

OVAC wrestlers easily handle MAC grapplers

FOR THE TIMES LEADER

HOOKSTOWN, Pa. - The OVAC flexed its muscles last Wednesday as the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference dominated their counterparts of the Midwestern Athletic Conference on Wednesday at South Side High School in Hookstown.

It was billed as the Clash of Champions - 14 senior all-star wrestlers from the OVAC and MAC conferences. The OVAC stars whipped the MAC wrestlers, 45-12.

It's the first time the two conferences have battled since 1994. South Side head wrestling coach Ron Ledbetter worked to bring back the "Clash" with the help of Quigley wrestling coach Ed Driscoll. Originally, the Clash of Champions was organized in 1988 by Nick Trombetta, former wrestling coach at East Liverpool.

The OVAC won the first two meetings (1988, 1989) and the MAC won in 1990. No other records were available on winners during the other four years.

Ledbetter and Jason Winters of South Side coached the MAC stars. The OVAC was led by Beaver Local's Rich Wright, Oak Glen's Larry Shaw and Monroe Central's Paul Robinson.

Wright, who served as head coach of the OVAC all-stars, said it was his first victory in three all-star games.

"I got beat last year against the WPIAL in Pittsburgh and my first all-star game in football, I lost the Penn-Ohio game. I was 0-2 coming in," said Wright with a smile on his face.

The OVAC lineup was stacked with talent - and it showed.

Kerry Regner, at 112, won a decision over Lucas Huffman of River, 6-3. Huffman entered the bout with the most career wins of anyone on the slate with a staggering 169 victories.

Phil Bliss of Brooke won MVP honors for the Ohio Valley stars. Bliss easily pinned Justin Scarfo in 41 seconds at 152. Bliss, a state champion for the Bruins this year, finished his high school career with 139 wins.

The OVAC all-stars won 11 of the 14 matches in front of a decent crowd at Rams' gymnasium. Ledbetter estimated about 500-600 fans attended.

The South Side coach said the OVAC put together a very competitive team. "The OVAC had quite a team. They were real good," said Ledbetter.

Wright was impressed with his team too. "It's a good, quality group. We had a lot of state qualifiers. We had a lot of good kids. The OVAC was tough this year, the seniors were tough and it was proven tonight," said Wright.

OVAC Wrestling Tournament Director Ron Mauck was impressed with the Ohio Valley stars.

"With the competition our kids have had the entire year and you look at their records, that shows it," said Mauck.

Dan Doyle, also in attendance to represent the OVAC, agreed the OVAC put together an impressive team. "I thought, being a senior meet and looking at the seniors we had representing the OVAC, spot for spot, it was a very strong team," said Doyle.

Buckeye Local's Dave Bertolino capped off his senior campaign with a 45-0 record, and a Division II state title. The Panther wrestler finished with 153 career victories.

Adam Hoppel, Steve Flowers, Bliss, Bertolino and Jared Williams were individual OVAC tournament champions this season.

The Clash of Champions will be held at an OVAC member school next year. There are 13 schools in the MAC and 37 schools that have wrestling programs in the OVAC.

Three of the MAC schools do not field complete teams.

South Side won the MAC conference title this year, the first in school history.

Beaver Local won the overall OVAC tournament title (their first) and Oak Glen was third. The Beavers won the Class AAAA division and the Bears were crowned Class AAA winners.

Results:

