

Jan. 11 Wrestling



Steinert's John Bussi works his way toward a second-period pin over Robbinsville's Connor Harding during tonight's 195-pound bout (Photo by Dennis Symons Jr./purchase photos at www.dennissymons.com).

Swamprats win another one as pins keep going their way this season

**By Ken Weingartner
Fish4scores.com**

Jan. 11: If the success of Nottingham's wrestling team has coach Jason "The Rock" Marasco doing back flips, it's in large part because the Swamprats are staying off their backs.

Nottingham improved to 11-2 tonight with a 46-21 win over visiting Lawrence. The Northstars got five pins and allowed only two.

This is not unusual for Nottingham this season, but it marks a dramatic reversal from a year ago. Consider that in the 'Rats' losses last season to Hamilton West, Princeton, Hopewell Valley and Lawrence, they were outpinned 25-9 and also gave up three technical falls.

Nottingham this season avenged the setbacks to West, Princeton and now

Lawrence, and lost a hard-fought match to Hopewell Valley. The Swamprats didn't give up more than



The crowd goes wild as Nottingham's Jacob Kouroume gets set to clinch a 2-1 win over Lawrence's Eric Osorio in tonight's win at the Swamp (Photo by Ken Weingartner).

two pins in any of those matches and yielded a total of just six. Meanwhile, they notched 12 pins and also were credited with a tech fall.

“We thought we could have a year like this if we stayed off our backs and that’s exactly what we’re doing,” junior Jacob Kouroume said. “We gave up a lot of pins last year, but we’re a whole other team this year. The goal is to just go out there and wrestle your best and don’t go to your back.”

Kouroume rallied for a 2-1 win at 126 to keep Nottingham in control of the match tonight.

“Jacob has been battling all these tough opponents; he’s wrestled some of the best kids in the county and he’s only given up some decisions,” Marasco said. “He’s been working hard; we’ve been practicing together a little one-on-one, he and I, and he toughed out a tough victory. He finally got one of these close ones.”

Earlier in the night, Hamzah Mohammed had a momentum preserving pin at 113. He knew the key to victory against Lawrence, as well as throughout the season, was planting opponents rather than being planted.

“Everyone stayed off their backs, which was good,” Mohammed said. “Last year we didn’t do that good a job at it. We learned our lesson.”

Jancel Nunez started the match against Lawrence with a pin at 182. Nunez is 13-2 this season.

Lawrence got a decision in the next bout, but the Swamprats answered with a pin from Hector Comulado, major decision from Wroway Williams, forfeit for Josh Magee and pin by Mohammed to build a 28-3 lead. Kouroume’s decision was followed by Justin Dempsey’s pin at 132.

Waleed Abouelela added a pin at 152 and Sidibrima Massaquoi won a decision at 160 as the ‘Rats raised their record to 5-1 against Colonial Valley Conference foes.

“I think the team did a great job,” Mohammed said.

Forfeits and quick pins kill Hamilton in loss to Hightstown

**By Rich Fisher
Fish4Scores.com**

Hamilton came up with four pins tonight, but it wasn’t enough to counter three forfeit losses and six first-period pins by Hightstown in a 54-27 victory at home tonight.

Hamilton is still without Nick Cecala and Ryan Carson-Burch, but coach Matt Benedetti is more concerned that they heal in time to get ready for the post-season.

“Dual meets are practice,” he said. “The thing that matters is districts and states. This is all practice leading up to it. At the end of the year districts and states are what count.”

Hamilton fell into a 42-6 hole in a match that started at 170. The Hornets got pins from Mark McKenzie (182), Jared Staub (126), Pablo Soto (138) and Darius Miller (152), while Anthony Kubish won by decision at 145.

“Staub has just looked awesome this year,” Benedetti said. “Miller keeps surprising me this year, and Pablo did really good tonight.”

Lights, camera action! Steinert wins on live MSG cablecast

They rolled in the MSG cameras tonight and Steinert put on a show.

The Spartans rolled to a 42-28 home victory over Robbinsville tonight in a match that was televised live on MSGVarsity.com and will appear on iO TV Channel 14 at 7:30 Thursday.

Steinert didn’t seem intimidated by the bright lights, getting pins from Tyler Beers (120 pounds), Sean McDonald (170), River Ullrich (182) and John Bussi (195). The Spartans also got decisions from Troy Flood (138) and Shaun Augustyn (145). Robbinsville also forfeited two matches as Steinert won its fifth straight to improve to 5-3.

