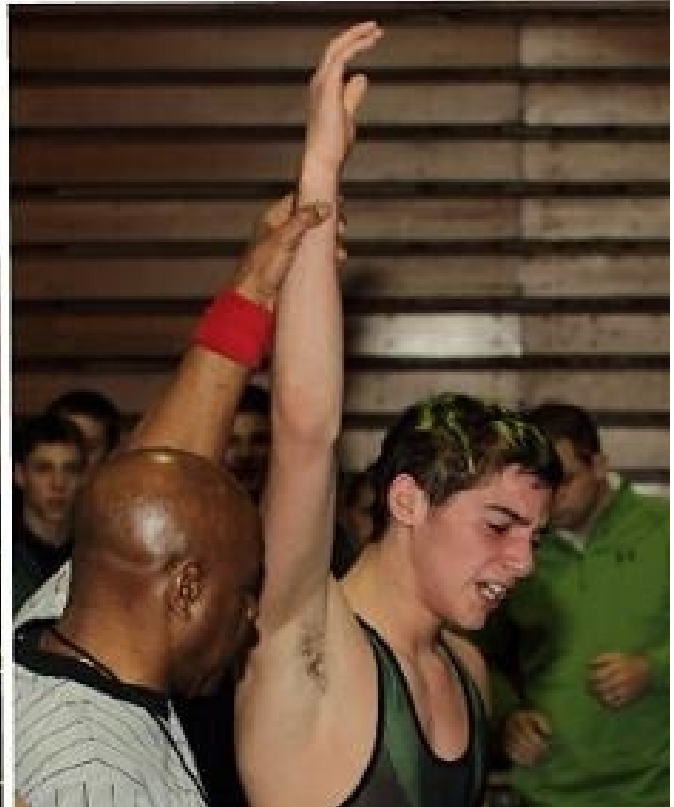
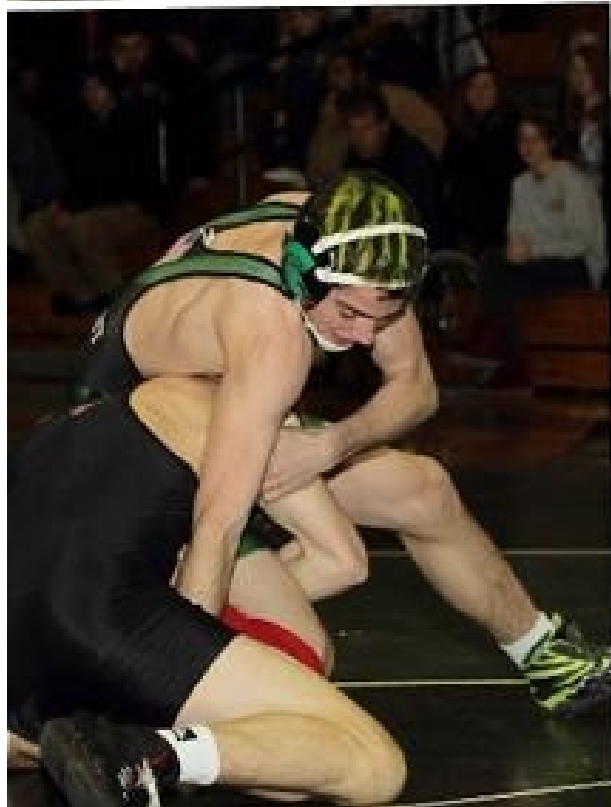


Jan. 14 Wrestling



In a familiar showdown, Steinert's Joe Michel and Hamilton's Jared Staub battle it out at 126 pounds today. Michel avenged last year's region loss with an 8-6 victory (Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos at jbsportsphoto@aol.com).

The Michel-Staub pendulum swings back to Michel in Spartans' victory

By Ken Weingartner

Fish4scores.com

Jan. 14: Steinert's Joe Michel thought about his last match against Hamilton West's Jared Staub all summer. And fall. And part of the winter.

It was his motivation when the two wrestlers renewed their rivalry today at Steinert as part of a tri-meet that included Wall. The Spartans and West met in the day's first match.

