

COUGAR JP CHRISTIANO PLACES SECOND; BLUE DEVILS OPOKU, BARBER PLACE THIRD

Raiders Jacobs, Tufaro Grab Region 3 Wrestling Crowns

By **DAVID B. CORBIN**
Specially Written for *The Westfield Leader and The Times*

Two grueling days of intense competition at the Region 3 Tournament in Union on February 24-25 after an elimination round on February 22 resulted in the crowning of 14 champions and 28 additional wrestlers who earned the right to compete at the NJSIAA championships in Atlantic City this weekend, March 2 through 4.

Among those were Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Raiders Andrew Jacobs (220-lbs) and Anthony Tufaro (285-lbs), who battled their way to the top of the podium. Westfield Blue Devils Ellis Opoku (138-lbs) and Colin Barber (152-lbs) placed third, and Cranford Cougar JP Christiano (170-lbs) placed second to earn their trip south.

On February 22, Blue Devils Barber, Kieran Cline (182-lbs), Nick Knepper (195-lbs) and Kyle Kania (285-lbs) survived the elimination round. The Raiders advanced Brian Lapham (126-lbs), Mike Steinfeld (145-lbs) and Tufaro. The Cougars advanced Gavin Murray (120-lbs), Corey Markovitch (152-lbs), Christiano

(170-lbs) and Jeff Weiss (220-lbs).

Top-seeded at 220-lbs, Jacobs used a slick side roll to finish off A.L. Johnson's Ed Olenick in 2:26 to advance to the semifinals.

"I think the reason why I got

good at that was because I wrestled heavier people, whether it be coach [Marc] Fabiano or Anthony Tufaro. The more I do it the more I get used to it," Jacobs explained.

Jacobs battered Tory Russell

free ticket to AC.

"He went for a hip throw. When he turned, I bull-rushed him and put a little trip in there. Then he fell into the pin, and I held it," Jacobs explained.

After placing third in the dis-

[lock]. He sprawled. I did my H2 - You get the front head. Sprawl down. When he tries to pop up, you reach the far ankle and pull it up," Tufaro explained.

His next opponent would be Kania, who had upset him in the districts with the benefit of a Japanese Whizzer.

"I have been thinking about moves to get out of it or not to let it happen. I am ready, and I am going to come at him," Tufaro promised.

Kania reached the semis after earning a 5-3 decision over Union's Kristian Lewis. Kania established his lead with a side single-leg takedown in the second period.

"It really wasn't a match to make any big moves. I wrestled a little more conservatively. I worked on more conventional takedowns. That single was big. It really set me in the lead," said Kania, who added, "Tomorrow is going to be a big match."

Tomorrow came and the battle began. Tufaro had a 2-0 lead then in the third period, he used devastating top control and turned Kania to his back to record

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David B. Corbin for *The Westfield Leader and The Times*

NEARLY GETTING THE PIN...Cougar Ian Henry, top, had Alex Murray (Watchung Hills) in a headlock and nearly got the pin in his 126-lb quarterfinal bout at the Region 3 Tournament. Murray survived and won in overtime, 7-5.

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(South Plainfield - SoP) with a 16-5 majority decision then destroyed Vincent Coiro (Boonton) in 1:31 to claim the title and his



district tournament, Tufaro was determined to prove that he was indeed the top dog, and he began his evening on Friday with a 1:48 fall over Rod Senat (Columbia) to reach the semis.

"I hit him with a front head

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