

The Dallas Post

SportsWeek

Gingo makes one goal, aims higher

By LEN KRYESKI
Sports Writer

February was quite a month for Aaron Gingo.

The Dallas wrestler finished the regular season undefeated, captured his first District II class AA championship on the 18th and took top honors again one week later in the 152-pound class during the first ever northeast qualifying regionals.

Then again, the senior's entire wrestling career has been spectacular. Gingo has won at least 20 bouts in each of his three years as a varsity starter. His next victory at the northeast regionals in Williamsport this weekend, will be the 70th of his illustrious career. Along the way he's placed second at districts as a sophomore and junior and won his weight class at the Troy Tournament this past December. Gingo also finished second in districts as a freshman while wrestling for the Dallas junior high team. At the junior high level the competi-

tion is double because teams are not split into AA and AAA classifications.

"I personally think he could have wrestled varsity in ninth grade," said Dallas wrestling coach Steve Kaschenbach. "That was a weight class where he could have been right in there and gone to regionals."

Northeast regionals is next on the Gingo hit list. Last year he made some noise, but came away with nothing to show for it. He took the eventual third place winner into overtime before allowing a take-down and lost by just two to the fourth place finisher.

"My goal is to qualify for states," said Gingo.

Aaron has already achieved one goal - his district championship. He finished second each of the previous two seasons to a wrestler he already defeated during the regular season. This year Gingo got the monkey off of his back with a 4-2 decision over Bill Hilburt of Meyers.

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Steve Kaschenbach
Dallas wrestling coach

"Sure it was on his head," said Kaschenbach. "Now he's in the finals for the third time and he's wrestling a kid who's brother (140-pound Brian) just won a district championship. You know he's going to be trying like crazy because he's a senior, so a lot of pressure was on Aaron. I think Aaron did a heck of a job."

"At our school, in the wrestling room they have the names of the district champs on the wall," added Gingo. "I always remember telling my Dad, I want to be a district champ."

Aaron is the son of Gene and Shirley Gingo of Shavertown. It was his father that signed him up for the Back Mountain Wrestling League while Aaron was in sec-

ond grade. He became the first wrestler in his family when one of Gene's friends claimed the second grader had the proper build for a wrestler.

"I remember my first practice," said Gingo. "I didn't want to wrestle. I started crying, my Dad had to push me into it. I'm happy I stuck with it."

He not only stuck with it, he mastered wrestling through hard work and determination. A third place finish at Eastern Nationals as a fifth grader convinced Aaron and his family that wrestling was more than just a passing hobby. Even today, one of the most feared wrestlers in the Wyoming Valley Conference continues to strive for perfection.

"I like to improve from the day before," Gingo said. "I try to push as hard as I can. Practice makes perfect."

"He's the hardest working kid in the room," added Kaschenbach. "[It's] between him and (112 pound Mike) Metz. They are both very, very competitive guys and they go

all out. It's always a pleasure to have somebody like that in the wrestling room because there's an example of what to do."

"He leads the way, he leads the way."

Realizing the underclassman and coaches look up to him and expect him to win just makes Aaron try harder at the one thing he'll miss most about high school: wrestling practice.

"We have a deal where we begin every practice, after stretching, we do our running," said Kaschenbach, "and Aaron is always the fastest besides our two cross-country guys. He's pushing, pushing all the time and you like to see that in practice. You like to see a kid give it his all."

The running has helped improve Gingo's footwork which is his main strength. Opponents know if Aaron takes them down first, it's almost a sure Gingo victory.

"If there is a weaker point it would be him on top holding the guy down," Kaschenbach said,

"but he has relied so much on his ability to take the guy down it really doesn't bother him too much to give up one point."

Not one to waste an opportunity, Gingo fills his summer spare time by working with weights. This past summer he worked extra hard to increase his value to the Dallas football team.

The fall sport has also supplied it's share of thrills for the two-time letter winner. One was winning the class AA state championship last year and another was getting to meet then Governor Robert P. Casey.

This year Aaron moved into the starting lineup on both sides of the ball. He was the center for Ted Jackson's offense and contributed 125 tackles from his defensive end position.

