

T-L Photo/KIM NORTH

BRIDGEPORT'S TINO Kusic blocks a shot attempt by West Allegheny's Dante Flati during Tuesday night's 24th annual "Clash of Champions" All-Star wrestling match at West Allegheny High School in Imperial, Pa. Kusic won 3-1 as the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference defeated the Midwestern Athletic Conference, 41-14. The OVAC now leads the all-time series 17-7.

OVAC claims 'Clash of Champions'

By **KIM NORTH**
Times Leader Sports Writer

IMPERIAL, Pa. — No athlete likes to lose, especially when it's the last game or match of their senior season.

Wheeling Park's Dylan Wood and Bridgeport's Tino Kusic both found themselves in that predicament following their respective state tournaments. Kusic, an Ohio Division III state-placer in 2018, didn't reach the podium this past weekend in Columbus, while Wood suffered a setback in the West Virginia state finals nearly three weeks ago in Huntington.

However, like good athletes do, both rebounded from those losses and were among 10 winners as the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference continued its dominance over western Pennsylvania's Midwestern Athletic Conference, 43-14, in the 24th

annual "Clash of Champions" Tuesday night at West Allegheny High School.

The lop-sided victory not only avenges a 40-22 reversal at Brooke a season ago, it bumps the OVAC's all-time margin in the series to a commanding 17-7.

"It felt really good to win that match because I was coming off a loss in the state finals," Wood admitted after a 5-0 decision at 220. "It feels good to come back out here and finish with a win."

Wood, who also excelled on the football field, will continue his athletic and academic careers at the University of Charleston where he will continue on the gridiron.

"I wanted to leave it all out there and just try and do my best," he said of his final match.

Kusic echoed those sentiments.

"It was nice. I didn't want to end my

(high school) career with a sour taste in my mouth," Kusic, the Bulldogs all-time winningest wrestler, said following a 3-1 night at 170. "(The) state (tournament) didn't go well. I don't know what happened, but I know all the guys on this team, so tonight was fun."

The OVAC sandwiched a pair of pins between Oak Glen's Shawn Moore (113) and Steubenville's Peyton Blasko (126) around a decision from Meadowbrook's Terry Gattrell to take a 15-0 lead it would never relinquish. Moore touched his opponent's shoulders in 1:01, while it took Blasko nine seconds longer. Gattrell won 9-3.

Wins in three of the next four weight classes allowed the Keystone State squad to pull to within 19-11, but that would be as close as it would get as the OVAC reeled

See, **OVAC**, Page B2

PENS DOWN CAPS

Evgeni Malkin picked up his 1,000th point as Pittsburgh rallied to defeat Washington, 5-3/16

The Intelligencer. SPORTS

WEDNESDAY,
MARCH 13, 2019

COMICS.....14
TV/ENTERTAINMENT.....15

11

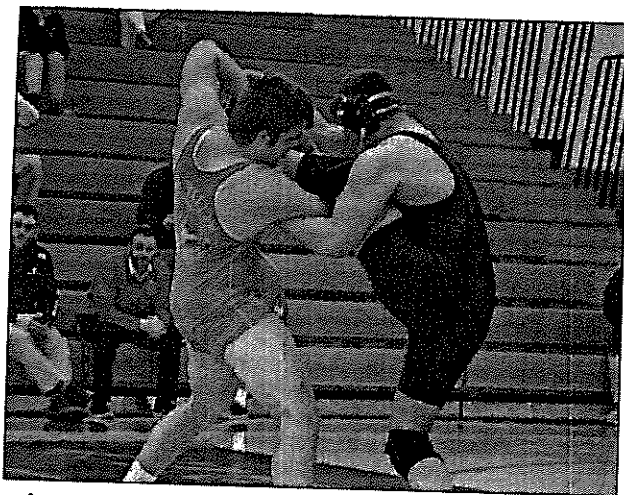


Photo by Kim North
Wheeling Park's Dylan Wood, left, grapples with Hopewell's Connor Forrest during Tuesday's match.

OVAC Wins 'Clash of Champions'

Rice named Most Outstanding Wrestler

By KIM NORTH
For The Intelligencer

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Please see OVAC, Page 12

OVAC

(Continued from Page 11)

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Wins in three of the next four weight classes allowed the Keystone State squad to pull to within 19-11, but that would be as

close at it would get as the OVAC reeled off triumphs in the final five bouts, including a pin from John Marshall's Anthony Carman at 182 with two ticks left in his match.

"I felt coming in that we had a really nice team. I also knew the MAC had a couple of good kids in their lineup, but I thought our kids were a little more overpowering, and it showed," OVAC head coach Jayson Stephen, of Barnesville, said. "As a coach, it was a pretty easy night."

Other winners for the local squad included Madonna's Cook twins - Alec (145) and Garrett (195), Steubenville's Anthony Rice (152) and Parkers-

burg South's Loudon Haga (285).

Alec Cook earned bonus points with a 10-1 major decision. Garrett completed a perfect 50-0 campaign with a 5-0 win.

Rice posted a technical fall and was named the OVAC's Most Outstanding Wrestler by the MAC coaching staff. Haga won 1-0.

"This is my senior year and I'm glad I could finish it off with a win and the Most Outstanding Wrestler award," Rice, who has narrowed his college choices to Kent State and Rutgers, said.

Next year's Silver Anniversary event will be held at an undetermined OVAC school.

PREP WRESTLING

OVAC All-Stars 41
MAC All-Stars 14

113: Moore (O) p. Montgomery, 1:01; 120: Gattrell (O) d. Alberts, 9-3; 126: Blasko (O) p. Ward, 1:10; 132: Chambers (M) d. Simpson, 3-2; 138: Ealy (M) d. Muldrew, 8-3; 145: A. Cook (O) d. Pail, 8-1; 145: Kazalas (M) ff. Helms, 19-3; 152: Rice (O) md. Montalbano, 17-9; 160: McGeary (M) d. Hinzman, 6-5; 170: Kusic (O) d. Flati, 3-1; 182: Carman (O) p. Miller, 5:58; 195: G. Cook (O) d. Presutti, 5-0; 220: Wood (O) d. Johnson, 5-0; 285: Haga (O) d. Hoaglund, 1-0