

Roper, Jacoby, Geurin take regional titles

By FLORENCE FINN
Sports Correspondent

Three Lake-Lehman wrestlers captured championships during the Class AA Northeast Regional tournament March 7 and 8 in Williamsport.

Of the 14 Back Mountain wrestlers who made it into the meet, Charlie Roper (130), Charlie Jacoby (140) and Michael Geurin (171) finished first as their team finished 4.5 points short of the team title. Line Mountain, one of the few teams to beat the Knights during the exhibition season, took the crown from Lehman with 96 points to 91.5 garnered by the Back Mountain team.

"It feels great to come in second to a great team," beamed Coach Phil Lipski. "We have three champs. I can't ask for more than that. Roper was the underdog and he won. Then Jacoby beat a tough Line Mountain kid and Geurin wrestled tough. I think we did better on a lot of people thought we would. We beat District 4 good, quality wrestlers."

Roper starts the winning

Charlie began his match against Dennis Altikins from West Snyder in typical Roper fashion. He wrestled aggressively with three near takedowns at the edge of the mat within the first 1:15 and was working on two at the buzzer of the first period. With no score, Roper gave up a gutsy one point when he intentionally let up Altikins in the first second, however, Roper got a takedown at 1:41 into the second period making the score 2-1. He instantly let Altikins up to tie the score again.

With 35 seconds left in the middle period, wrestling on the edge of the mat, Altikins almost had a takedown, but Roper fought it off for a restart. Yet another near takedown by Altikins was countered by Roper when the buzzer ended the second period with a 2-2 score.

The third period began with Altikins on top and Roper came out at 1:14 for one. The two wrestled on their feet with Roper by one until the Black Knight was warned for stalling with 23 seconds to go. Roper was a little scared then. I saw the clock, I knew I had been warned, so I had to step in. I had to hold on. I wanted it so bad. I thought 'I have to hold on.' Roper related as he wrestled the last 28 seconds. At the buzzer, both wrestlers were tied up, Roper holding onto his opponent's leg to save two and the regional medal.

Jacoby overcomes injury

Two matches later, another Charlie from Lake-Lehman stepped

onto the mat to meet Bobby Renn of Line Mountain. Renn attempted several arm drags for takedowns, but Jacoby countered. Both wrestled cautiously on their feet while the Lake-Lehman fans began to chant, "Let's go Charlie."

The Line Mountain fans replied with, "Let's go Bobby."

"I heard the fans and remember thinking that it was rude of the Line Mountain fans to start after we did, so it got me going," an amused Jacoby commented.

In the second period, Jacoby came out for a neutral at 1:49 and seemed to have a takedown at the buzzer, but no points appeared. With a slim 1-0 lead going into the final period, Jacoby was on top. He rode with a figure four through five restarts due to out-of-bounds and dangerous hold calls, and two stalemates.

Then the excitement began with 32 seconds left. On four occasions, Renn almost broke loose, but Jacoby countered with relentless skill and strength and, in the last 20 seconds, caught Renn for two back points to insure the match. "I didn't know I had back points until they handed me the chart with the medal. I had wrestled him before, so I knew he was good on the bottom. I kept the leg in and he'd sit and I'd cross face. I thought I was finished once, but I countered," Jacoby explained. Previously, he had received an injury to his chest which was badly bruised.

"I never felt it as the adrenalin flowed," he commented as the gold medal hung over the bruised area.

Geurin dominates

Lehman fans once again psyched themselves for their last hero to wrestle at 171, senior Mike Geurin. On his way to repeating a regional championship, it took Mike about 21 seconds to take down Wyalusing's Ed Moore. In typical Geurin style, he immediately let Moore up for a neutral only to take him down 15 seconds later. This was repeated four times in the first period for a score of 8-3, masterful Mike on top.

The second period started from the neutral position and at 1:12 the takedown artist got his usual two and let his opponent up. A frustrated Moore ran back at Geurin, accidentally head butting the gentle giant. The match was stopped momentarily until Mike was checked out and the giant returned not so gentle. He quickly took down Moore once again and attempted to roll him over, but couldn't turn dead weight.

The final period allowed Moore to be on top. He rode Mike the whole period picking up one stalling point to end the meet 12-5. "I was a little tired and conservative

in the last period and I knew he (Moore) was good on top," Geurin apologized for his lack of escape in the third period.

"It was the second goal of many," Mike replied. "Wrestling isn't the only thing in life, but it can help me get other goals. I think sports teach you about life. You can get down in life just as you are in a sport and it teaches you to go on. What comes around goes around. Wrestling is only one of my goals," an intense Geurin repeated.

