

Green Wave pins rival Rebels in final tuneup before SWCs

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New Milford's Brandon Leonard, top, wrestles with New Fairfield's Zachary Kalmanson in the 126-pound match while the referee looks on during the wrestling meet at New Fairfield High School Feb. 6, 2017.

NEW FAIRFIELD — The **New Milford High School** wrestling team bounced back in a big way Monday after suffering its first loss of the season on Saturday.

Roughly 48 hours after falling to Danbury, the top-ranked team in this week's state coaches poll, second-ranked New Milford defeated South-West Conference rival New Fairfield 54-27. Perhaps more important than Monday's score was how well the Green Wave wrestled with the sting of Saturday's loss still fresh on their minds.

"We got a gift — we got our butts kicked by Danbury," New Milford coach **Chris Piel** said. "It's not like one of those gifts you get on Christmas morning, but it's one of

those gifts that is sometimes necessary. It looks like it was a wake-up call for our guys, and we're ready to roll.

"I'm very pleased with the way the kids responded," Piel continued. "I thought they wrestled well. I think we're on the right track to peak at the right time."

If their performances were on Monday were any indication, the Wave wrestlers certainly got the message.

"Saturday was a wake-up call for us," New Milford senior **Cam Berger** said. "It got everybody in the right mindset that we're not done yet. We have a lot left in our season. Today put us back on track."

Stevie Brooks (113 pounds), Brandon Leonard (126), **Mel Ortiz**, Tyler Schultz (138), **C.J. Schultz** (145), Cam Berger (160), Kyle Fabich (170), **Mike Haggerty** (195) and **David Angulo** (220) all won by pin for New Milford. Ortiz, the two Schultzes, Fabich and Angulo all scored their pins in the first period.

For New Fairfield, Ashton Capichiano (106), Avery Shay (152) and **Billy Magrino** (182) all won by pin, with Shay's pin coming in the first round. **Liam Goudie** (120) won by decision and **Brennan Hart** (285) won by forfeit.

"These kids stepped up today," New Fairfield coach **Paul Musso** said. "The one thing we always do is fight."

Next up for both teams is the SWC championship meet, set for Saturday at New Fairfield. Defending-champ New Milford has won the conference title 12 times since 2002. The Wave is looking for a strong showing at the SWCs to start the championship portion of the season, then follow it up at the Class L state championships at Bristol Central in two weeks – New Milford is the four-time defending Class L champ – before trying for its first State Open title in three weeks at the **Floyd Little Athletic Center** in New Haven.

The State Open title has been a goal for New Milford since the season started, and the setback against Danbury has stoked the Wave's competitive fire even more.

"Going into the postseason No. 2 in the state I think is pretty good," Angulo said. "I think we can give Danbury a run at the State Opens."

If nothing else, Saturday's loss showed the Wave how it stacks up against Danbury head-to-head. It's quite possible that a few of those same head-to-head matchups could decide the State Open.

"We took that loss, not as a bad thing, but as part of the learning process," C.J. Schultz said. "We're going to take it, learn from it and run with it. We all have little things we need to fix."

New Fairfield, meanwhile, may have graduated several of the key pieces to last year's improbable run to the State Open title, but don't look past the Rebels come tournament time.

"On a real good day, if we get five or six kids to the Open, I'll be happy," Musso said. "It's a rebuilding process we're in right now, but that's not bad for a **Class M school.**"

NEW MILFORD 54, NEW FAIRFIELD 27

(at New Fairfield) 106: Ashton Capichiano (NF) pinned Shayne Donaldson 3:53; **113:** Stevie Brooks (NM) pinned Hunter Chin 3:29; **120:** Liam Goudie (NF) dec. Peter Coniglio 5-1; **126:** Brandon Leonard (NM) pinned Zachary Kalmanson 3:49; **132:** Mel Ortiz (NM) pinned Jake Costanzo 0:41; **138:** Tyler Schultz (NM) pinned James Byers 0:55; **145:** C.J. Schultz (NM) pinned Colman Doucette 0:18; **152:** Avery Shay (NF) pinned Alex Richardson 1:40; **160:** Cam Berger (NM) pinned Brian Sacco 2:48; **170:** Kyle Fabich (NM) pinned Aaron Mullally 0:41; **182:** Billy Magrino (NF) pinned Lorenzo Pusateri 1:13; **195:** Mike Haggerty (NM) pinned Tyler King 4:44; **220:** David Angulo (NM) pinned Shane Mallory 0:28; **285:** Brennan Hart (NF) won by forfeit.
Records: New Milford 12-1; New Fairfield 12-9.