

CHRISTIANO FINISHED 29-5 WITH 111 CAREER WINS, HENRY WON DISTRICT 126-LB CROWN**Cougar Matmen Finish, 15-8, Return Experienced Team**

By DAVID B. CORBIN

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Changing from one head coach to another came smoothly for this year's Cranford High School wrestling team. And the result was a 15-8 record with a very competitive schedule that included Westfield (20-6), Scotch Plains-Fanwood (21-3), Linden (District 11 champions), Governor Livingston (22-3) and perennial powers David Brearley (Union County Champions) and Roselle Park.

"We wrestled well! Up and down the lineup, we were real strong at some points, and at some points, we filled in the best we could. We lost flour matches by three or less," Cougar Head Coach Pat Gorman said.

The Cougars had no competitor at 113-lbs and had to fill in some weak spots with new wrestlers, but they did have several veterans and several athletes, who made strong contributions.

One who made huge contributions for four years was senior JP Christiano, who finished this season with a 29-5 record at 170-lbs to bring his career wins total to 111. Four of his five losses came against Joey Balboni of Brearley - in the UCT finals, District 11 finals, Region 3 finals and in a dual meet. He qualified for the NJSIAA Tournament in Atlantic City, but due to illness, he was not able to compete.

"He came down with mono. Looking back, he probably had it a week or two before the districts," Coach Gorman explained.

Last year, Christiano was the UCT, District 11 and Region 3

champion at 160-lbs. He advanced to the NJSIAA quarterfinals

Senior Ian Henry, also a four-year varsity wrestler, earned his team plenty of bonus points with

became the District 11 champ at 126-lbs. Henry finished with a 24-9 record.

"He ended his career on a great note. The good thing for him was winning the districts, because

mat and see this kid, they don't think much of him. Six foot something and 152-lbs, but he uses that lankiness. Cradles! Legs! He's got those long arms and legs to wrestle like an octopus. He knocked off some good kids. I think he is going to have a great year next year," Coach Gorman said.

Junior James Dwyer missed the middle part of the season due to illness but managed to place third in the district at 160-lbs and finished with a 9-4 record. Senior Glen Cook filled in and also finished 9-4.

"Glen had a great year. Dwyer beat him in a wrestleoff for the districts. He just couldn't break the lineup at the end of his high school career," Coach Gorman said.

Freshman Gavin Murray showed up on the radar screen immediately when he won the Garden State Holliday Tournament at 120-lbs in December. He also placed third in the UCT and second in the district to finished 29-8.

Sophomore Corey Birch finished 17-15 at 132/138-lbs and junior

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David B. Corbin (February 2012 files) for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WORKING FOR A DISTRICT 11 TITLE...Cougar Ian Henry, top, works over Elizabeth's Ralph Staddler in the 126-lb District 11 championship bout. Henry earned a 10-2, majority decision and the district title.

Probitas Verus Honos

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his wild, go-for-the-pin maneuvers. This season, he accomplished a goal that he had been eyeing his entire career when he

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he's been plugging away at that for so long," Coach Gorman said.

Junior Corey Markovitch, competing at 152-lbs, finished second in the district and fourth in UCT and recorded a 27-10 record.

"A lot of people look across the

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