As three Lehman wrestlers won championships and almost won the team medal, another wrestler watched and cheered his teammates on. Perhaps if fate had not sidelined Jason Naugle, he might have been the fourth champ and Lake-Lehman might have picked up the five points needed to bring home the championship, but a back problem had robbed him of his chance.

There was also another Lake-Lehman wrestler who watched, but he had garnered a fourth place finish and was happy with that accomplishment. Justin Goodwin had just finished wrestling in the consolation finals and had lost 8-2. "I did better than I ever thought I would in wrestling, but, once you get this far, you want to go on. Just getting here is a surprise." Goodwin expressed mixed emotions regarding his fourth-place finish. "I'm happy it's over, but I'm kind of sad now that it's a reality. I sort of wish I had another year because I never really had confidence in wrestling and, now that I do, I'd like to go on," Goodwin reminisced.

As far as the remaining qualifiers go, "It was great experience for our young wrestlers," Lipski stated. Freshmen Tim Sayre, John Wood and Mike Stuart all agreed even though they had not placed at regionals. "I was pretty excited to make it to regionals and it helps to wrestle this caliber as a freshman," said Sayre, who had lost 6-4.

Mike Stuart lost in the semi's 4-5 and echoed his teammate's comments. "It will improve my wrestling for next year. I'll be less likely to choke having been here already," a confident Stuart explained.

The last freshman, John Wood also agreed, "I won't have to go through a first-time at regionals again."

At 103, junior Rick Finnegan said, "I wanted to place in the top four. I didn't, but next year my goal will be to place one or two. I'll feel better coming here next year," a determined Finnegan said.

Junior Jason McDade accomplished all of his wrestling goals for this year. "I wanted to finish better



Winning grapplers

The Lake-Lehman wrestling squad took second place in team standings at the Class AA Northeast Regional tournament last weekend in Williamsport. Shown above, front row from left, Charlie Jacoby, Justin Goodwin, Charlie Roper. Standing, from left, Phil Lipski, co-coach; Mike Geurin, Tom Williams, co-coach. (Photo by Dave Kozemchak)

and farther than last year. I was district champ this year. I made it here last year, but I lost in the first round. I won one more match this year. My goal for next year is to make it to states."

Sophomores Brian Gizenski and Ed Pitcavage felt that the experience gave them more confidence to compete against kids their own age in the future two years. "We were here for the experience this year," Gizenski stated.

"I'm kind of sad it's over," Pitcavage reflected. "I like wrestling and wanted to win one match here, but at least I know what it's like for next year."

Dallas grapplers gain experience

The wrestlers from the other

half of the Back Mountain expressed similar sentiments. Frank Natitus was disappointed with his overall results, but satisfied with his second match performance. "I didn't wrestle so hot in the first match," Natitus lamented. What he didn't say is that he wrestled the regional champ first.

"I came from behind 4-0 to lose 5-4 in the second match," he commented. Natitus had gotten a late two points which would have won the match, but the luck of the buzzer took them from him. "I was happy to be there. Many of the Dallas wrestlers were there to support us and that was good for the whole team."

Bobby Jesse was pleased with his second match as well. He too

came from behind, but was short one point as he lost 5-4. "I wasn't so good in the first match. I lost 12-0 but I was able to put him (his opponent) on his back in the second match." Jesse also enjoyed the experience of making some new friends of some old rivals at regionals.

Dallas' Glen Ellsworth felt that regionals were a learning experience also. "I'm looking forward to next year. I was intimidated by the crowd. I didn't expect it to be like that. Next year I'll take regionals a lot differently," he said.

Geurin, Jacoby and Roper will be looking forward to the challenge of state competition this weekend, March 13 and 14, at Hershey Arena, Hershey.

Mark Konopki will move up to AA ball

By FLORENCE FINN
Sports Correspondent

Mark Konopki, a former Dallas High School baseball standout, has been moved from A to AA baseball. After pitching for the Elmira Pioneers and having a successful year with a 9-4 record, Mark was informed by the Red Sox that New Britain had bought his contract. Therefore, he reports March 9 to New Britain, Connecticut and will then go to Winter Haven, Florida for spring training.

"On paper it sounds good, but it won't hit me until I get down there that it is two steps from the pros," a calm Konopki commented.

If he experiences a good year with New Britain, Mark could be picked by the Red Sox AAA team in Pawtucket which is his short-term goal. If this happens, local fans might watch a local boy play ball at Lackawanna Stadium in the near future. However, the right hander is a little apprehensive about the jump. "I'm getting up there in age.

