

New England wrestling: Runner-up Pastrana all about wrestling now

By Dave Dyer ddyer@eagletribune.com Mar 3, 2018 Updated Mar 3, 2018



PROVIDENCE — Malib Pastrana couldn't quite come away with a New England title Saturday, but he came away with renewed confidence and plenty of respect.

The Greater Lawrence senior advanced to the 195-pound finals with two impressive matches earlier in the day before falling to Mount Anthony (Vermont) sophomore phenom Sam Wilkins, 7-2, in the finals. Pastrana finished the regular season with a 53-3 record.

Pastrana had a pin in the quarterfinals and a 12-3 major decision in the semifinals.

Against Wilkins, Pastrana gave up a takedown in the first period, an escape in the second period and could never get any momentum going.

"This (finish) isn't what I wanted but it's what I got," said Pastrana. "He was lanky and tough to take down."

But Pastrana didn't think Wilkins was the best wrestler he's faced this year.

"(Travis) Manick (of Methuen) was better — he's really tough to wrestle with his style," he said.

Manick, who defeated Wilkins at the Methuen Tournament, met him again Saturday in the semifinals but this time he dropped a tough 6-3 decision. The Methuen star then lost his next two matches to finish sixth, ending his regular season with a 43-3 record.

Pastrana's performance at New England may have him changing his view on his future. Previously he said his future might be in either wrestling or football, Saturday he declared that wrestling was his top priority.

"I had three college coaches talk to me here," he said. "I want to wrestle (in college)."

Pastrana may draw even more interest in two weeks because he plans on competing at the Senior Nationals in Virginia Beach.

Cabinta tough in semis

Nashoba's Paul Calo barely survived Salem's Tristen Cabinta, 3-2, in the 160-pound semifinals, but he romped to a 9-0 major decision in the finals.

Ryan Fredette of Winslow, Maine, was named Outstanding Wrestler after recording a pin in the 182-pound finals. ...

Both Masconomet's Jack Darling and Danbury, Conn.'s Ryan Jack needed overtime to win their 120-pound semifinal matches and they then had a war in the finals. Jack got a takedown in the final five seconds for a 3-1 win.