

## Feb. 2 Wrestling

# It's time to party down in the Swamp as 'Stars clinch Valley crown

By Ken Weingartner

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**Feb. 2:** Jason Marasco called it a team effort and it would be hard to argue otherwise.

Nottingham's wrestling team got big wins throughout the lineup and clinched the Colonial Valley Conference's Valley Division title by knocking off Hightstown, 38-27, tonight in the Swamp. The Swamprats are 16-2 overall and 10-1 in the CVC while the division-rival Rams fell to 14-5, 9-3.

Nottingham has only two more CVC matches on the schedule, Saturday against Steinert and Tuesday against Ewing.

Among the big wins tonight for the Swamprats were Justin Dempsey pinning at 132 pounds in a bout he was losing, John Pinos following with a win at 138 over Mercer County Tournament medalist Josh Parkhurst and Jancel Nunez pinning Joey DeCristofaro in 91 seconds at 182.

Nottingham won four of the night's final five bouts, starting with Nunez's pin.

"We wrestled really well tonight," Northstars' coach Jason "The Rock" Marasco said. "We battled in every match. There were about five tossup matches and we kept telling the guys we needed to win three of them. And we won three of them. It was a total team effort."

Hightstown, which finished fifth in the MCT while Nottingham was eighth, got a pin at 113 to start the match, but Hector Davila cut the deficit in half with a 1-0 victory over Kevin Medina. The Rams extended their advantage to 9-3 with a decision at 126 before Dempsey and Pinos came up with their big wins to give the Swamprats a 12-9 edge.

Waleed Abouelela won a major decision at 145 to make it 16-9, but Hightstown got a pin and two decisions to reclaim the lead, 21-16, heading into Nunez's bout against DeCristofaro.

Nunez and DeCristofaro met in the semifinals of last weekend's MCT, where Nunez rallied in the final seconds to pull out an 11-10 victory on his way to the championship. This time, there was no suspense.

"I told (Nunez) that on paper I had him losing," Marasco said. "I knew he was going to win, but I didn't want to tell him that. He went out there like a possessed man."

Wroway Williams followed with a pin at 195 to make it 28-21 in favor of Nottingham. The Rams got within one point with a pin at 220, but Hector Comulado pinned at heavyweight and Josh Magee won a major decision at 106 to close out the division-clinching triumph.

"A lot of the matches came down to the wire and we hung on," Marasco said. "It was a battle. I give a lot of credit to Hightstown. They really brought it. It was everything I anticipated it to be.

"I'm really proud of my guys. It was a great night."

A championship night.