

## **Dec. 21 Wrestling: Northstars win Backyard Mat Brawl**

### **Nottingham trying to change its 'dog' status from under to big**

**By Ken Weingartner**

**Fish4scores.com**

**Dec. 21:** Wroway Williams says the Nottingham High wrestling team is an underdog this season, but the way the squad has started the campaign they might soon be big dogs.

One night after beating Princeton, 40-22, the Swamprats improved to 2-0 by knocking off rival Hamilton West, 40-19. The Hornets, who were wrestling in their dual opener, are the defending Colonial Valley Conference Valley Division champions.

"This win means a lot," said Williams, who won by major decision at 195 pounds as Nottingham posted triumphs in the match's final five bouts. "We're underdogs and we like that as a team. Every day in practice we say we're going to be the best, and this is one step at it.

"We're not going to stop. We're just going to keep getting better, baby. We're just doing our job. We're just getting started. We have great wrestlers on our team. They all did their jobs. That's all that matters. We got the W and now we're going to go back to practice and go from there."

Josh Magee set the tone for Nottingham when he battled from off his back to post an 11-8 win over the Hornets' Chris Bohorquez in the opening bout at 106. Magee was pinned by Bohorquez in the Nottingham Invitational Tournament last weekend.

The win was the first of three in a row for the Swamprats as Hamzah Mohammed won a decision and Hector Davila pinned to give Nottingham a 12-0 lead.

"That was huge," Nottingham coach Jason "The Rock" Marasco said. "Those matches right there gave us momentum."

Jared Staub won a decision at 126 to give Hamilton its first points, but the Swamprats' Jacob Kouroume earned praise from his coach and teammates for not surrendering bonus points.

"It was going to be a tough match," Kouroume said. "He's a two-time state qualifier and this is only my second year doing wrestling. My job was just to go out there and not get pinned, and that's what I did. He's a tough kid. It was really tough. I just didn't go to my back."

Nick Cecala's pin at 132 pulled Hamilton within 12-9, but Nottingham's Justin Dempsey won a decision at 138 to extend the Swamprats' edge to six points.

Pablo Soto rallied in the final seconds to earn an 11-10 win at 145 and Anthony Kubish won a major decision at 152 to give the Hornets their first lead of the night, 16-15. Darius Miller extended the advantage to four points with a decision at 160, but that would be all the scoring for the hosts.

Jared Lavarra's first-period pin reclaimed the lead for Nottingham. Lavarra got his first varsity win with a pin against Princeton and sparked the Swamprats' closing burst against Hamilton.

"It's kind of surreal," said Lavarra, who is a junior. "I know I have a tough road ahead of me and I'm looking forward to a successful varsity career. I'm going to push myself every day in practice and hopefully I can make it all the way through regions and into states."

Jancel Nunez won a decision, Williams got his major, Kevin Meneus won by injury default and Hector Comulado pinned at heavyweight to put an exclamation point on the victory.

"Our team did a pretty good job," Kouroume said. "It was a big win for us. I think we're going to do good this season. We just have to work hard in practice. We just have to work harder and harder every day and it will be good."

Lavarra agreed.

"We're proving to everybody that we're hungry and we're here to win and we're not messing

around this year,” he said. “I think everyone has a strong feeling of family and unity. I think that’s the most important thing because we all have each other’s backs. Win, lose or draw, we’re all here for each other.”

Hamilton, which finished third in the Nottingham Invitational, one spot ahead of the Swamprats, is idle until next Wednesday when it visits Notre Dame.

“It’s early in the season,” Hornets coach Matt Benedetti said. “We’ll go back to the drawing board and figure out where the little things are that we have to work on and get back to it. From where a person starts to where a person ends is what matters; you want to show growth. As long as they’re making progress every time, that’s what is important.”