

New Milford captures SWC wrestle in dominant fashion

By Jon Chik Updated 11:10 pm, Saturday, February 13, 2016



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New Milford's Brett Leonard and New Fairfield's Andrew D'Amico wrestle in the 160 pound weight class championship match during the SWC high school wrestling championships, held at Masuk High School, on Saturday, February 13, 2016, in Monroe, Conn. Leonard won the match. [less](#)

MONROE — Spending one season away from the top of the SWC mountain was apparently one season too many for the New Milford wrestling team, which reclaimed the conference crown in dominant fashion Saturday at [Masuk High School](#).

New Milford, which finished as the runner-up to Newtown at last year's SWC Championship, is back on top after winning the title every year since 2007 (except for 2013 when there was no SWC tournament due to weather).

"Every time you win, it's special," New Milford coach [Chris Piel](#) said. "This year

is very special because this is a very special group of kids. This was one of our goals. After you lose it, it gets a little bit sweeter when you win it."

The Green Wave placed eight wrestlers into championship matches and had seven tournament winners on Saturday, which was the most for the school, according to Piel.

"It feels good coming back from a big loss," New Milford's CJ Schultz said, referring to last year's SWC Championship. "We really had to put in the work, get back out there and support each other as a team."

Seven of the eight New Milford finalists (Brandon Leonard at 106, **Colin Lindner** at 113, **Mel Ortiz** at 120, **Tyler Schultz** at 126, CJ Schultz at 132, Bryan Rojas at 145 and **Brett Leonard** at 160) went on to win their championship match as the Green Wave amassed 246 points, comfortably ahead of runner-up Newtown with 166.

"I think we could have probably got another one or two of those (weight class champions), but overall, considering what I have right now, it wasn't a bad effort," Newtown coach **Chris Bray** said.

The rest of the top five included New Fairfield (140.5), Masuk (93.5) and Pomperaug (82.5).

"We did alright," New Fairfield coach **Paul Musso** said. "It's a really tough tournament. I think if we have a full team, we beat Newtown. Just my opinion on it."

By requiring just 33 seconds to pin his opponent in the 132-pound championship match, CJ Schultz claimed his 100th win.

"It was pretty nice to win it here when it mattered," CJ Schultz said. "This is the postseason; this is where it all starts and it means a lot to everyone."

Tyler Schultz also had a dramatic win over **Aaron Occhipinti** of Newtown just

prior in the 126 title match, notching the only point of his 1-0 decision with 27 seconds remaining in the third.

"We had a close match last week when I won 4-3," Tyler Schultz said. "I kind of felt nervous going into it, but going 1-0 to win it felt great."

At 120, New Fairfield's **Alec Opsal** scored a point with 10 seconds to go to force overtime, but New Milford's Mel Ortiz executed a takedown six seconds into the extra time for the 4-2 win.

"It felt great. Bringing a lot of people into the finals felt good," Tyler Schultz said. "We work really hard every day to get to where we were. It showed how much we've improved over the season."

Claiming weight class championships for the Nighthawks were Joe Accousti (170), **Anthony Falbo** (182) and **Tom Long** (220).

"We're holding out hope that maybe we'll get Andy (Hubina) back, but it's not looking good right now," Bray said. "But that would be very helpful for us."

Accousti won all of his matches by pin, including the championship in just 45 seconds.

"I was feeling good," Accousti said. "I was really proud with our performance today. We had a lot of guys in the finals. I think as a team we have a chance at winning (the state tournament)."

New Fairfield boasted two tournament champions: Avery Shay at 138 and **Justin Garden** at 195. Shay picked up a convincing 7-0 win in the finale, and Garden scored a 4-0 win in overtime.

"I really believe we have a legit shot to win this thing (the state tournament)," Musso said. "We have to wrestle back hard. We had five guys in the finals today, and the kids we lost to are freakin' good."

