

## Danbury wins first New England wrestling title since 1990

By Richard Gregory Updated 11:43 pm, Saturday, March 4, 2017



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### IMAGE 1 OF 18

Danbury's Jakob Camacho, top, wrestles Andy Richard of Lincoln-Sudbury in the 120-pound championship match at the New England wrestling championships in Providence March 4, 2017.

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PROVIDENCE — It was an historic night for a program which already had a rich history, a championship finish to what coach Ricky Shook described as “the best year ever” for the Danbury High School wrestling program.

On the same night Shook was inducted into the New England Wrestling Hall of Fame — and on the same night former Hatter star Kevin Jack won his second Atlantic Coast Conference championship for North Carolina State — the mighty Hatters won their first New England team championship since 1990, scoring 114 points to beat second-place Newtown by 47 points. Traditional New England contenders Mount Anthony Union (Vt.), Timberlane (N.H.) and Bishop Hendricken (R.I.) placed third, fourth and fifth.

Jakob Camacho won the 120-pound title for Danbury, while Ryan Jack placed second at 106, A.J. Kovacs took third at 138, Michael Gaboardi placed fourth at 285 and Gino Baratta took sixth at 160.

"It really puts all of our hard work into perspective," said Camacho, who was named the Most Outstanding Wrestler of the tournament. "Day in, day out, we're all busting our butts in the practice room. We got it all done this year, and we're going to keep working and keep getting better."

Shook, a 1983 Danbury High graduate, was a young, 20-something assistant coach on Mike Morris' staff when the Hatters won the New England title in 1990. Jeff Vitti and DeMaine Dillard both won individual titles to lead the Hatters to victory. It almost seems crazy to think that, for all Danbury's dominance over the years, it took 27 years to win it again. In fact, no Connecticut team had won the New England title since Windham did it in 1992.

That is, until Saturday.

"If you had told me at the beginning of the year that this team would do this, I would have said you're crazy. You're out of your mind," said Shook, whose 2014 team finished a close second at New Englands, just 13 points behind Mount Anthony. "We weren't really a great dual-meet team, but we were a pretty good tournament team. It was hard to keep everything together, as usual, but we did."

The Hatters came in off a record-breaking victory at the State Open last weekend in New Haven and brought eight wrestlers to Providence this weekend. That set the stage, and the Hatters came up big under the spotlight.

"These guys are pretty close. They don't all hang out together in school, but if you watched them today, they are a pretty close team, and they knew what their goal was," Shook said. "They understand what we do and why we do it."

As has been the case repeatedly in recent years, the southwestern corner of Connecticut fared quite well at the New Englands.

Foran crowned a pair of champions in Ryan Luth (145) and Michael Ross (152), while Newtown's Joe Accousti won the title at 170. Runner-up honors went to Tyler Sung of New Canaan (126), Timmy Kane of Warde (138) and Edward Lovely of Newtown (145). Mel Ortiz of New Milford (126) and Avery Shay of New Fairfield (145) both placed third, while Tristan Haviland of Trumbull (126), Michael Mirmina of Trumbull (145) and Thomas Long of Newtown (220) all placed fourth and Mathew Pangle of Pomperaug (152) and Nicholas Cote of Bethel (220) placed fifth.

But the night belonged to the Hatters.

Jack, a freshman, reached the finals with a pin and two decisions. In the title match, he never came back from a 2-0 first-period deficit and lost a 3-1 decision. Camacho, a junior who placed second at 113 last year, reached the finals in dominant fashion with two wins by technical fall and one by major decision. The eighth-ranked high school wrestler in the country at 120 pounds, according to Flowrestling.org, Camacho took the lead early in his championship match and worked that into a pin in the third period.

"It's definitely a great feeling," Camacho said. "It's nice to come out here and have my teammates with me. I just wanted to wrestle like I knew I could and put points up on the board like I love to do."

Bad news for the rest of New England: both Danbury finalists will be back again next year.

