

Danbury pins Warde in clash of FCIAC wrestling rivals

By Richard Gregory Updated 9:09 pm, Wednesday, January 25, 2017



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Andrew Ward's Ryan Dean and Danbury's Shaun Williams wrestle in the 132 pound class in the high school wrestling meet between Fairfield Ward and Danbury high schools, on Wednesday, January 25, 2017, at Danbury ... [more](#)

DANBURY — It was just another day at the office for the **Danbury High School** wrestling team.

The Hatters, who have been the No. 1 pick in the weekly state coaches' poll all season — and a unanimous No. 1 pick nearly all season — toppled FCIAC rival Warde on Wednesday 57-16. Warde, which had finished second behind Danbury in the Class LL state championships last year, was tied for sixth in this week's state poll with fellow FCIAC hopeful Trumbull.

"It's definitely a mentality booster," said Danbury senior 182-pounder **Jake Constantine**. "It's always a good experience for the team to see that we could put up a sound win against a pretty good team. We just have to make sure we're wrestling as well as possible."

The Hatters improved to 9-1 in dual meets, their only loss coming against fellow New England powerhouse Mount Anthony Union of Bennington, Vt. And while the No. 1 ranking in January is nice, the Hatters know the biggest prizes are up for grabs next month at the championship tournaments.

And Danbury's schedule leading up to those championship meets is an absolute minefield. The Hatters are scheduled to travel Saturday to New Hampshire to face Timberlane (N.H.), Nashoba Valley (Mass.) and fifth-ranked Xavier. Danbury's final two dual meets of the regular season will be at Trumbull next Wednesday and at home against second-ranked New Milford on Feb. 4.

"New Milford is a really, really good team," Danbury coach **Ricky Shook** said. "Xavier is good, and we'll see them this weekend up in New Hampshire. We'll also see Timberlane, which I think is the best dual-meet team in New Hampshire, so we're going to struggle with them. We have a good weekend ahead, and then we have Trumbull next week."

Despite the lopsided score Wednesday, Danbury can expect a tougher challenge from Warde when the FCIAC championships roll around on Feb. 10 and 11.

"Coming into it at full strength, they're still a better team than us," Warde coach **Jason Shaughnessy** said. "We were missing a couple our good kids, but we felt we needed to rest them and get them ready for when it was important.

"It's about how you're wrestling at the end of the year and if you're healthy," Shaughnessy added. "Our goal is to get our team healthy and be wrestling well at the end of the year. This is a speed-bump in the process. We didn't compete well today, but in the big picture, hopefully we can when it counts, at the end of the year."

Shook knows his Hatters haven't seen the best from Warde yet this year.

"In the FCIACs, they will be on our butts," he said.

Andrew Marquis (220 pounds), **Michael Gaboardi** (285) and **Ryan Jack** (106) immediately set the tone for Danbury on Wednesday, scoring first-period pins in the first three matches of the evening. **Ben Leblanc** won a 5-0 decision at 113, and **Jakob Camacho** (120), **Kyle Fields** (126) and **Shaun Williams** (132) all followed with first-period pins of their own to put the Hatters ahead comfortably, 39-0.

Timmy Kane put Warde on the board with a first-period pin at 138. A.J Kovacs then scored a second-period pin for the Hatters at 145, **Eric Rocha** won a decision at 152 and **Gino Baratta** notched a second-period pin at 160 to extend Danbury's lead to 54-6.

Matheus Ribeiro scored a first-period pin for Warde at 170, and **Matt Cuoco** added a win by major decision at 195 for the Mustangs.

In between was the most exciting battle of the night, with Danbury's Constantine and Warde's Joseph Gjinaj slugging it out at 182. Gjinaj led 6-4 early in the third period, when Constantine scored a two-point takedown to tie the score with 45 seconds remaining. Gjinaj escaped just a few seconds later to take a 7-6 lead. Constantine then scored another takedown in the final seconds to win, 8-7.

"When I took him down, all I could think was that I better not let him up," Constantine said. "I was just looking at the clock, and that was a pretty long eight seconds."

DANBURY 57, WARDE 16

(at Danbury) 220: Andrew Marquis (D) pinned Daniel Mundle 1:00; **285:** Michael Gaboardi (D) pinned Reynaldo Idieu 1:41; **106:** Ryan Jack (D) pinned Victor de la Pena 0:51; **113:** Ben Leblanc (D) dec. Cole Shaughnessy 5-0; **120:** Jakob Camacho (D) pinned Brandon Moutinho 0:51; **126:** Kyle Fields (D) pinned Noah Zuckerman 1:07; **132:** Shaun Williams (D) pinned Ryan Dean 1:57; **138:** Timmy Kane (W) pinned Ozzie Cortez 1:58; **145:** **A.J. Kovacs** (D) pinned Anthony Zartenga 3:16; **152:** Eric Rocha (D) dec. Michael Eaton 6-2; **160:** Gino Baratta (D) pinned Noah Kane 3:50; **170:** Matheus Ribeiro (W) pinned Jesse Patton 1:26; **182:** Jake Constantine (D) dec.

Joseph Gjinaj 8-7; **195**: Matt Cuoco (W) major dec. Montez Osbey 13-1. **Records:**
Warde 8-2; Danbury 9-1.

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