

## Danbury cruises to Class LL wrestling crown

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Danbury's Ryan Jack, top, works to turn over Westhill's Chase Parrot during Class LL Boys Championship Wrestling Tournament action in Trumbull, Conn. on Saturday Feb. 18, 2017.

TRUMBULL — Another year, more Danbury dominance.

Danbury added to its rich history on the mats by steamrolling its way to another state title Saturday night. With finalists in seven of the 14 weight classes, the Hatters secured the Class LL title before the championship bouts actually began.

"It's not easy to do this," Danbury coach Ricky Shook said. "We've lucked out a couple years in a row where everything's falling together. Hopefully we can continue to do it next week."

The Hatters scored 272.5 points to win their second straight LL title and 19th overall. Xavier finished a distant second with 191 points, and Newtown took third with 181 points. Southington (179.5) and Trumbull (169.5) rounded out the top five finishers.

"It's pretty awesome to just be part of a team that can do something like that," said Danbury's Andrew Marquis, the champion at 220 pounds. "It's just cool."

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Fresh off an FCIAC title at 120, Danbury's Jakob Camacho bolstered his gaudy resume by pinning Shelton's Chandler Duhaime in 1:51 to win the same weight class. Camacho, ranked eighth in the country in his weight class, improved to 30-1 on the year.

"Going into the match (my intent) was just have fun, let loose, just show what I can do," Camacho said. "I like to go out there and put it all on the line, have some fun, take some risks and just do what I can do — just wrestle."

Four Hatters won titles in all: Ryan Jack at 106, Michael Gaboardi at 285, Marquis and Camacho.

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"There's pressure, but we usually live up to the pressure," said Marquis, who defeated Newtown's Tom Long, 4-3. "That makes us wrestle better. We've been pressured since we were little to be the best program in the state. We usually follow through with that."

Trumbull placed three wrestlers in the finals, including Matthew Ryan, who avenged his quadruple-overtime loss in FCIACs to Danbury's Ben LeBlanc with a 3-1 sudden victory at 113. Ryan's teammate, Tristan Haviland also went overtime — three, in fact — to edge Danbury's Kyle Fields, 2-1.

"I knew he was going to try to go into that ultimate ride out like last week," Ryan said. "He doesn't have many shots, so he was going to try to hold me down. I knew if I got that takedown that was my best shot at winning."

Newtown, the LL champion in 2014 and 2015, won two weight classes, including 145 behind Edward Lovely (10-6 decision over Trumbull's Michael Mirmina). The other win came at 170 from Joe Accousti, who kept his unbeaten record (34-0) intact with a 16-0 technical fall win over Fairfield Prep's Evan Titus.

"I feel confident. I feel happy. I feel good because I like being the only unbeaten," Accousti said. "I like to win, and that gives me extra incentive."

Warde, which finished sixth with 166 points, got titles from Timmy Kane at 138 (1-0 over Danbury's AJ Kovacs) and Joseph Gjinaj (14-6 major decision over Francisco Jiminian from East Hartford) at 182. Ray Weiner defeated the Mustangs' Matt Cuoco 7-3 at 195 for seventh-place Shelton (120.5).

Danbury, which won its 30th FCIAC title in 31 years last week, is aiming to take back the State Open crown next weekend at Floyd Little Athletic Center in New Haven. The Hatters finished second at the Open the previous two seasons.

*[dbonjour@ctpost.com](mailto:dbonjour@ctpost.com); @DougBonjour*

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