

New Milford wrestlers open with win over Oxford

Jason Sonski

Updated 11:35 pm, Wednesday, December 12, 2012

OXFORD -- After nine straight SWC championships there is little surprise when it comes to the New Milford High wrestling team.

And that's exactly how they like it.

The Green Wave opened their season Wednesday night with an impressive 54-25 victory over Oxford. In a formula mixed with senior leadership and new faces making a positive impression, New Milford showed why it's still the team to beat in the conference against an undermanned Wolverine squad.

"We just wanted to come out and start the season with a bang," said senior captain Rob Tozzi. "We know what we have to do and just keep looking forward."

New Milford junior Thomas McIlveen started the year in fine fashion when he pinned junior Brendan Carothers in 5:00 at 220 pounds.

It was then Tozzi's turn to flex his muscles on the mat at 285 pounds. Oxford junior Dan Carbonaro lasted only 2:39 into the match after Tozzi caught him on his back to earn another six points.

New Milford was then given three straight forfeits to jump out to a 30-0 lead.

"It's tough to give up three matches against anybody but especially New Milford," said Oxford coach Ben Blue. "They are one of the top teams in the state. We had four or five guys that wrestled well. It went as I expected."

New Milford once again showed why it's able to reload every year when freshman Brett Leonard trotted out and pinned sophomore Zach Latka in 57 seconds for his first varsity win.

"It's great to see the young guys come in and contribute," said Tozzi. "We tell them that you can't look in the past and just worry about doing your job. We want everybody to stay focused on the future."

Oxford will have a tough time earning wins with three holes in its lineup, but that won't stop a strong core of wrestlers led by junior Steve Persson from attacking their opponents.

The defending Class S champion at 140 pounds, Persson got off to a stellar start by pinning junior Keith Morse in 35 seconds.

"It was good to get a match in," said Persson. "It's good to see a team as good as New Milford. It helps the team see what level we are at now. It's tough to have the open spots. We just have to do our part."

New Milford finished 21-1 last year with its only loss coming in the season opener to Hand. New Milford also finished runner-up to Hand in the Class L tournament.

Coach Chris Piel knows the Green Wave will need to be tested throughout the regular season in order to make another run at a state title. New Milford will see plenty of quality opponents Saturday at the Berlin Invitational, which features top teams from around the state and others such as New England power Mt. Anthony of Vermont.

Oxford also returns to action on Saturday at the Pomperaug Invitational.

New Milford 54, Oxford 25 (at Oxford): 220: Thomas McIlveen (NM) pinned Brandan Carothers 5:00; 285: Rob Tozzi (NM) pinned Dan Carbonaro 2:39; 106: Halim Bourjeli (NM) won by forfeit; 113: Kyle Lindner (NMO) won by forfeit; 120: Bryan Rojas (NM) won by forfeit; 126: Nico Stefanatos (NM) pinned Nick Lombardi :29; 132: James Lobb (O) dec. Zach Arnold 2-0; 138: Brett Leonard (NM) pinned Zach Latka :57; 145: Louis Alhage (NM) pinned Matt Sherman 3:43; 152: Steve Persson (O) pinned Keith Morsey :35; 160: Kameron Brandshaw (NM) pinned Will Denslow 3:30; 170: Marlin Simon (O) pinned Chris Brett 2:32; 182: Alex Mardis (O) major dec. Denzel Phillips 13-3; 195: Andy Temple (O) pinned Jorge Arcuri 3:24. Records: New Milford 1-0. Oxford 0-1.