After graduation, Gingo plans to continue his school work at the university level and more than likely will study criminal justice. It's also quite possible his wres-

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Black Knights dominate tourney, Mounts send two on to regionals

Ten wrestlers from Lake-Lehman and two from Dallas will shoot for Class AA Northeast Regional titles this weekend. The top four finishers at each weight class from this past weekend's first ever regional qualifying tournament earned the right to continue.

With 10 of it's 11 grapplers advancing, Lake-Lehman also has their sights on a second team regional title during the 90s.

Matt Raczkowski (103), Allen Scott (119), Mike Stuart (130), Tim Sayre (135) and Mike Budzak (189) repeated as champions of their weight bracket for the second consecutive week.

Heavyweight Vito Pilosi was also crowned champion by avenging his one point loss at districts to Nanticoke's Joe Mushala. Pilosi beat Mushala with a 14-4 major decision.

For the second time in two weeks, 145-pound John Wood finished second to Todd Sattof of Meyers by one point, 3-2.

Joe Halowich (125) and Brian Butler (140) finished third and

Ryan Gold (152) fourth to continue advancement.

160-pound Paul Vandermolen was the only Lehman wrestler eliminated, losing both of his matches on Saturday.

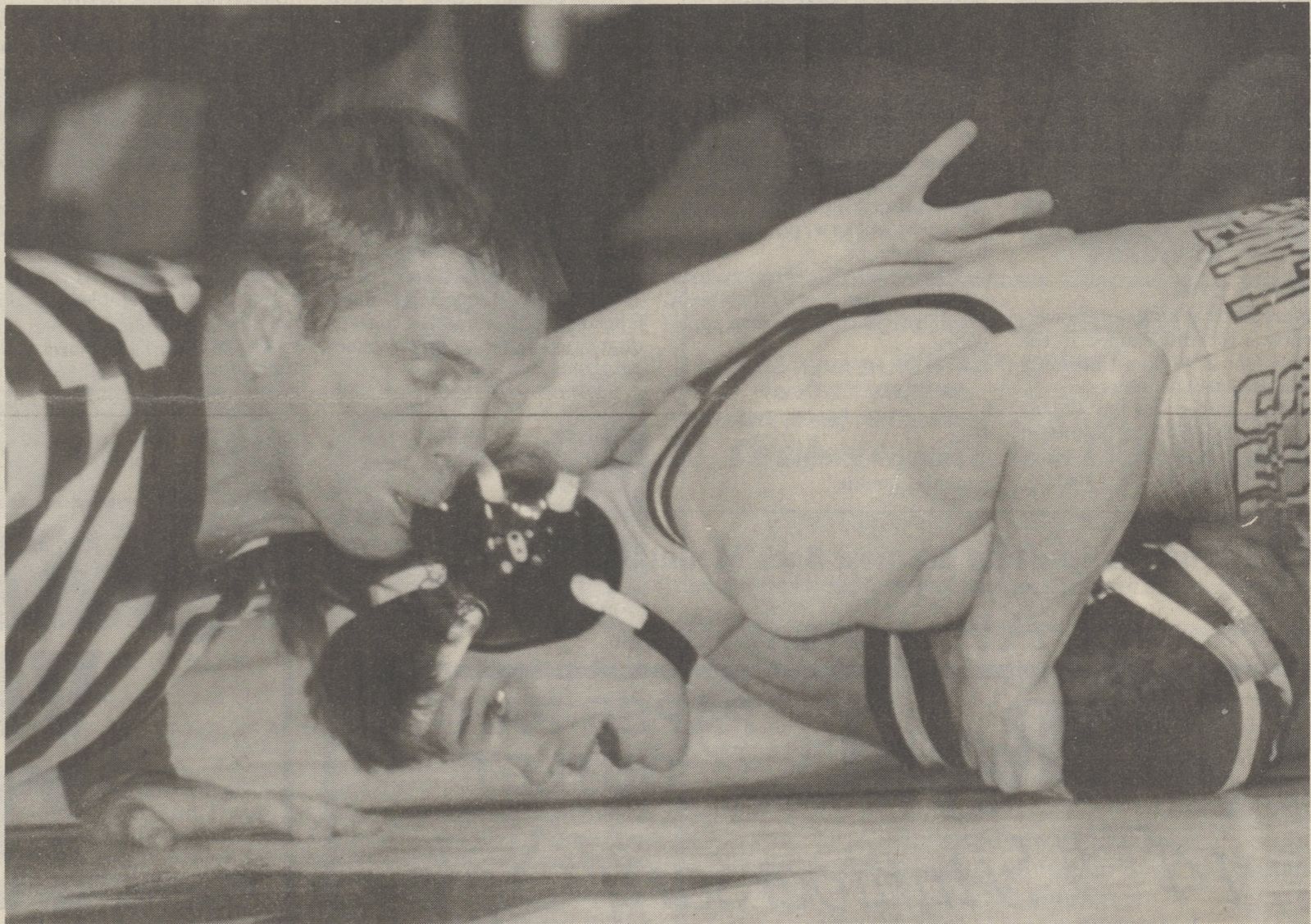
For the Mountaineers, Aaron Gingo remained undefeated by taking the 152-pound competition.

