

J. MILLER NIPS BUSCH, 4-2, IN O.T.; DiGIOVANNI EDGES FULLER, VELEZ MAJORS BIRCH**Cougar Matmen March Past Westfield Blue Devils, 39-22**By **DAVID B. CORBIN***Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times*

Five forfeits shortened a showdown between two rivals, but several bouts turned out to be quite exciting as the Cranford High School wrestling team marched to a 39-22 victory over Westfield in Cranford on January 24.

Few, if any, of the bouts were more exciting than the very first one at 126-lbs when Blue Devil freshman Jack Miller fought off a double-leg takedown attempt in overtime and turned it into a defensive takedown to edge Dave Busch, who had recently placed second in the Union County Tournament, 4-2.

Miller managed to wrap his left leg around Busch's right leg to eventually inch behind for the takedown.

"It was difficult. The last time I wrestled him I lost, so I wanted revenge on him. When he took the shot, I just pushed myself and thought about the work we did in practice, and I put it [leg] in there," Miller said.

Busch took a 2-0 lead with a double-leg takedown in the first period and Miller escaped, but his ability to control Busch from the top position throughout the entire second period put him in the position to, at least, knot the score in the third. Busch, who received a warning in the first period, also controlled from the top throughout the third period but received a second warning while doing so, which awarded

Miller a penalty point to send the bout into overtime.

Cougars Brian McGovern (132-lbs) and Gavin Murray (138-lbs) received forfeits to make the team score, 12-3, then Blue Devil Matt

Barber recorded a second-period escape and a low double-leg takedown to nip Andrew Tompkins, 3-2, at 145-lbs.

Blue Devil Nick Velez increased his offensive arsenal in his 152-

several two-on-one pipewrench tilts, although receiving no further points. In the second period, Velez recorded a turn-in reversal then added a pair of takedowns to earn an 11-1,

lbs, Cougar Nick Ballas recorded an escape and a defensive spin-around takedown to defeat Devin Anderson, 3-0. When Kevin Frega received a forfeit at 195-lbs, the Blue Devils took a 22-21 team lead.

Another tight bout came at 220-lbs when Blue Devil Tom Anderson and Mike Pastor entered overtime with a 2-2 tie. Pastor, however, took Anderson to his back for a five-point move to record a 7-2 victory. Cougar heavyweight Alex Esposito received a forfeit then Cougar Anthony Capece recorded four takedowns and a reversal to defeat Chris Hoerle, 10-4, at 106-lbs.

Another very tight bout arrived at 113-lbs when Blue Devil John Fuller and Tom DiGiovanni were locked in a 0-0 tie entering the third period. DiGiovanni pulled off a standing Gramby forward roll for an escape then warded off Fuller's attacks for a 1-0 victory.

The final bout of the evening at 120-lbs was also very tense. Blue Devil Nick Kalimtzis took a 2-0 lead with a Merkel takedown, but Chris Scorese escaped and came back with a takedown for a 3-2 lead. Scorese pulled off a standing Gramby reversal and Kalimtzis escaped in the second period then Scorese's tenacious top control in the third earned him a 5-3 decision.

"When I was looking at their lineup, thinking they had every spot filled, it was a close match. It could have gone either way depending on the [coin] flip. That's what I thought it would come down to, the flip at 138 where they were going to bump everybody up. They could move some guys around in there, but

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

COMING DOWN TO OVERTIME AT 126-LBS... Cougar Dave Busch, left, and Blue Devil Jack Miller battled to a 2-2 tie in regulation at 126-lbs, but Miller got a defensive takedown in overtime to earn a 4-2 victory.

majority decision.

Cougar Niko Cappello received a forfeit at 160-lbs then Blue Devil Jerek Gozdzieski recorded a takedown before pinning Chris Kiame in 1:30 with a half nelson and arm bar at 170-lbs. At 182-

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lb bout with Corey Birch. Velez converted a takedown into a 3-point nearfall to seize a 5-0 lead in the first period and attempted

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