Other weight class champs were Immaculate-Barlow's Emmett LiCastrì at 152 and Notre Dame-Fairfield's **Hakim Fleming** at 285.

The state tournaments are next Friday and Saturday.

"I can go down the list of who wrestled their butt off, and the Green Wave really showed up today," Piel said. "Once we get rolling, we don't stop."

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SWC CHAMPIONSHIPS

Team Scores: 1. New Milford 246; 2. Newtown 166; 3. New Fairfield 140.5; 4. Masuk 93.5; 5. Pomperaug 82.5; 6. Immaculate-Barlow 78.5; 7. Stratford 67; 8. Notre Dame-Fairfield 58; 9. Bethel 57; 10. Weston 31; 11. Bunnell 14.

106: Championship—Brandon Leonard (New Milford) pinned Nikolas Accousti (Newtown) 4:48; Consolation—Hunter Chin (New Fairfield) dec. Xavier Rojas (ND) 8-6. **113:** Championship—Colin Lindner (New Milford) dec. **Michael Fedorko** (Masuk) 6-1 ; Consolation—Zach Kalmanso (New Fairfield) dec. **Michaela Quinn** (Pomperaug 5-1). **120:** Championship—Mel Ortiz (New Milford) dec. Alec Opsal (New Fairfield) 4-2 (OT); Consolation—Jack Wellman (Newtown) dec. Tore Gambino (Masuk) 5-3. **126:** Championship—Tyler Schultz (New Milford) dec. Aaron Occhipinti (Newtown) 1-0; Consolation—Kyle Sheehan (Pomperaug) pinned **Tony Joaquim** (Masuk) 1:17. **132:** Championship—CJ Schultz (New Milford) pinned **Ben Coppock** (Immaculate-Barlow) :33; Consolation—Robert Ruiz (Bethel) pinned **Owen Walsh** (Newtown) 1:59. **138:** Championship—Avery Shay (New Fairfield) dec. **Matt Pangle** (Pomperaug) 7-0; Consolation—Evan Colley (New Milford) pinned **Jason Lobdell** (Masuk) :56. **145:** Championship—Bryan Rojas (New Milford) dec. Ed Lovely (Newtown) 10-4; Consolation—Will McCallister (Stratford) won by default against Joe Vanculin (Pomperaug). **152:** Championship—Emmett LiCastrì (Immaculate-Barlow) dec. **Alex Stavola** (Newtown) 7-0; Consolation—Cameron Berger (New Milford) dec. Jordan Carrion (Stratford) 7-2. **160:** Championship—Brett Leonard (New Milford) dec. **Andrew D'Amico** (New

Fairfield) 6-2; Consolation—Max Khosanbo (Bethel) pinned **Evan Patterson** (Masuk) 1:52. **170:** Championship—Joe Accousti (Newtown) pinned Kyle Fabich (New Milford) :45; Consolation—Clayton Hoskins (Masuk) pinned **Mike Reilly** (Immaculate-Barlow) 4:38. **182:** Championship—Anthony Falbo (Newtown) major dec. Will Foschi (Pomperaug) 21-7; Consolation—David Angulo (New Milford) dec. Clyde Auba (Notre Dame-Fairfield) 2-0. **195:** Championship—Justin Garden (New Fairfield) dec. **Josh Lachs** (Weston) 4-0 (OT); Consolation—Rob Krajewski (Masuk) dec. **Nick Pellicone** (New Milford) 11-4. **220:** Championship—Tom Long (Newtown) dec. Nick Cote (Bethel) 5-3; Consolation—**Julian Reza** (New Milford) pinned Hammit Nasufi (Stratford) :16. **285:** Championship—Hakim Fleming (Notre Dame-Fairfield) pinned **Russell Howard** (New Fairfield) 2:43; Consolation—Sergio Ferreira (Stratford) dec. **Roy Villagomez** (Immaculate-Barlow) 5-2.

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