Once again Mike Metz finished second to Wyoming Area's Don Morgan at 112.

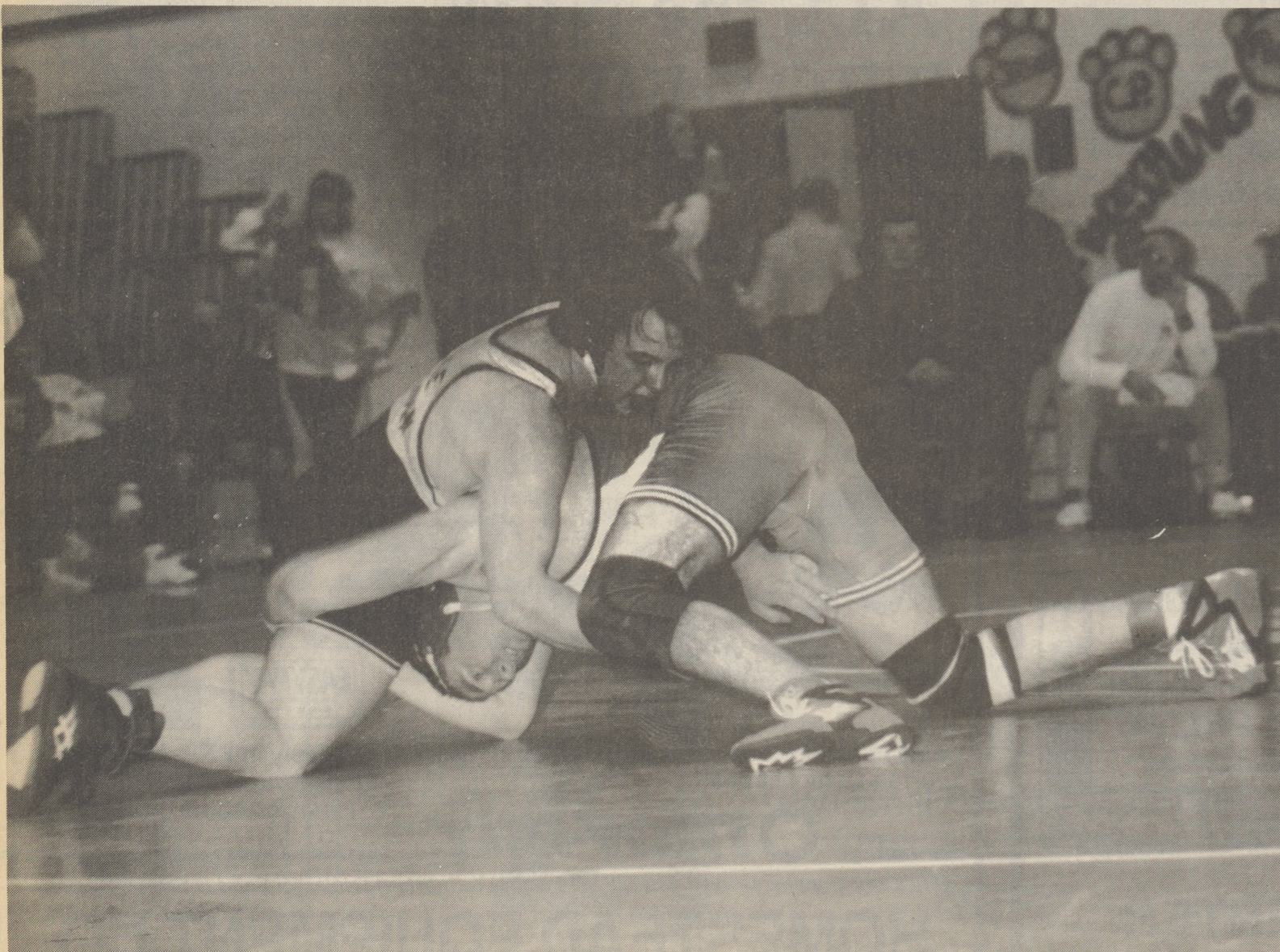
Three Dallas wrestlers were knocked out of regionals. John Crispell (130) and Adam Hoover (171) managed to place fifth while Mike Heffron (119) had to forfeit his fifth place bout.

