

A big night for the small schools

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It was a night for the little guys at Fairport High School. It even had Bob Button and John Cosentino as exceptions that proved the rule.

Smaller schools in Classes C through AA earned nine state wrestling tournament berths, to five for Class AAA schools, in qualifying finals last night before a crowd of 2,000. The top three wrestlers at each weight from the five sectional classes were wrestling to determine a state representative.

And the most intriguing of the 14 who qualified was the smallest and youngest, Canandaigua Academy eighth-grader Marty King.

A power failure delayed the finals'

start 55 minutes, to 8:10. Then King became Section 5's first state qualifier this year and the section's second eighth-grader in history (Spencerport's T.J. Mincer was the other) to qualify for the state meet.

King (22-4) frustrated, dominated and decisioned Franklin junior Clarence Brown, 9-4. He was one of four Canandaigua wrestlers, including his brother Matt, to qualify for the state championships Friday and Saturday in Syracuse.

Strange as it may seem, Marty King has more wrestling experience than Brown, who's three years ahead of him in school.

"My dad pushes me," explained King, whose family moved from Honeoye to Canandaigua to take advantage of Weldon Canough's superior wrestling program there. "I go to tournaments all over, Nebraska and Iowa, every Saturday. That's more fun than varsity.

"My three brothers are wrestlers. We have a mat at home and we practice all

the time on that."

This year's qualifier seemed to indicate having a wrestling brother is a big factor in a champion's success.

Penfield's Larry Kane (31-0-1) won a 16-0 decision from Spencerport's Andy Komarek for the 105-pound title. Kane said working with his brother, Chris, has helped him. It apparently has helped sophomore Chris Kane as well. He continued to close in on Section 5 112-pound champ Tony Cotroneo (34-0) of Irondequoit. Cotroneo, a 3-0 winner over Kane for the AAA title, beat him in the qualifier finals, 6-4.

Pittsford Mendon 155-pounder Rick Kase fell short of the finals, but his brother Mike Kase (32-0) won the 98

Please turn to page 9E

Classes C through AA walking tall after wrestling qualifier success

From page 1E

pound title by pinning Canandaigua's Joe Ricciotti in 3:41 to repeat the previous week's AA final victory.

"If it wasn't for my brother, I wouldn't be here," Mike Kase said. "He teaches me everything in practice. I have another brother who transferred to Brockport State when we came up from Florida this year, and he helped me, too.

"I was a little nervous when we started the match. I was all ready to go and then the lights went out (at 7:04) and we thought we were going to have to come back tomorrow and wrestle."

Section 5 wrestling chairman Walt Teike decided that the matches shouldn't start with a few emergency lights casting dim light on the mats and that a decision would be made by 8:30. At 8, Teike declared the matches would start as soon as all the spectators were seated, and as that was happening, the lights went on.

After Marty King and Mike Kase won, Mohr County's Class AAA teams took their turn in the spotlight. First Larry Kane and Cotroneo won, then hometown favorite Bob Arao (22-1) of Fairport avenged his only loss by decisioning Irondequoit's Tim Lehmann, 6-2. Spen-

cerport's Trevor Graham (34-1) upheld the county's honor in the night's closest match, a 3-1 overtime decision over East Rochester's Mike Kuhn at 126.

Then Canandaigua junior 132-pounder Matt King (30-1-1) made Penfield's Rich Battaglia the 102nd victim of his career, 8-2. Class C Bolivar's Rick Gould (33-0) then nipped ER's Joe Walczak at 138, 4-3, and Canandaigua's Mike Reho (28-4-1) took a 3-0 overtime decision from Irondequoit's Paul Salamone at 145.

In last week's AAA 155-pound finals, Gates-Chili's Dave Silipini (27-0-1) had avoided the bad knee of Greece Arcadia's Jeff Smith, who limped and lost a 5-2 decision. This time, Silipini took a 2-0 lead in the second period, when Smith was forced to default because of the knee injury.

When the big wrestlers (167-250 pounds) came out, so did the smaller schools. Bill Hadsell (28-2) of Canandaigua whipped Kendall's Stu McFarland at 167, 9-0. Livonia's Ron Kidder (33-0) eliminated the last AAA hope, Greece Athena's Joe Prestigiacomio, 9-2.

Then Newark's Button (32-0), who finished second in the state last year at 215, made short work of Elba's Dave

Williams. Williams spent enough time on his back but not on the mat to trail, 9-0, before Button pinned him in 2:34. Then Geneva's Cosentino (26-4) turned in the night's fastest pin, over Canandaigua's Joe Kuras in 1:19.

"I wasn't planning on coming this far this year," Cosentino admitted. "I was the first from our school to come this far. I set the school's pin record (with 20) this season. It used to be 14."

Arao said he has been locking forward to the state meet "for a long time." He was unbeaten until the AAA finals, when he took a blow to the head and defaulted to Lehmann after two periods of a scoreless tie. They worked their way back into the qualifying finals against each other.

"His strategy was to keep the score down," Arao said. "If he could keep it 0-0, he figured he could get out from under."

"When I get to the states, I'm sure there'll be one kid from Long Island who beat me three times over the summer," Arao said. "Yes, I like the challenge. The pressure's on the other guy."

Graham, who also won the AAA title in overtime, had his second straight cliff-hanger