

Shamrocks repeat as Observerland wrestling champions

BY BRAD EMONS
STAFF WRITER

Redford-Detroit Catholic Central's wrestling team is like a good set of radial tires. And it appears coach Mike Rodriguez is going to get a lot of mileage out of this year's squad.

The Shamrocks, who appear built to last, repeated Saturday as Observerland Invitational champions in the 16-school meet held at Livonia Churchill High School.

CC, scoring a team-high 226.5 points, placed in 11 of 14 weight classes and won five of six individual finals. The Shamrocks captured their sixth title since the tournament began in 1992.

Last year's runner-up, Westland John Glenn, finished a strong second with 204. Rounding out the top five was Livonia Stevenson (168), Churchill (142) and Plymouth Salem (138). The tournament's smallest school, Lutheran High Westland, earned an impressive sixth with 122.5. See complete statistical summary.

The Shamrocks, ranked fourth in Division I, rolled in with a 13-3 dual meet record and a runner-up finish Jan. 11 to No. 1 Davison in its own CC Invitational.

"Our endurance is starting to show, they're coming," Rodriguez said. "But it's not as easy to win this tournament because of the talent in this area. It's a battle and it's more competitive than ever. Even a school like Lutheran Westland is now competitive. It's an awesome tourney."

"You're going to see a lot of these kids at the Palace (for the individual state finals)."

CC carried a lead of 10.5 points over Glenn entering the finals. Both schools had six in the finals with the Shamrocks winning five and Glenn three.

Freshman Sean Dong set the tone for CC with a 9-1 decision over Salem's Ryan Stump in the first match at 103 pounds.

By the time the finals had ended, CC had won four more individual crowns including

wins by Matt Steintrager (112), Nate Rodriguez (140), Trevor Stewart (160) and Pat Clark (275).

"I'm very pleased with my 103-pound freshman," Rodriguez said. "He just flies. The others, I expected it because of their talent."

Nate Rodriguez, captured his third Observerland title in four years. He defeated Glenn's Enrique Garcia in the final, 11-7.

"This meet is important because how you do here is how you'll do at districts," said Nate, a senior co-captain along with heavyweight champion Clark.

Nate may have been 4-for-4 at Observerland had it not been for a broken hand his sophomore year.

"They say a father loves his son, but a grandfather just adores his grandchildren," Mike said. "It's a blessing to coach him."

Nate's dad is also an assistant coach. He's in a long line of Rodriguez's to grace the mats for CC.

"It's an experience," he said. "There's no pressure, but you know the family is always around."

Glenn rebounded from Thursday's 36-7 Western Lakes crossover defeat to Walled Lake Western by winning three individual titles — Tim Mulroy (130), Reece Cox (135) and Jake Fairchild (189).

The much-travelled Mulroy, who began his career at CC before transferring last year to Flat Rock, became eligible second semester for Glenn.

He won a hotly contested match against Wayne Memorial's Tim Hamner, 9-7, pulling off a reversal with just two seconds left after Hamner had taken a 7-0 lead with nine seconds remaining. Hamner, however, was penalized a point for unsportsmanlike conduct after celebrating a reversal of his own just seven seconds earlier, setting the stage for Mulroy's dramatic win.

The sophomore Cox, meanwhile, edged Salem's Mike Gothe, a state placer at 125 a

year ago, 6-5, for the 130 crown. And Fairchild took a 6-4 decision at 189 when he handed Lutheran Westland's Neal Kemp his first loss of the season.

"We're getting good at bouncing back," said Glenn coach Bill Polk said. "The reason we're doing so well is that we've toughened up the schedule. It takes some bumps and bruises. Winning three of six in the finals is a step up for us. Even the ones who lost in the finals wrestled tough."

"We had two kids beat undefeated kids. Fairchild has nine losses, but he's losing to good kids. He's moving in the right direction."

"Overall I thought our kids reacted and wrestled well."

Stevenson put four in the finals and came away with titles at 125 (Charlie Rabaut) and 145 (Jason Fischer).

Rabaut, 38-0, found himself in a 5-0 hole after nearly getting pinned by Redford Union upstart John Moore, who earlier won No. 2 seed Craig LeBaron of Redford Thurston in the semifinals, 18-17.

Rabaut then rallied to pin Moore in 2:51.

"Charlie got caught early, but he fought like a champ."

Stevenson coach Bob Moreau said. "The sign of a champion is come back and get a pin."

