

Time to reverse stalling ploys

There's nothing wrong with playing to win. Wednesday night's Canandaigua-East Rochester wrestling match, however, made a strong case for "How you play the game."

When a high school athlete is all smiles after losing a match 20-1, priorities have been misplaced.

Ask any coach to describe the purpose of high school athletics and he's almost certain to mention that sports build character. But how sincere are those words?

Wednesday, Canandaigua led by a 25-15 score through 10 matches. A victory was certain provided Canandaigua's final two wrestlers didn't fall asleep on their backs. The message from Coach Weldon Canough was clear — lose a million to one, but don't be pinned.

At every opportunity Canandaigua's final two wrestlers ignored a chorus of boos and clawed toward the edge of the mat and the safety of the out-of-bounds. In so doing they avoided a pin and killed time, East Rochester's major ally.

ER's John Zito crushed Joe Kuras, 20-1. Yet Zito wore the long face and Kuras was all smiles. ER heavyweight Rick Sidor cleaned up on Guy Parker, 9-4. Sidor, the winner, was in tears.

The whole scene was enough to make anyone cry.

Canough obviously was toying with the rules.

"It's a team sport," Canough said. "If the team wins, everybody wins. Every match you have two or three guys lose, but they don't feel like losers because the team wins."

"If Parker had gone all out," Canough continued, "and made a mistake and got pinned, I would have had 12 losers."

"Everybody does it that way," he said. "It's part of wrestling."

Is it?

"I guess we all have our own prin-



John
Kolomic

ciples," said ER Coach Don Quinn. "But if I tell a kid he's going to lose, he's defeated before he even goes out there."

There is a penalty for stalling. At the referee's discretion, one point is awarded to the aggressor when the ref feels the other party has it in park.

Canough and his wrestlers didn't invent the stall. They were only continuing a long tradition of non-participation.