Vandermolen of Lehman along with Hoover and Heffron of Dallas, are all seniors and saw their high school wrestling careers end.

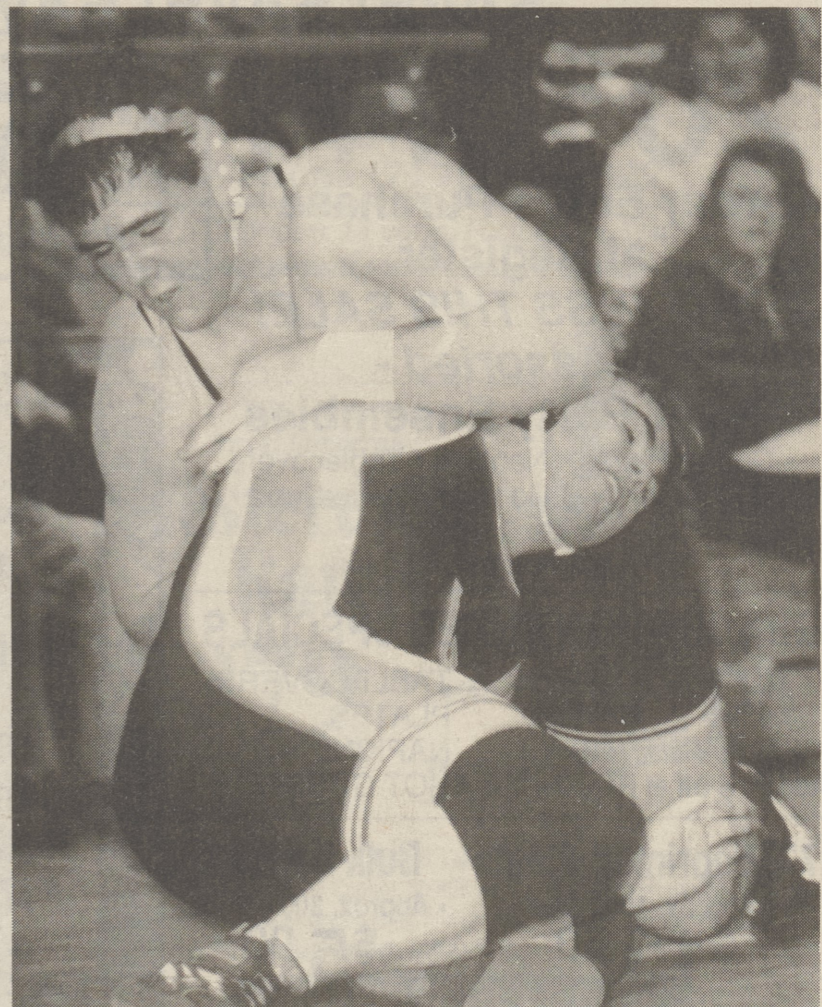
The Wyoming Valley Conference managed to crown 11 champions during the battle of the best from District's II and 12. The survivors will battle their counterparts from District IV at Williamsport High School this Saturday.



Mike Stuart had his opponent on the ropes in the pre-regional wrestling tournament last weekend.



Mike Budzak won the pre-regional championship, as he had taken the district title the week before.



Vito Pilosi avenged a loss at districts by beating Joe Mushala in a 14-4 major decision.

Photos by Lynn Sheehan