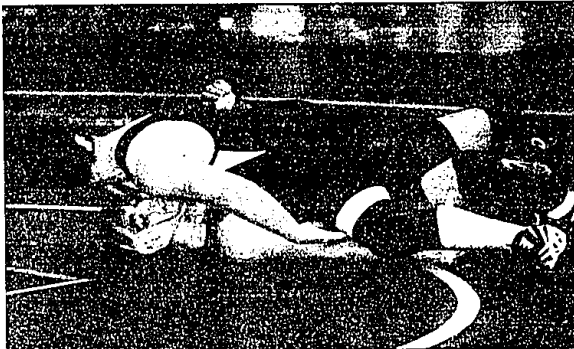
RU coach Jim Gourlay said the finals at 119 could easily have gone in a different direction.

"I'm glad Charlie on his back within the first 10 seconds of the match, but the ref was out of position to see it," Gourlay said. "It was the first time Rabaut had been on his back all year. It's just one of those breaks that goes against you, I guess."

Fischer, meanwhile, upped his record to 35-3 after holding off Glenn's Daron Cruickshank, 10-6. "I'm happy with our place, a lot of kids stepped up in the loser's bracket," Moreau said. "Every kid scored for us, which is nice."

"And Fischer winning here two times is nice."

Churchill, which trailed



Farmington High School's Courtland Bartlett (top) advanced to the finals at 177 pounds in the annual Observerland Invitational Saturday.

Salem by 12 points heading into the finals, surpassed the Rocks by going 3-for-3 in the finals.

Brian Clement, a senior, pinned Livonia Clarenceville's Nader Al-Mooshi in 2:42 to win his third Observerland title in row. Clement, a state placer in 2002, shared the lower weights MVP award with Glenn's Cox.

Two Churchill finalists from a year ago, Lev Mergian (152) and Alex Murray (215), each found themselves on the winner's podium on Saturday.

Mergian defeated CC's Chris Bartram, 12-6, while Murray pinned Salem's Jeremy Henderson in 1:50.

"Those three I felt would get to the finals and win," Churchill coach Marty Alouian said. "I thought we'd do a little better, not standings-wise, but personally with some individuals."

"I thought this year there were some very competitive weights."

"The upper weights MVP was Wayne's Steve Wallace, who won three of four matches by pin including an 18-3 technical fall over Farmington's



North Farmington's Kenrick Petersen (top) pinned Catholic Central's John Claren in a first-round match at 135 pounds Saturday.

Courtland Bartlett in the finals. But the day belonged to Catholic Central.

"CC is a solid team, up-and-down," Alouian said. "They have a good mix of younger and older talent. And with a pool of 60 to 70 kids to choose from, and their tradition, it says how good they're going to be year-in and year-out."

Rodriguez has guided CC to seven state crowns, the last coming in the inaugural team dual format in 1988.

He hopes this team will return to Battle Creek after losing in last year's regional tourney to Dearborn Fordson.

"We have the confidence we're going to be there," the veteran coach said. "We lost to (Temperance Bedford) in the triple dual and we lost to Clarkston, but it was early in the year we didn't have our full lineup. We've beaten some good teams like Roseville and Novi. I think we're much more so (balanced) than in the past. We have a couple of holes. It's going to be tough to get by us."

OBSERVERLAND WRESTLING

16TH ANNUAL OBSERVERLAND WRESTLING TOURNAMENT
Jan. 25 at Livonia Churchill

Year standings: 1. Redford-Detroit Catholic Central, 226.5 points; 2. Westland John Glenn, 204; 3. Livonia Stevenson, 168; 4. Livonia Churchill, 142; 5. Plymouth Salem, 138; 6. Lutheran High Westland, 122.5; 7. Wayne Memorial, 96.5; 8. Garden City, 96; 9. Redford Union, 73.5; 10. Livonia Clarenceville, 73.5; 11. Farmington, 65; 12. Canton, 47; 13. Livonia Franklin, 46; 14. Redford Thurston, 33; 15. Farmington Harrison, 30; 16. North Farmington, 29.

INDIVIDUAL RESULTS
103 pounds: Sean Dong (CC) won by major decision over Ryan Stump (FS).
130: 3rd place: Sam Naber (LW) pinned Jesse Garwood (L). 4-46; 5th: Dan Rabe (LW) vs. Robert Madley (CW), 2-27.
135: Matt Steintrager (CC) p. Nick Naber (LW), 5-45; 3rd: Jacob Davis (CC)

p. Jason Crothers (WM), 4-23; 5th: Justin Smith (LW) p. Josh Wischmeyer (RU), 3-46.

