

Hatter wrestlers win Ryan Sabbagh Holiday Tournament

By Richard Gregory Updated 10:11 pm, Saturday, December 30, 2017



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Danbury's Gino Baratta and Wilton's Zach Zeyer wrestle for the 170-pound championship in the Ryan Sabbagh Holiday Tournament on Saturday in Danbury. Baratta took a 6-1 decision.

DANBURY — The Ryan Sabbagh Holiday Wrestling Tournament has been a tradition at Danbury High School for nearly three decades. So, too, has been the Hatters' dominance in their home tournament.

That tradition continued on Saturday, as Danbury won its holiday tournament for the third straight year and the 25th time in 27 years. The Hatters scored 186.5 points, while Bristol Eastern finished second with 145, New Milford took third with 136, Putnam (Mass.) finished fourth with 75, and Wilton came in fifth with 73.

"To do well in this tournament is important because it's the beginning of the season and it shows us where we're at and what we need to work on," Danbury junior Ben LeBlanc said. "As a whole, I think our varsity lineup did pretty well."

The Hatters claimed six individual champions out of 15 weight classes: Kevin Pina at 99 pounds, Ben Leblanc at 113, Ryan Jack at 120, Kyle Fields at 132, A.J. Kovacs at 152 and Gino Baratta at 170. Tyler Johnson placed second at 106 for the Hatters, and Jordan Agosto took fourth at 285.

"It's always fun coming out here and dominating as a team and as an individual," Jack said.

Being so early in the season, this tournament has been an annual springboard to success for the Hatters, the reigning FCIAC, Class LL, State Open and New England champions.

"Winning here, it's a team effort," Kovacs said. "It's really nice to have a big group and all be doing well. We have a lot of younger guys who are coming in, and this is a great tournament for them to see how competitive everything really is."

Tyler Schultz won the 145-pound championship and Kyle Fabich claimed the 182-pound title for New Milford, while Brandon Leonard (126), Colin Lindner (132) and Mel Ortiz (138) all placed second, and Julian Reza (195) took third.

Schultz won a tough battle with Stamford's Garey Mendez in the final. Schultz held a one-point lead in the third period and scored a two-point takedown with 47 seconds remaining to seal a 7-4 victory.

"He was good," Schultz said of Mendez. "It was a hard-fought victory."

Travis Longo captured the 106-pound title for Wilton, while Zach Zeyer (170) placed second, Nick Rende (126) took third and Finn McGovern (120) finished fourth.

"This year should be really exciting," Longo said. "Our team is doing great, and I couldn't be happier. All our freshmen are coming out and trying very hard. Even the kids who are brand-new wrestlers, they're trying their hardest, and that's all you can ask. We're looking forward to a lot of success as a team."

Justin Mastroianni of New Canaan won the championship at 126, while Tyler Sung (138) placed third and Nate Sibbett (145) and Nick Kortman (220) both took fourth.

It was a dominant performance by Mastroianni, whose road to the title included a first-minute pin and a major decision.

"I just want to win everything," Mastroianni said with a smile. "My mentality is to win, win, win."

Colin Realbuto of Iona Prep (N.Y.) won the 138-pound title and was named the tournament's Most Outstanding Wrestler. His brother Brian was a three-time All-American at Cornell, and his brother Dylan is currently wrestling for the Big Red.

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RYAN SABBAGH HOLIDAY TOURNAMENT

Dec. 30, Danbury High School

Team scores: 1. Danbury 186.5; 2. Bristol Eastern 145; 3. New Milford 136; 4. Putnam (Mass.) 75; 5. Wilton 73; 6. Morgan 71; 7. New Canaan 61.5; 8. Hope (R.I.) 61.5; 9. East Haven 51; 10. Bethel 48; 11. Newtown 43; 12. Norwalk 42; 13. Stamford 34; 14. Iona Prep (N.Y.) 31.5; 15. Greenwich 29; 16. Danbury B 19; 17. Bacon Academy 18; 18. Brookfield 6; 19. Darien 2; 20. Abbott Tech 0.

99: Championship: Kevin Pina (Danbury) dec. Jake Defonce (Abbott Tech) 6-0; Consolation: Mason Lishness (Bristol Eastern) pinned Kyle Carse (Morgan) 0:34.

106: Championship: Travis Longo (Wilton) tech. fall Tyler Johnson (Danbury) 16-0; Consolation: Bryce Beebe (Bristol Eastern) pinned Liam Knight (Danbury B) 1:05.

113: Championship: Ben Leblanc (Danbury) major dec. Jordon Champagne (Bristol Eastern) 8-0; Consolation: Louis Bradley (Morgan) by default over Victor Garcia (East Haven).

120: Championship: Ryan Jack (Danbury) pinned Sam White (Norwalk) 1:00; Consolation: Tom Nicholas (Bristol Eastern) dec. Finn McGovern (Wilton) 9-2.

126: Championship: Justin Mastroianni (New Canaan) major dec. Brandon Leonard (New Milford) 14-2; Consolation: Nick Rende (Wilton) dec. Aaron Occhipinti (Newtown) 7-0.

132: Championship: Kyle Fields (Danbury) pinned Colin Lindner (New Milford) 3:38; Consolation: Darnell Dunston (Hope) major dec. Trevor Follo (Morgan) 13-3.

138: Championship: Colin Realbuto (Iona Prep) dec. Mel Ortiz (New Milford) 3-2, OT; Consolation: Tyler Sung (New Canaan) dec. Damien Figueroa (Putnam) 4-0.

145: Championship: Tyler Schultz (New Milford) dec. Garey Mendez (Stamford) 7-4; Consolation: Diego Fernandez (Bristol Eastern) dec. Nate Sibbett (New Canaan) 8-5.

152: Championship: A.J. Kovacs (Danbury) major dec. Justin Marshall (Bristol Eastern) 12-3; Consolation: Nick Marchak (Bethel) pinned Tim Smith (Morgan) 1:45.

160: Championship: Ahmad Sharif (Putnam) dec. Michael Barrett (Bristol Eastern) 7-5; Consolation: Max Khoshabo (Bethel) pinned Andrew Fortuna (Morgan) 2:53.

170: Championship: Gino Baratta (Danbury) dec. Zach Zeyer (Wilton) 6-1; Consolation: Jake Heerman (Stamford) pinned Jakari Walker (Norwalk) 3:49.

182: Championship: Kyle Fabich (New Milford) major dec. Josh Rao (East Haven) 15-4; Consolation: Andrew Nanai (Greenwich) pinned Zachary Tupper (Bacon Academy) 0:33.

195: Championship: Trinidad Gonzalez (Bristol Eastern) dec. Ralph White (Hope) 7-4; Consolation: Julian Reza (New Milford) pinned Sandro Martinez (Norwalk) 5:15.

220: Championship: Davyn Peterson (Putnam) dec. Nick Cote (Bethel) 6-5; Consolation: Hidekal Mangual (Bristol Eastern) pinned Nick Kortman (New Canaan) 2:22.

285: Championship: Austin Daley (Morgan) dec. Joe Zeller (Newtown) 3-1; Consolation: Edison Guardas (Hope) pinned Jordan Agosto (Danbury) 4:22.

Most Outstanding Wrestler: Colin Realbuto, Iona Prep, 138 pounds.