"We've got five kids coming back next year who competed here," Shook said, "so hopefully next year we can come back and make another run."

Sung, a freshman, reached the finals with a first-period pin and two decisions by a combined three points. His run ended with a pin in the finals, but that certainly doesn't take away from all he was able to accomplish in his rookie season.

"Getting to the finals was a really great accomplishment, going through tough guys who gave me a challenge," Sung said. "If anything, just getting to the finals and being the only one representing New Canaan is something to be proud of."

Kane, a senior and the reigning New England champ at 132, reached the finals with a win by technical fall, followed by two wins by decision. In the title match, he came on

strong but couldn't erase a 5-0 deficit, and lost by decision.

The four semifinalists at 145 pounds were the top four finishers at last week's State Open, where Luth edged Shay by a point to win the title and Lovely defeated Mirmina to take third. This time around, Lovely beat Shay and Luth beat Mirmina in the semifinals to set up the finals showdown between Luth and Lovely.

Luth, a junior who was second at 132 last year, won three decisions to advance to the finals. Lovely, a senior, scored a first-period pin in his first match, then won a decision and a major decision to reach the finals. In the title match, Luth was ahead 5-2 in the final seconds when Lovely scored a takedown to make it 5-4. Lovely let Luth escape with the hopes of taking him down again, but time ran out and Luth claimed a 6-4 victory.

In the next finals match, Luth's teammate and training partner Ross secured a title of his own with a win by decision. Ross, a senior, reached the finals with two first-period pins and a win by decision. It was a special moment for the Foran program as the two teammates won titles back-to-back.

"This is surreal," Ross said. "Me and Ryan, we've been training together since we were little boys. He's my best friend, and I couldn't ask for a better training partner in the room with me."

Accousti, a senior who placed third at 170 last year, advanced to the finals with a win by major decision, a win by decision, and a win by default in the semifinals. He won his championship match by decision.

"It took a long time to scratch my way to the top of that podium," Accousti said.

Shay and Ortiz each won perhaps the longest battle of all, coming all the way back to place third after being knocked into the consolation brackets.

"The first day, I didn't win a match I needed to," Ortiz said. "I would have been in the finals, but there are no would-haves or could-haves. I just had to wrestle back and take third."

Back in Danbury, meanwhile, another championship will soon be immortalized on the wrestling-room wall.

"I can't wait to get the banner," Shook said.

After all, it's already been a long enough wait.

#### NEW ENGLAND WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

##### March 3-4, Providence Career and Technical Center

**Team scores:** 1. Danbury 114; 2. Newtown 67; 3. Mt. Anthony 62.5; 4. Timberlane 57; 5. Bishop Hendricken 56; 6. Foran 52; 7. Lincoln-Sudbury 51; 8. Ellis Tech 50; 9. Minnechaug 48; 10. Cumberland 44; 19. Trumbull 31; 21 (tie) New Milford 28; 30 (tie) New Canaan 24; 37. Warde 21.5; 40. (tie) Bethel 20; 44. (tie) New Fairfield 18; 60. Pomperaug 14.5; 76. Ridgefield 7.5; 133. (tie) Greenwich 2; 146. (tie) Masuk 0.

**106:** Championship: Cody Craig (Skowhegan) dec. Ryan Jack (Danbury), 3-1. 3rd: Andrew Fallon (LaSalle) dec. Christopher Trelli (Bristol Central), 7-2. 5th: Jarod Kosman (Fitch) major dec. Hunter Adrian (Melrose), 10-0.

**113:** Championship: Jake Ferri (Shawsheen) dec. Ryan Garlitz (St. John's Prep), 6-0. 3rd: Sean Johnson (Ellis Tech) dec. Jack Darling (Masconomet), 2-0 (TB2). 5th: Nick Arborio (Berlin) tech. fall Noah Call (Mt. Anthony), 16-0, 3:26.