Michel and Staub met for the seventh time during their scholastic careers, with Michel posting an 8-6 win at 126 pounds as part of the Spartans' 63-12 win over West. The last time the two faced each other was in the third-place match at last year's Region 7 Tournament, where Staub emerged with a 2-1 win.

Earlier in that season, Michel defeated Staub, 8-2, on his way to the Mercer County Tournament title at 112.

"He beat me in regions when it really counted and he got his chance to go to states," Michel said. "That stuck with me. I wanted it so bad this year. I've been working hard all summer, going to clubs, hitting tournaments, just working my best to work up to this match."

Staub, who was 4-0 against Michel two years ago, got the match's first takedown and added two near-fall points, but Michel reversed and got three backpoints for a 5-4 lead at the end of the first period.

Michel started the second period in the defensive position and got a reversal with 15 seconds to go to increase his advantage to 7-4. The third period started in neutral, with Staub getting a takedown to make it 7-6. He let Michel escape midway through the period, but was unable to score again.

"It's always a good scrap," said Staub, who dropped to 9-1. "My shots were there, I just couldn't finish. It's hard to wrestle a guy you've wrestled so many times.

"Honestly, this match meant nothing. You can win all these, but it really counts at counties and districts and all that. You'd love to win them all, but it just doesn't work that way. I'll just go back to the room and train even harder than I was, go back to the things I need to work on. I'll just keep grinding it out each day. It shows me what I need to work on more."

Both wrestlers could meet again in the MCT, which is in two weeks at Robbinsville. If they do, it will most likely be at 120.

"He's definitely a tough kid; good with his legs," said Michel, who improved to 11-1. "I think I'm starting to realize what he's doing and learning to counter it and do all the right things. I ended up scoring points on the mat. I remembered I got the cradle on him at counties (last year), so I try to hit it again and I got it.

"I'm definitely going to have to work on my takedowns, try to get a little better on my feet. This match definitely gave me a lot of confidence going into counties; I feel real strong. I feel I can beat anyone right now."

The clash between Michel and Staub provided some electricity.

"That was definitely a highlight match," Steinert coach Adam Jankos said. "It's great to see a match like that; it's almost like the gym stops. Everyone was just focused on that. It was nice to have that, especially when they could just wrestle; they didn't have to think about districts or counties and the match wasn't on the line. It was just go out there and do what you do."

Also getting wins for Steinert, which won its sixth in a row to improve to 6-3, were Matt McDonald (160), Sean McDonald (170), Jon Bussi (195), Nate Benitez (106), Joe Paragon (132) and Troy Flood

(138) – all by pins. Luis Leon (220), Mike Remboski (285), Owen Garton (113) and Tyler Beers (120) got forfeits.

Mark McKenzie (182) had a pin for West. Anthony Kubish (145) and Darius Miller (152) won decisions.

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Steinert also rolled over a Wall team that is not quite the power it was a few years ago, as the Spartans stormed to a 51-18 victory after beating Hamilton.

Benitez, Beers, Brandon Bernstein, Matt McDonald and Remboski won by pin, Michel had a technical fall, Bussi won a major, while Shane Augustyn and River Ulrich won by decision and Sean McDonald by forfeit.

“It was a nice match,” Steinert coach Adam Jankos said. “You never know what to expect when you get a Shore Conference team in here. [Wall’s] program is always good every year. To get a team to come here and beat them here is a great feeling.”

Steinert's seventh straight win put the Spartans at 7-3.

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Hamilton fell, 54-14, to Wall in its second match of the day. Staub got back on the winning track by winning by technical fall while Pablo Soto, Kubish and Miller all won decisions.

Nottingham just keps rolling with a victory over Notre Dame

Nottingham improved to 12-2 with a 42-21 victory over Notre Dame. The Northstars got pins from Jordan Lebo (230), Jacob Kouroume (126), Simon Kerven (170), Jancel Nunez (182) and Hector Comulado. Winning by decision were Joshua Magee (106), Waleed Abouelela (152), Wroway Williams (195) and Kevin Meneus (220).