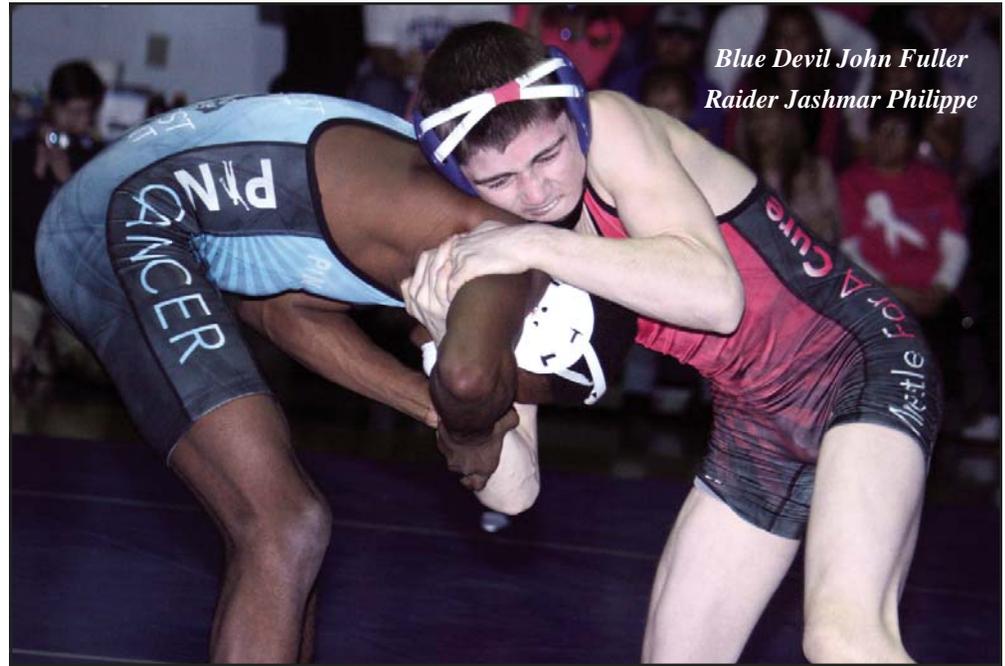




*Blue Devil Nick Velez
Raider Dom Natale*



*Blue Devil John Fuller
Raider Jashmar Philippe*

SPF Raiders Edge Blue Devils in Final Bout, 34-33, in 'Pin Cancer' Wrestling Showdown

Another showdown bout came at 145-lbs when Blue Devil Matt Barber went head-to-head with Brian Lapham, whom he recently beat, 5-2, for the Union County Tournament (UCT) title. The bout turned out to be very physical, but Barber delivered most of the punishment with a side single takedown in the first period, a quick escape and two more takedowns in the second to claim a 7-3 decision.

"I wanted to push the pace. Coach made some rules before we go into the match, saying, 'if you don't run back to the circle, you have to stay in practice. If you get a stall called, that's 25 pushups', so I knew I had to push the pace more this time around. I feel like I am in his head now that I beat him twice. I have been gaining confidence throughout the year. You will see me even better in districts probably," Barber said.

"Barber/Lapham is always a tough one. Two very talented wrestlers, they go after each other, they bang heads," Coach Gavor said.

Another closely observed bout came next at 152-lbs. Blue Devil Nick Velez, the UCT champ at that weight, quickly delivered an offensive spin takedown in the first period then slipped out of Dom Natale's leg riding attempt in the second period for a reversal to carry a 4-1 lead into the third period where he added another reversal, a takedown and a two-point tilt to grab a 10-2 majority decision.

"The game plan was that I wrestled Natale. We gave up a couple of forfeits, so we had to make it up with bonus points where we could get it. He de-

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fended really well. In the third period, when I got the takedown and the turn with a pancake, I got the major, but I was looking for some more bonus," Velez said.

The Blue Devils stretched their team lead to 33-21 when Jarek Gozdieski, leading 4-1 at the time slammed George Ramos with a lateral drop in 5:17 at 160-lbs. Raider Alex Mirabella received a forfeit at 170-lbs, making the score, 33-27, then at 182-lbs, Raider Jaylen Bryant recorded four double-leg takedowns to earn an 8-2 decision over Devin Anderson and set the stage for the final act.

"I couldn't let them down. I wanted it more than all of them. I wrestled a couple of other varsity matches and haven't won one, so this would have been like the best match ever to win. I just tried harder. I put in the work," said Bryant.

"Jaylen was really the wild card

at 170. He just moved here from South Carolina, he's got one year under his belt; he's a real tough athletic sophomore. The match all came down to Ridge at the end and we were comfortable that he could major him," said Coach Gavor.

"Scotch Plains was tougher than us today. Our kids put Frega in a

More Photos Next Page

tough situation. We could have put this thing away earlier. Scotch Plains went out there with a definite game plan. They stuck to it better than our kids stuck to ours," Blue Devil Head Coach Glen Kurz said.

Fred Lecomte recorded the comments from the Raider wrestlers and coach.

BOUT SEQUENCE:

- 220: — Van brunt (S) p Anderson, 1:10
- Hwt: — Henderson (S) won forfeit
- 106: — Hoerle (W) p Olin, :41
- 113: — Fuller (W) d Philippe, 1-0
- 120: — Kalimtzi (W) tf Martin, 25-10
- 126: — Beirne (S) won forfeit
- 132: — Cunningham (S) d Miller, 5-1
- 138: — K. Miller (W) p Liebrich, 3:47
- 145: — Barber (W) d Lapham, 7-3
- 152: — Velez (W) md Natale, 10-2
- 160: — Gozdieski (W) p Ramos, 5:17
- 170: — Mirabella (S) won forfeit
- 182: — Bryant (S) d D. Anderson, 8-2
- 195: — Ridge (S) md Frega, 8-0

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Raiders
Cougars*



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