**120:** Championship: Jakob Camacho (Danbury) pinned Andy Richard (Lincoln-Sudbury), 5:08. 3rd: Christopher Derosa (Billerica) dec. Cole Wyman (Brockton), 3-2 (TB2). 5th: Joseph Valentino (North Andover) dec. Keenan Taylor (Mt. Anthony), 8-5.

**126:** Championship: Connor McGonagle (Timberlane) pinned Tyler Sung (New Canaan), 3:46. 3rd: Mel Ortiz (New Milford) dec. Tristan Haviland (Trumbull), 3-1. 5th: Ramazan Attasauov (Wayland) major dec. Sean Caltagirone (Coventry), 9-0.

**132:** Championship: Baltazar Gonzalez (Ellis Tech) pinned Josh Lee (Burlington), 3:43. 3rd: Seth Brown (Coventry) pinned Samson Sirois (Skowhegan), 2:55. 5th: Joel Morth (Montville) dec. A.J. Pagliarulo (Bedford), 3-1 (SV).

**138:** Championship: Brady Beaulieu (Marshwood) dec. Timmy Kane (Warde), 5-2. 3rd: A.J. Kovacs (Danbury) major dec. Devin Rivet (Bishop Hendricken), 11-2. 5th: Brian Lindsay (Kingswood) dec. Evan Goodall (Chelmsford), 2-1.

**145:** Championship: Ryan Luth (Foran) dec. Edward Lovely (Newtown), 6-4. 3rd: Avery Shay (New Fairfield) dec. Michael Mirmina (Trumbull), 9-3. 5th: Tristen Cabinta (Salem) dec. Austin Shorey (Noble), 6-4.

**152:** Championship: Michael Ross (Foran) dec. Ryan Monteiro (Minnechaug), 5-0. 3rd: Lucas Cordio (Nashoba Regional) dec. Peyton Cole (Ellsworth), 7-4. 5th: Mathew Pangle (Pomperaug) dec. Tyler Burgess (Mt. Anthony), 3-1.

**160:** Championship: Paul Calo (Southington) dec. Ryan Devivo (Xavier), 5-1. 3rd: Michael Barrett (Bristol Eastern) dec. Dawson Stevens (Oxford Hills), 7-1. 5th: Ahmad Sharif (Putnam) dec. Gino Baratta (Danbury), 7-3.

**170:** Championship: Joe Accousti (Newtown) dec. Robert Heatherman (Mt. Ararat/Brunswick), 5-3. 3rd: Trent Goodman (Ellsworth) dec. Dylan Tremblay (Timberlane), 5-2. 5th: John Hayes (Cumberland) by forfeit over Ibragim Arsakhanov (Manchester Central).

**182:** Championship: George Tarwo (Concord) dec. Ryan Fredette (Winslow), 8-6. 3rd: Brandon Cousino (Vergennes) pinned Tom Wrzesien (Chariho), 2:00. 5th: Fransisco Jiminian (East Hartford) by forfeit over Darius Franklin (Methuen).

**195:** Championship: Andrew Marshall (Lincoln-Sudbury) dec. Michael Tanguay (Windham), 2-1 (TB2); 3rd: Jackson Rheault (Somers) dec. Antonio Difronzo (Melrose), 9-3. 5th: David Verizzi (Lyman/Windham) dec. Henri Behaeghel (Billerica), 4-0.

**220:** Championship: Nick Johnson (Milton) pinned Benton Whitley (Minnechaug), 1:49. 3rd: Dan Greaney (Bedford-Minuteman) dec. Thomas Long (Newtown), 6-1. 5th: Nicholas Cote (Bethel) by forfeit over Sebastain Rocher (Mt. Anthony).

**285:** Championship: Nicholas Martino (Bishop Hendricken) dec. Jasper Stone (Simsbury), 1-0. 3rd: Michael Burchell (Daniel Hand) pinned Michael Gaboardi (Danbury), 1:30. 5th: Nicholas Martone (Platt) dec. Aaron Wilcox (Cumberland), 2-0.

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