

Dec. 18 Wrestling



Nottingham's Jancel Nunez pins Alexis Villegas of Morristown during today's Nottingham Tournament 182-pound bout. After being injured in the same tournament last year, Nunez took a second place (Photo by Ken Weingartner).

Nunez back in business and looking good in season-opening tournament

By Ken Weingartner

Fish4scores.com

Dec. 17: A year ago, Jancel Nunez's wrestling season ended in the Nottingham Invitational Tournament.

This year, the Northstar senior is hoping the event marks a great beginning.

Nunez suffered a knee injury in his second match of the day in last year's tourney and missed the remainder of the campaign. He ended the season 1-1.

"It was disappointing," Nunez said. "But I'm back. I've been working out all offseason. I'm like the underdog; nobody knows me."

People might learn about Nunez quickly. He was seeded sixth at 182 pounds in today's Nottingham Tournament, but pinned in his opening round on his way to a second-place finish. Nunez dropped a 6-4 decision to No. 1-seed Tom Forline of Moorestown. Forline, a senior, was a district champion at 189 last season.

Nottingham, which got a championship performance from Waleed Abouelela at 145, finished tied for fifth place in the 15-team tournament. Kevin Meneus was second at 220 and Hector Davila was third at 120.

Hamilton West, which saw Jared Staub win the title at 120, was one spot ahead of the Swamprats, finishing fourth. Hamilton hosts Nottingham in a dual Wednesday night.

Nunez started wrestling his freshman year after being sold on the sport by Northstars coach Jason "The Rock" Marasco during a discussion in the weight room. He saw limited time that year.

"I was 180 (pounds), pure fat," Nunez said. "I was a freshman and complained a lot.

"I came back sophomore year and manned up. It all worked out."

As a sophomore, Nunez went 14-16, finished fifth at 171 pounds in the Mercer County Tournament, and won seven of his last 10 matches. One of those losses was a narrow setback to state qualifier Gregg Ratner of Hightstown and another was to state place-winner Brendan Vercammen of South Brunswick. He also had an earlier loss to state place-winner Ross Scheuerman of Allentown.

"I had high expectations for my junior year, and then I got injured," Nunez said. "This is my year to shine."

Nunez is not afraid to set high expectations for himself, either. His goals for this season include setting the school record for wins in a campaign and qualifying for the state tournament.

"I like to set big goals, and I think I've got a chance to reach them," Nunez said.

Marasco is a believer, too.

"He's wrestled a lot in the offseason, he's in the weight room, he's focused," Marasco said. "He's got unbelievable endurance and his takedowns are just nasty. In the third period he's still going to be shooting; he doesn't get tired. And he's got the heart of a lion."

During his time away from the mats last season, Nunez spent time watching wrestling videos to learn new moves. As soon as he was healthy, he began drilling those moves with former local star Andrew Rubio, who was a district champion at Steinert in 2007 and later wrestled at Nottingham.

"I love wrestling," Nunez said. "I'm naturally good at it, I think. I don't get tired. I push myself. I push myself until my body gives out.

"I like pinning people, that's fun," he added. "Getting my hand raised, there's no other feeling like it."

One he hopes to experience often this year.

Hamilton finishes fourth in Nottingham Tournament

Hamilton West's wrestlers opened the season at Nottingham's tourney and came away with a fourth-place finish. Jared Staub was the champion at 120, where he was seeded third. Staub began his day with a first-period pin of Ridge's Ted Caruso. He then won 2-1 over Bishop Ahr's Anthony Rosamila, the second seed, in the semifinals and 7-2 over No. 1-seed Frank Crippen of Morristown in the final.

Nick Cecala finished second at 126 and Mark Mackenzie was runner-up at 195.

Cecala, who was seeded second, won by technical fall over Spotswood's Jake Teetsel and major decision over Seneca's Robert Bush before losing to top-seed Greg McCrystal of Bishop Ahr in the title bout.

Mackenzie, who was seeded fifth, pinned Millville's Nick Davis and won 11-7 over Oakcrest's Tyler Bates before winning 16-3 over Moorestown's Tyreek Smith in the semis. He lost 8-4 to Plainfield's Joshua Knight, the second seed, in the final.

Chris Bohorquez was third at 106. Bohorquez pinned Nottingham's Joshua Magee in his opening match and then decked Riverside's Charlie Ehrgood in the quarterfinals. After a loss to Spotswood's Ryan Fahy, the No. 1 seed, in the semis, Bohorquez rebounded to pin Oakcrest's

ShaQuan Harrell-Huffin.

Michel and Remboski pace Steinert at TCNJ Pride Tournament

Steinert finished seventh in the 13-team TCNJ Pride Tournament at Sayreville High School.

Joe Michel and Michael Remboski led the Spartans with second-place finishes. Michel was runner-up at 126 pounds, where he lost to Toms River South's Matt Theobolt in the final, while Remboski forfeited to Robbinsville's Tyler Gildner at heavyweight. Theobolt was a state qualifier last year as a sophomore when he wrestled at Manchester.

Steinert's Sean McDonald finished third at 170 while Tyler Beers was fourth at 120.

Brick Memorial won the tournament, followed by Toms River South, Middletown South, Point Pleasant Boro, Freehold Township and East Brunswick.