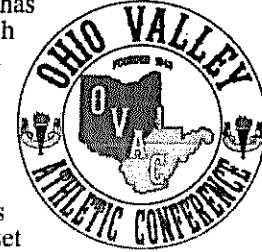
OVAC 45, MAC 12

- 103 - Justin Goneau (Oak Glen) dec. Dave Katus (Hopewell), 6-2
- 112 - Kerry Regner (Blackhawk) dec. Lucas Huffman (River), 6-3
- 119 - Bill Kronz (Moon) dec. Jake Bates (East Liverpool), 7-0
- 125 - Ryan Turnbull (Buckeye Local) maj. dec. Antonio Reino (Laurel), 16-8
- 130 - Josh Johnston (Indian Creek) dec. Rob Potts (Freedom), 4-3
- 135 - Jared Hoppel (Beaver Local) tech. fall Josh Kolenda (Hopewell), 18-3
- 140 - Steve Flowers (Oak Glen) dec. Bill Moresetti (West Allegheny), 11-10
- 145 - Christopher Wilson (Monroe Central) maj. dec. Brad Lehocky (Freedom), 10-2
- 152 - Phil Bliss (Brooke) pin Justin Scarfo (Mars), :41
- 160 - David Bertolino (Buckeye Local) tech. fall Justin Castagnacci (South Side), 24-9
- 171 - Jordan Williams (Beaver Local) pin Nate Ruffing (Moon), :50
- 189 - Jared Williams (Beaver Local) dec. Matt Baker (Montour), 5-2
- 215 - Josh Stansbury (East Liverpool) dec. Jake Jahnke (Mars), 12-6
- 275 - Jason Fronczak (Montour) pin Michael Price (Cambridge), 3:35

OVAC releases its 2003 all-star wrestling team

• Grapplers will face Pennsylvania Wednesday at Beaver Local H.S.

The Ohio Valley Athletic Conference has released its All-Star Wrestling team, which will compete against wrestlers from Pennsylvania on March 12. The match will be contested at Beaver High School and will start at 7 p.m. The price for admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for students.



Slated to represent the OVAC are Lucas Huffman who was 47-3 as a senior and set the all-time Ohio Valley record for career wins with a 169-23 record. He was an OVAC tournament champion and state runnerup as a junior, but finished second in the conference and fifth in the state as a senior.

East Liverpool's Jake Bates will be entered at 119 pounds. He was 27-11 this past winter with a seventh place finish in the OVAC.

Buckeye Local's Ryan Turnbull will be entered at 125 pounds. He registered a 30-9 record this season and finished 90-48 in his career.

Indian Creek's Josh Johnston was 37-7 as a senior, winning the OVAC title. He finished 122-43 in his career.

Beaver Local -- which won the overall team title at the OVAC tournament -- will be represented by three different competitors.

The Beavers are led by Jared Hoppel at 135 pounds. He had a 33-7 record, winning the OVAC title. He closed his career at 104-40.

Oak Glen's Steve Flowers will take part at 140 pounds. He was 38-2 this past season, winning the OVAC title and a state title, helping the Golden Bears to yet another team crown.

Monroe Central's Chris Wilson will be the 145-pound entrant. He was 40-6 this season, finishing third at the OVAC and fourth in the state. He was an OVAC champ and state runnerup as a junior.

Brooke's Phil Bliss gets the call at 152 pounds. He went 42-1 this past season, winning both the OVAC and West Virginia state titles. He was 139-20 in his career.

Buckeye Local's second representative is at 160 pounds with senior David Bertolino. Bertolino went 44-0 this past season, winning the OHSAA Division II 160 pound title and also the OVAC title. He closed his career with a sterling 153-23 record.

The Beavers other two representatives come at 171 and 189. The Brothers Williams, Jordan and Jared, hold down those two spots. Jordan posted a 32-10 record, finishing second in the conference.

Jared, meanwhile, was 40-6 this season and 115-36 for his career. He was also the conference champion.

East Liverpool's Josh Stansbury holds down the 215-pound slot with a 39-6 record this past season. He was second in the OVAC.

Cambridge Michael Price -- who was just 24-5 -- will be the entrant at 275 pounds.

The coaching staff for the event will consist of Monroe Central's Paul Robison. He led his Seminoles to both the OVAC tournament 2-A title and also the dual match championship.

Oak Glen's Larry Shaw is also on the staff. He led his Golden Bears to their eighth straight WVSSAC title.

Beaver Local's Rich Wright who guided the Beavers to the OVAC tournament title and also the dual meet title.