

Mount Anthony tops Danbury in annual clash of wrestling powers

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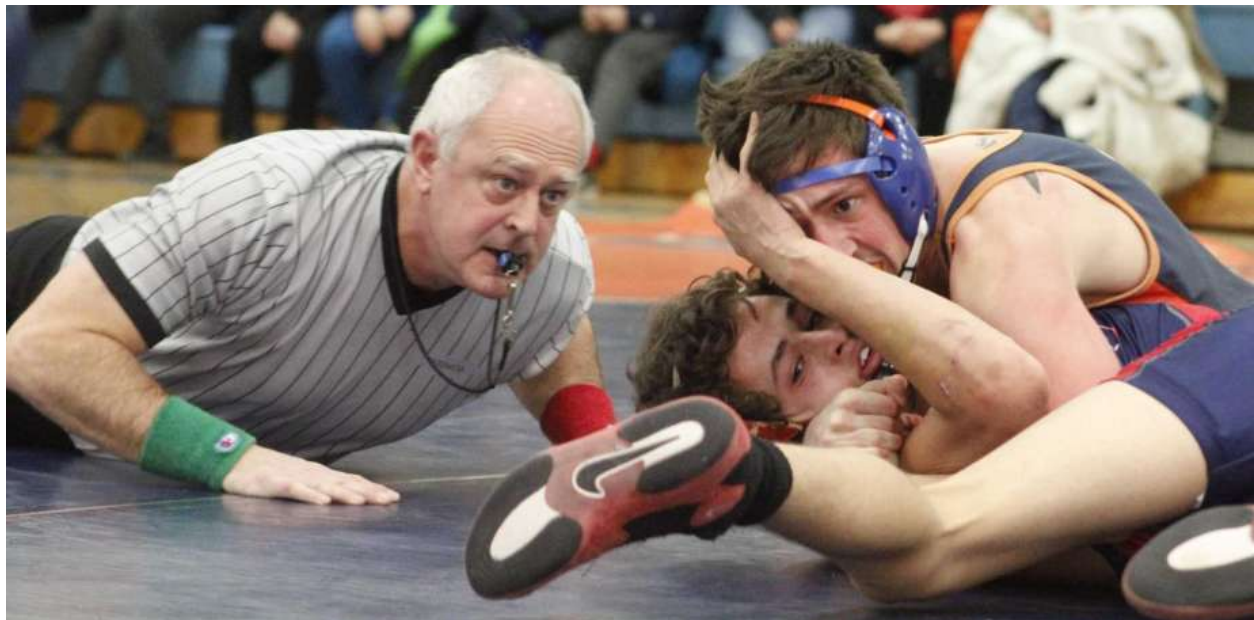


IMAGE 1 OF 12

Danbury's Nic Savo, top, has the upper hand in the 120-pound match against Mount Anthony's Gaige Crandall, bottom, seconds before the referee signaled Savo had won by pin during the wrestling match at Danbury ... [more](#)

DANBURY — Win or lose, the Danbury High School wrestling team's annual dual-meet showdown with fellow powerhouse Mount Anthony provides an important mid-season gauge, not to mention a taste of what to expect at the New England championships in March.

The two teams renewed their rivalry Monday night in front of several hundred fans at Danbury High in what was a clash of the last two New England team champions. Although the visitors from Bennington, Vermont, scored a 39-27 victory, Danbury coach Ricky Shook felt his previously unbeaten Hatters — a unanimous No. 1 pick in

last week's state poll – learned more about themselves in one tough loss than they had in all their previous victories.

"I have no problem losing to them because it shows us where we're at dual-meet-wise," Shook said. "This helps me in the long run."

Ben Leblanc and Nic Savo scored back-to-back pins for the Hatters to start the match at 113 and 120 pounds. Ryan Jack then won by decision at 126 to put Danbury ahead 15-0. The Patriots then won the eight of the next 11 matches to secure the win, their second straight over the Hatters. A.J. Kovacs (152), Gino Baratta (170) and Tyler Johnson (106) also scored victories for Danbury, which had lost to Mount Anthony in a dual meet last year before winning its first New England team title since 1990.

"This match is always good for us, win or lose. Usually, it's better for us if we lose," Shook said with a grin. "We lost this match last year and we won New Englands."

Noah Call (132), Gage McLaughlin (138), Keegan Coon (145), Adam Osha (160), Chris Mayer (182), Sam Wilkins (195), Colin Crowley (220) and Calvin Hayford (285) all notched victories for the Patriots, the 2016 New England team champions and the 29-time defending Vermont state champs.

"It's a great win for us as a team," Mayer said. "We worked hard for it."

In the 18 years since the two teams began wrestling each other in a dual meet, Mount Anthony has won 13 times and Danbury five.

TURNING POINT

Mount Anthony took the lead for good with Mayer's win by technical fall in the 182-pound match. The win was the 100th of Mayer's career, although the significance of his personal milestone took a back seat to the importance of the points he scored for the team.

"I just wanted to get the win," Mayer said. "It's no different, the 100th win or the first, just go for it."

Despite Danbury's early lead, Mayer and the Patriots were confident they could come back.

"We knew we could do it," Mayer said. "That's what it came down to. We knew we had it."

ON THE MEND

Danbury was without the services of senior All-American Jakob Camacho, who is still recovering from a leg injury. Shook said Camacho could be out a few more weeks.

"We'll be very cautious with it," Shook said.

Of course, a healthy Camacho in the lineup might have provided Danbury a 12-point swing against Mount Anthony, which would have tied the score, but Shook wanted no part of that argument.

"No excuses," Shook said. "They're good."

MOUNT ANTHONY 39, DANBURY 27

(at Danbury) 113: Ben Leblanc (D) pinned Julian Granger 1:09; **120:** Nic Savo (D) pinned Gaige Crandall 3:11; **126:** Ryan Jack (D) dec. Keenan Taylor 8-6; **132:** Noah Call (MA) dec. Kyle Fields 9-4; **138:** Gage McLaughlin (MA) pinned Joe Silva 0:31; **145:** Keegan Coon (MA) major dec. Chris Palacio 13-2; **152:** A.J. Kovacs (D) dec. Tyler Burgess 6-3; **160:** Adam Osha (MA) pinned David Pina 1:56; **170:** Gino Baratta (D) dec. Steven Brillion 8-4; **182:** Chris Mayer (MA) tech. fall Jesse Patton 19-3; **195:** Sam Wilkins (MA) dec. Montez Osbey 5-0; **220:** Colin Crowley (MA) pinned D.J. Donovan 0:56; **285:** Calvin Hayford (MA) pinned Jordan Agosto 1:36; **106:** Tyler Johnson (D) pinned Brodie Krawczyk 0:17.

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