

## Feb. 4 Wrestling – Steinert win streak hits 14



*Steinert's River Ullrich battles Nottingham's Jared Lavarra in a key 182-pound bout, which was won by Ullrich 6-3 (Photo by Dennis Symons Jr./purchase photos at [www.dennissymons.com](http://www.dennissymons.com)).*

### **Steinert on record-setting win streak; Stars set mark for wins in a season**

**By Ken Weingartner**

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**Feb. 4:** The Spartans' march continues on.

Steinert's wrestling team enjoyed a banner day today, starting with a 33-21 win over township rival Nottingham that clinched the Colonial Valley Conference Colonial Division title and ending with a one-point triumph over Northern Burlington that extended the Spartans' school-record win streak to 14. In between, Steinert knocked off Willingboro on its way to a sweep of the quad meet held at Northern Burlington High School.

"Three-and-oh; that was the goal today," Spartans coach Adam Jankos said. "Keep the streak alive."

The streak is alive and well as Steinert gets ready for Monday's NJSIAA Central Jersey Group III team tournament match at Hopewell Valley. One of the Spartans' three early-season losses came against Bulldogs, 33-22, on Dec. 23.

"It gives me momentum; I hope it gives them momentum too," a pumped-up Jankos said about Steinert's roll. "I think with the momentum we have that we've got a good shot (against Hopewell Valley). The kids are fired up about it. If we could wrestle anybody again, it's them. That's who they want to wrestle.

"That's a redemption match right there."

Of course, the Spartans first needed to take care of business today. Steinert, which won the coin flip and had the upper hand in setting the matchups, got off to a strong start against Nottingham

thanks to big wins from River Ullrich at 182, Kazier John at 195, Jon Bussi at 220 and heavyweight Mike Remboski in building a 24-6 lead against the Swamprats. Ullrich, John and Bussi won decisions and Remboski pinned.

Also picking up victories for the Spartans, who are 14-3 overall this season, were Brandon Bernstein (152), Matt McDonald (160), Tyler Beers (120), Joe Michel (126) and Troy Flood (138). Steinert captured six of the eight matches that were decided by four points or fewer.

“We’re crosstown rivals and we were looking forward to this,” Beers said. “We were anticipating this match the entire year, once we realized how well both teams were doing. We thought it would be a great matchup.”

Nottingham, which bounced back to beat Northern Burlington and Willingboro, thereby establishing the school record for wins in a season with 18, got victories against Steinert from Jancel Nunez (170), Josh Magee (106), Hamzah Mohammed (113), Justin Dempsey (132) and Waleed Abouelela (145).

“We weren’t ourselves,” Swamprats coach Jason “The Rock” Marasco said. “They got every matchup with the coin flip, and we knew that was going to be a big deal, but if we wrestle the way we’re supposed to wrestle we could get the wins we were supposed to get.

“Steinert was prepared and Nottingham wasn’t. We didn’t wrestle to the best of our abilities. When it’s your time to do your job you’ve got to do it. The Steinert kids were very aggressive. Jankos did a great job getting team ready.”

The Spartans cruised to a 54-24 win over Willingboro thanks to six forfeits and pins from Ullrich, Michel and Joe Paragone (132). That set the stage for the sweep against Northern Burlington. Bernstein’s 8-1 win in the penultimate bout clinched the victory for Steinert, but once again the upper weights helped set the tone. Ullrich started the match with an 8-7 win at 170, followed by Kazier’s 12-8 triumph at 182 and Bussi’s 8-6 win at 195.

After Northern Burlington got two pins, Nate Benitez pinned at 106 to regain control for the Spartans. Beers pinned, Michel won a decision and Sean Augustyn won a major decision to set up Bernstein’s moment.

“These guys don’t want the streak to end,” Jankos said. “It’s like they’re pushing each other, telling each other to stay off their backs and not give up any bonus points. They’re starting to understand how a match works. It’s not just: Go out there and pin or be pinned. It’s about keeping matches close and minimizing the points (your opponent) can get.”

Nottingham also posted a big win over Northern Burlington, 40-33. Abouelela and Sidibrima Massaquoi closed out the match with back-to-back pins to lock up the triumph. The Swamprats also got pins from Wroway Williams (220), Magee, Jordan Lebo (120) and Hector Davila (126). Nunez won a major decision.

“After the Steinert match, I took them into the locker room and we had a heart to heart in there,” Marasco said. “I told them what I felt. I told them, ‘This is not who we are.’ After that, they had a whole new attitude.”

Nottingham, which is 18-3 overall and claimed the CVC Valley Division crown with a win Thursday over Hightstown, also is in CJ Group III sectional action Monday night, traveling to Jackson Liberty.