

Danbury's Camacho wins national wrestling title

By Ryan Lacey Updated 1:24 pm, Friday, November 3, 2017



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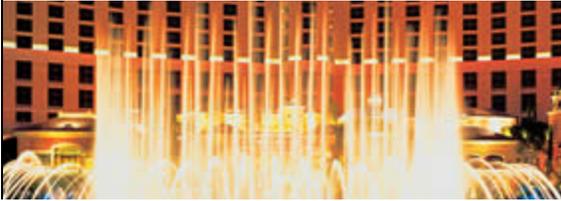
Danbury native Jakob Camacho, left, with coach Khaled Dassan after claiming the Super 32 National Championship in the 126-pound weight division last weekend.

Already an FCIAC, Class LL, State Open and New England champion, there is little left for Danbury senior Jakob Camacho to prove as one of the region's dominant high school wrestlers.

But Camacho went one better last weekend and added an impressive championship to the collection. What's even more, he wasn't the lone local to bring home a national title.

In a tournament held in Greensboro, N.C., Camacho was crowned Super 32 National Champion at 126 pounds. Camacho beat Pennsylvania's Beau Bartlett by a 6-4 decision to earn the title belt. New Milford's Joanne Ortiz also brought home a title belt in the female 108-pound division by topping Lauren Stone by a 12-7 decision.

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"It means the world to me," Camacho said by phone Tuesday. "I put in countless hours, and days; most of my life to winning. It meant a whole lot to me to accomplish this dream."

The Super 32 is one of four premier national tournaments that draw many of the top wrestlers from around the country. Camacho took second at FloNationals in March, but finally earned his first national championship by knocking off the No. 9-ranked Bartlett in a tight matchup.

"I kept my hands and feet moving; a lot of my scores come off counter attacks," Camacho said. "I just stayed active throughout. I was thinking the match isn't over, keep wrestling and make sure I'm moving. The last 10-15 seconds I was just able to protect."

It was another notch for the incredibly successful program that the Hatters have built from the youth level. Camacho became the first high school wrestler from Connecticut to win a national championship since 2003, and is the first public school student to ever accomplish the feat.

"Jakob is the most dedicated wrestler I have ever coached," said Hatters coach Ricky Shook. "His work ethic and love for the sport; he puts in the time. He is a little stubborn like the best ones."

Camacho — who will wrestle at North Carolina State after one more year with the Hatters — had a familiar face in his corner during the event. Current Wolfpack and former Danbury standout Kevin Jack was at the event helping support his brother and

Camacho, along with the coaching staff at Somers, N.Y.-based Iowa Style Wrestling, the club team that many Danbury wrestlers compete for.

A little more than an hour away from where Camacho will be plying his trade at N.C. State, the atmosphere at the Greensboro Coliseum Special Events Center was palpable for the finals. Inside the same complex that a different type of wrestling rocked the walls at the Greensboro Coliseum, thousands of fans watched Camacho take the gold.

"All eyes are on the final," Camacho said. "There are wrestlers and parents on all four sides of the mat, and of course the stands are full. I just tried to make myself at home out there."

Ortiz also had her hand raised after a grueling run to the finals. After a bye to the final eight, Ortiz won a 9-6 decision in the semifinals. Ortiz was named All-American over the summer when she took fourth at a national tournament, and took top spot in the event over the weekend.

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