140: Charlie Rabaut (LS) p. John Moore (RU), 2-51; 3rd: Drew Corner (WJ) won by hold over Craig LeBaron (RT); 5th: Ray Stralos (EF) dec. Matt Kozawa (CC), 5-0.

145: Brian Clement (C) p. Nader Al-Mooshi (CVille), 2-42; 3rd: Brad Schnettler (LW) won by major dec. over Pale Bobbe (FS), 12-2; 5th: Brian Baumgartner (CC) dec. Darryl Rice (WJ), 3-2.

152: Tim Mulroy (WJ) dec. Tim Hamner (WM), 9-7; 3rd: Dan Bergina (Canton) won by major dec. over Jim Moore (RU), 11-50; Jon Schwarz (F) dec. Kris Felice (LW), 8-2.

155: Reece Cox (WJ) dec. Mike Gothe (FS), 6-5; 3rd: Matto Perez (CC) dec. John Gourlay (RU), 3-1; 5th: Matt Nolar (LW) dec. Jared McClain

(LS), 9-5.

160: Nate Rodriguez (CC) dec. Enrique Garcia (WJ), 11-7; 3rd: Dan Leith (LS) p. Rich Russell (CC), 2-29; 5th: Adam Heman (C) win dec. Pete Daniels (LW), 11-5.

165: Jason Fischer (LS) dec. Daron Cruickshank (FS), 10-6; 3rd: Adam Adams (C) dec. Dan Barclay (LW), 12-4; 5th: Tony Stott (EF) dec. Mike Fish (Farm), 7-3.

177: Lev Mergian (LW) dec. Brad Bartram (CC), 12-6; 3rd: Jeremy Spawls (CC) p. Chris McLane (LW), 1-43; 5th: Chris Wells (EF) won by major dec. over Kyle Kils (LS), 12-3.

189: Trevor Stewart (CC) won by major dec. over Daro Manetta (LS), 15-4; 3rd: Emilio Perez (CC) dec. Brandon Noble (WJ), 5-3; 5th: Manuel Schubert (CC) dec. Bryant Longton (WJ), 4-3.

189: Steve Wallace (WM) won by technical fall over Courtland Bartlett

(Farmington), 18-3 (15:54); 3rd: Dan Haller (LW) dec. Eric Schabers (WJ), 6-4; 5th: Scott Schwarlosek (CC) p. Ryan Solomon (FH), 4-35.

195: Jake Fairchild (WJ) dec. Neal Kemp (LW), 6-4; 3rd: Eric Vojtkovsky (RCC) won by major dec. over Nick Belsky (Farmington), 10-2; 5th: Jesse Barkin (LS) p. J.J. Samney (WM), 2-29.

215: Alex Murray (C) p. Jeremy Henderson (FS), 1-50; 3rd: Jacob Galindez (LW) p. Andrew Kaulding (FH), 3-42; 5th: Pete Rodriguez (CC) p. Pat Kennedy (CW), 118.

275: Pat Clark (RCC) p. Paul Barquetach (LS), 1-03; 3rd: Jeremy Walker (FP) p. Pat Drahmel (CC), 11-3; 5th: Jameson Higgins (LW) p. Nick Cooper (CC), 2-10.

SPORTS ROUNDUP

NORTHVILLE RUN

The Galyan's Northville Solstice Run will be held Saturday, June 21. The event is designed to promote healthy lifestyles and fitness while providing amenities and entertainment within the Northville community.

For more information, please call the Northville Parks and Recreation Department at (248) 449-9941 or race director Alan Whitehead at (248) 420-1376.

SPORT SHOW AT FORD FIELD

The 20th Annual Michigan Boat, Sport and Fishing Show will take place Jan. 29 to Feb. 2 at Ford Field in downtown Detroit.

More than 300 trailerable boats from 60 manufacturers will blanket the playing field.

The extra-wide concourse will house the largest exhibit of fishing tackle and boating accessories of any show in Michigan.

Kevin Van Dam, 2001 BassMaster Classic Champion and three-time B.A.S.S. Angler of the Year, will make a special appearance on Thursday, Jan. 29.

New features include a live river otter show, an MSU Museum exhibition of ancient hunting and fishing boats, The "Reel Deal Fishing Tackle Giveaway Gameshow" with \$5,000 in prizes and a special Shipwreck Museum display from Whitefish Point.

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