

Bombers Win Monroe County East-West Championship

It was supposed to be the big match of the season. It was for the supremacy of the County of Monroe...the East and the West divisions. East Rochester, the champion of the East wheel and Hilton, the king of the West.

It was to occur on the Hilton mats last Saturday night. And when it was over, coach Don Quinn's Bombers just short of humiliated the Hilton club. Final score: ER 30-13.

Last year, both teams slugged each other around for a 25-25 tie. In these days, no one likes to share anything with anybody.

ER was rated number three statewide and Hilton was ranked 12th. Only tough Baldwinsville, near Syracuse, had a number one perch and Long Island's Huntington High was number two.

The Bombers finished the regular season 12-2 and Hilton wound up 13-2.

But among the Bomber scalps were the previously first place-rated Olean Huskies.

Oh, that pair of two-point losses to Brighton and Canandaigua. If ER had nabbed both, the Bombers would have been the state's premier wrestling team. It was a tough price to pay for the upset reversals to the Barons and the Cans.



Mike Kuhn

But Quinn wasn't singing the blues over the season's results. He had the Monroe County East crown despite an identical 8-1 first place tie with Irondequoit; his club added the East-West trophy and during the season, the Bombers won the Monroe County and Amherst Sweet Home Tournaments.

Prior to the Hilton win, ER finished the regular season with a 40-18 win over Penfield last Thursday night on the losers' mats.

The win came after the Bombers were down 11-0 after two matches. Tom Pagano, a freshman who will develop into one of Quinn's winners the next three years, went up against classy Larry Kane in the 98 pound conflict. At the 3:51 time, Pagano was pinned.

John Walczyk, 105 pounder, had another Kane on his hands in Chris Kane, and Walczyk lost a 17-2 superior decision.

It took ER four scraps to gain a 15-3 lead, thanks to a six-point forfeit victory by 112 pounder Scott McIntosh; a four-point 12-4 win by Pat Zito (119) over Gary Moore and after Mike Kuhn had his record blemished in the 126 ranks with a 2-2 tie against Rich Battaglia; 132 pounder

Joe Walczyk beat Tim Blaakman, 5-0.

ER put three straight wins into the victory column as Craig Venette (138) took a close 8-7 verdict over Mike Owen; Bruce Kier netted 4 points with a 145 pound nod over Paul Bardash, 135, and Dennis Essom (155) posted the first Bomber pin with a 1:31 tussle against Doug Turley.

Quinn had Reggie Reid in the 167 argument and the ER matman lost a 14-1 decision to Chris Manchester.

John Zito won one the easy way in the 177 weights, a forfeit, and Billy Condon tallied Bomber pin No. 2 in 1:37 over Jon Kaiser.

Quinn's "grunt and groaners" moved into the Section 5 Class A tournament Wednesday at Midlakes as qualifying and preliminary rounds began at 5 p.m. Winners moved onto the glory paths that would take them to East Rochester on Saturday for the quarterfinal round at 10 a.m., the semifinals at 1 p.m., the consolations at 2:30 and the finals at 7:30.

Interclass competition continue into next weekend and the winners then have a crack at the state high championships in Syracuse March 9 and 10.

Quinn has had two state champs, both in the 167 ranks. Timmy Gay was the first in 1970 and Richie McPhee the second in 1974. Heavily favored to go all the way this season is senior John Zito, who goes into the Sectionals with a lusty 25-0 record.

And don't count out 119 pounder, Romeo Battazzi, who is 24-2 and Mike Kuhn, who is showing a 23-2-1 record.

Zito, Battazzi and Kuhn

were named to the East-West All-Star team before the Hilton-ER battle.

Quinn had it figured to beat Hilton. His scratch pad read seven wins and five likely losses. His team only lost three. One match found both ER's Bruce Kier and Hilton's George Eblacker adding some offensive slugging to their scraps and both were disqualified by referee Al Gentile in the 145 clash.

ER trailed 9-4 after three tilts and that gave Hilton fans a big chance to cheer. The lead came after Bomber John Walczyk nabbed a 9-0 blanking of Paul Nau in the 98 pound lid-lifter.

Tom Pagano, usually the first man on the mats for ER,

moved into the 105 tangle this time and ran up against more experienced Steve Burton.

At 4:37, Burton put the pin on Pagano for 6 points. Hilton's strong 112 pounder, Matt Kellman, was only able to gain a 4-3 nod over Scott McIntosh.

Romeo Battazzi, always reliable for Quinn, faced All-County West Chris Kellman in the 119 affair and six minutes of hard wrestling netted Battazzi a 9-6 victory.

When Mike Kuhn just squeezed by Hilton's Steve O'Shea, 5-4 in the 126 pound match, ER took a 10-9 lead and his scorecard was running true to his prognosis.

Quinn figured his team

would lose the next three matches, but Joe Walczyk at 138 came up with a surprising 10-7 nod over Al Caternola.

The card said Curtis Doreen would lose the 132 event to Al Rossner and Doreen did, 10-1, for a 4 point loss.

And after Kier's troubles with Eblacker, Quinn's card was perfect for the last four matches.

Dennis Essom beat Gerry Bensley, 4-0, in the 155 tilt; John Zito wrecked Terry Brown, 13-1, in the 167 shindig; Drew McGregor pocketed the 177 match over Billy West, 14-6, and 215 pounder, Rick Sidor, had an easy time with Fred Bedford, racking up a 13-1 decision.