance twice for Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School senior Sean Cannon, who battled his way through a very tough semifinal bout and an even tougher final bout to grab the 152-lb wrestling crown and the Outstanding Wrestler Award (upper weights) at the Union County Tournament (UCT) in Union on January 22.

Brearley (B) earned its seventh straight team title with 180 points, followed by Westfield (W) at 153 and Roselle Park (RP) at 146.5, but Cannon's performances helped put the Raiders (SP) in fourth with a total of 139, beating out the Governor Livingston (GL) Highlanders, who placed fifth at 129.5. Cranford (C) placed sixth with 107.5 points. Blue Devil Head Coach Glen Kurz was named Union County Coach of the Year.

Seeded third, Cannon won his first bout by 1:33 fall. Next, he faced second-seeded Blue Devil Colin Barber, who had defeated him in overtime in their recent dual meet. Cannon recorded a defensive takedown in the first period. Barber escaped in the second period then Cannon escaped early in the third, but Barber converted a single to double-leg takedown to tie the score.

Barber let Cannon escape in order to work a takedown for a victory, but Cannon held on for a 4-3 win.

"My goal was to stop Colin the whole match, work hard, and it worked out for me in the end.

He's tough! I am looking to see him again in districts," Cannon said.

His championship bout was to be against heavily favored Bryan Merkel (RP).

"He and I used to battle. We

fire and recorded three takedowns to seize a 6-2 lead entering the second period, but Cannon repeatedly fired back. Merkel tired physically then mentally until Cannon cut his lead to 9-8. Seconds before the buzzer,

folded," Cannon said.

Barber went on to defeat Cougar Corey Markovitch, 6-0, for third place.

Blue Devil senior Mike Kalimtzis recorded a pair of arm bar stack pins to reach the 120-lb finals to face GL's Ryan Morrison (UCT 112-lb champ in 2011). Kalimtzis recorded a low double-leg takedown in the first period and controlled Morrison from the top position the entire second period to earn a 2-1 victory.

"It felt good to come out with a win. I really didn't get to wrestle the match the way I wanted to wrestle. I wanted to get a takedown early. Set the tone of the match, because we have them next week in a dual meet. I wanted to keep my weight on him on top, make sure he didn't get points. He was tough on bottom. He did a lot of rolls, sit-outs and switches," Kalimtzis said.

Cougar freshman Gavin Murray, after losing to Morrison in the semifinals, rebounded to defeat Andy Santamaria (RP), 7-1, to place third.

"It is good to see him bounce back from a loss. Morrison is a

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RESEMBLING A PRETZEL...Cougar Gavin Murray, left, has Highlander Ryan Morrison knotted up like a pretzel in the 120-lb semifinal bout. Or does he?

Probitas Verus Honos

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would go back and forth. Hopefully I will get a good match," Cannon said.

Merkel came out like a ball of



Cannon swept in for the takedown to win 10-9.

"I just wanted it more. During the match, I realized that I had to wear him out. There towards the end, that's exactly what I did. He



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