

Feb. 1 Wrestling



Nottingham's Jared Lavarra battles Robbinsville's Giovanni Cino en route to a pin at 170 pounds (Photo by Ken Weingartner).

'Stars bounce back from sub-par county showing to pound Ravens

By Ken Weingartner

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Feb. 1: The Showdown in the Swamp.

That's what it will be Thursday night when the Nottingham High wrestling team hosts Hightstown in the first of two key Colonial Valley Conference matches for the Swamprats.

The second big match is Saturday at Northern Burlington when Nottingham clashes with Steinert as part of a quad meet. The Swamprats, who improved to 15-2 overall and 9-1 in the CVC tonight by beating Robbinsville, 57-17, are trying to win the Valley Division title over a Hightstown squad that entered a match tonight against Hopewell Valley also with a 9-1 league mark.

"I'm looking forward to tomorrow night," Nottingham coach Jason "The Rock" Marasco said. "It should be a battle. It should be a barnburner. Hopefully we'll have our full lineup, but I'm not sure if we will. But we'll be all right. We're ready."

The Swamprats were without a few of their regulars – notably Hector Davila and Wroway

Williams –tonight at Robbinsville, but it didn't impact the outcome. Nottingham won the final 10 bouts of the night, turning a 12-point deficit into a runaway.

Jordan Lebo's pin at 120 started the Northstars win streak. Also pinning for Nottingham were Justin Dempsey (132), Waleed Abouelela (145), Kevin Simon (160), Jared Lavarra (170) and Jancel Nunez (182). Jacob Kouroume (126), John Pinos (138) and Kevin Meneus (195) won decisions. Hector Comulado (220) and Sidibrima Massaquoi (152) won by forfeits.

The win helped remove some of the sour taste from last weekend's Mercer County Tournament, where Nottingham finished tied for eighth place. Hightstown finished fifth and Robbinsville was seventh.

"We didn't show up at the tournament," Marasco said. "I definitely wasn't happy with our performance. I expected to be up there in the top three.

"But we've worked hard since then. We've worked, believe me, we've worked."

Nottingham and Hightstown wrestlers met five times in the MCT, with the Rams winning three. The Northstars biggest win came when Nunez upset Joey DeCristofaro in the semifinals at 182 on his way to winning the title. Nunez, who was seeded third, used a late takedown and three backpoints to come away with an 11-10 victory over the third-seeded DeCristofaro.

"We match up well, I think," Marasco said. "There's about four or five toss-up matches. It's going to come down to bonus points and those toss-up matches. There should be a couple good [MCT] rematches, too."

It's a showdown, after all.

Part One.

Steinert methodically dismantles WW-P North for 10th straight win

Make it 10 straight for the Spartans, the easy way.

With very little drama involved, Steinert won its 10th consecutive match, 70-3, over winless West Windsor-Plainsboro North tonight.

Aside from four forfeit victories, the Spartans got pins from Troy Flood (138 pounds), Shaun Augustyn (145), Matt McDonald (160) and Tyler Beers (113). McDonald and Beers pinned in the first period and McDonald had a sub-minute plant.

Brandon Bernstein (152) won by technical fall, Kazier John (195) and Joe Paragon (120) won majors and Sebastian Collazo (182) won by decision.

The Spartans are back in action Thursday with a home match against Lawrence as a warm-up for Saturday's big showdown with Nottingham.