I'm 23 and can't play single A ball until I'm 27," he confessed.

This is a positive move, according to his high school coach Jack Wolensky. "This is a big jump from A to AA for Mark. He's progressing rapidly and a good year at New Britain could place him in Pawtucket. It's a good organization to move with because the pitching hasn't been too strong."

Right now the former Old Dominion player sees this move as a testing ground. "I'll know my future once I'm at spring training. I'll know whether I'm good enough or not to play pro ball," a cautious Konopki replied.

During the past winter months, Konopki credits his former coach with providing him with a facility in which to work out. "Jack has been helpful letting me in the gym over the winter. It's hard to get a place," he gratefully acknowledged.

Meanwhile the local fans will be hoping to see him at Lackawanna Stadium when America's favorite pastime captures our attention.



John Morris to attend Bucknell

John Morris has chosen Bucknell University to continue his academic and athletic careers. John was the leading passer in Dallas football history, passing for over 3,000 in his two years as starting quarterback. John was chosen to the coaches All Star-Team and UNICO All-Star teams. Seated, from left, John's mother, Claire Morris, and John Morris. Standing, from left, father, Attorney John Morris and Ted Jackson, Dallas Coach.

Attack Soccer Club registration March 15

Northeast Attack Soccer Club announces that a U-19 tryout will be held on March 15, 4 p.m. at Kirby Park, Kingston. For any additional information contact Diane Blodgett, president, NE Attack 842-6506.

Soccer registration April 11

Back Mt. Youth Soccer Association will hold registration for the 1992 Fall Intramural season on April 11, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Dallas Middle School, one day only. Fees are \$30 for the first child, \$27 for the second, and \$25 for the third child. Registration will be limited this year to the number of coaches we have in each age group, U-8 to U-14, register early. Birth certificates required for first year players and everyone who registers must have their social security number.

Back Mtn. Baseball tryouts

Back Mountain Baseball, Inc. will conduct tryouts for the upcoming baseball and softball seasons on Saturday, March 14 and March 21. Baseball tryouts will be held at the upper fields above the main Little League field. Softball tryouts for all ages will be held near the tennis courts at the Dallas Middle School beginning at 9 a.m.

Baseball tryout times for each age group are as follows: 12-year olds, 8:30 a.m.; 11-year olds, 9:30; 10-year olds 10:30; 9-year olds, 11:30 and 8-year olds, 1 p.m.

All players ages 8 through 12 who are not on a major league roster must tryout. Any player wishing to be placed on a major league roster must attend. Rain date for the March 14 baseball and softball tryout is Sunday, March 15.

Rainout times are as follows: 12-year olds, 1 p.m.; 11-year olds, 1:45; 10-year olds, 2:30; 9-year olds, 3:15 and 8-year olds 4 p.m. Softball tryouts will remain at 9 a.m.

Dallas wins basketball titles

In soccer and field hockey, three goals in a game is called a "hat trick."

This year, Dallas has scored a "hat trick" in basketball, winning championships from its 7th, 8th, and 9th grade boys basketball teams.

The 7th grade team beat Nanticoke at Nanticoke to become the playoff champions.

The 8th grade team was the league champion of the West Side, and runner-up in the play-offs to Nanticoke.

The 9th grade team were the division II champions with a 16-0 record, and overall champions of the Wyoming Valley Conference with a 20-2 record for the year.

According to coach Jack Wega, this is only the second time a team from Dallas has been overall champions.

Many members on the squads play not only in their own grade

level, but in the next grade up.

Playing on the 7th grade team were: Jason Campbell, John Matson, Kevin Kozel, Aaron Getz, Scott Townsend, Mitch Bailey, Kevin Williams Joe Dreier, John Martin, Kevin West, Ron Sutton, Jeff Beisel, and George Simms.

Playing on both the 7th and 8th grade teams were: Tim Puz, Justin Jumper, Mark Kaschenbach, Frank Valvano, and Bill Puchalsky.

On the 8th grade team were: Joe Noon, Conner Ennis, Dan Podell, J.P. Cosgrove, Darin Hobson.

On the 8th and 9th grade teams were: Rich Klick, Jeff Kunkle, and Ted Jackson.

On the 9th grade team were: Mike Vozniak, Jason Pieczynski, Pat O'Neill, Ed Thomas, Mike Viglone, Rich Butcofski, Dave Townsend, Matt Williams, Andy Burns, Steve Batory, and Jeremiah Jancik.