

Jan. 4 Wrestling: 'Stars hang tough; Spartans win



Hector Davila works his way to a 3-0 win over Hopewell's Brendan Murphy in tonight's 120-pound bout (Photo by Ken Weingartner).

Nottingham loses first but gives powerful Hopewell Valley all it can handle

By Ken Weingartner

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Jan. 4: After winning six of seven matches to open the season, Nottingham's wrestling team traveled tonight to Hopewell Valley to see how it measured up against Colonial Valley Conference's top program.

The Swamprats measured up well, just not well enough.

Nottingham got off to a 12-0 lead and held a 15-9 advantage midway through the match, but saw the Bulldogs rally for a 31-22 win. Hopewell Valley (3-1 overall and 2-0 in the CVC) is the defending Mercer County Tournament champion and went undefeated in CVC action last season.

"It was a great match; great match," Nottingham coach Jason "The Rock" Marasco said. "But against great teams you've got to be perfect. Good isn't good enough against great teams. We made a mistake or two. There's nothing more to say.

"We wrestled really well and I'm really proud of the team. (Hopewell Valley) is a great team. My hat's off to them."

There were only two pins in the match – both by the Bulldogs – and after the first eight bouts of the night only once had a wrestler been to his back for near-fall points.

As Hopewell Valley coach "Super" Mario Harpel said after praising Nottingham's effort: "That was a battle for every inch on the mat."

Josh Magee got Nottingham off to a good start when he used an escape and takedown in the third period to rally for a 6-5 win at 106 pounds. After Hamzah Mohammed received a forfeit at 113, Hector Davila won 3-0 at 120 to give Nottingham its 12-0 lead.

Hopewell Valley won the next three bouts – one by sudden victory and another by two points – to cut the deficit to 12-9, but the Swamprats' Waleed Abouelela won 9-5 at 145 to extend Nottingham's advantage to six points.

The Swamprats (6-2), though, got only Jancel Nunez's 11-4 win at 182 and Wroway Williams' 11-3 major decision at heavyweight the rest of the way.

"Nottingham was in it," Harpel said. "It was tough."

On Tuesday night, the Northstars rocked West Windsor-Plainsboro North, 72-3, getting pins from Jordan Lebo, Justin Dempsey, John Pinos, Jahi Coleman, Sidibrima Massaquoi, Kerven Simon, Jared Lavarra and Hector Comulado.

Spartans top Hightstown for first victory of the season

Steinert got its first win of the season by beating Hightstown, 37-30, tonight.

Brandon Bernstein (152), Sean McDonald (170), River Ulrich (182) and Michael Remboski (285) got pins for the Spartans. Nathan Benitez (106) won a major decision and Tyler Beers (120), Joe Michel (126) and Mathew McDonald (160) won decisions.

The Spartans are 1-3 this season.