

McInally

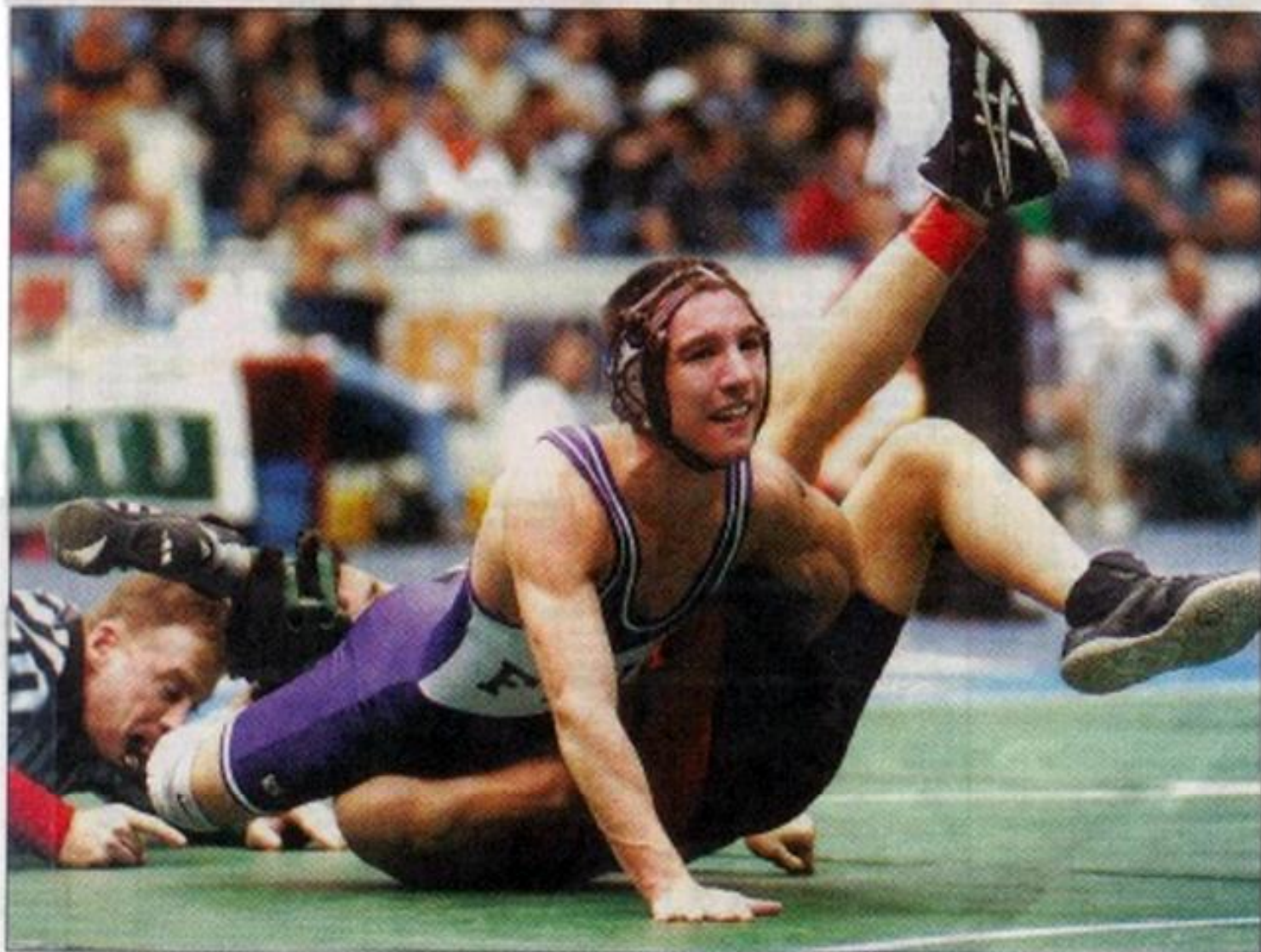
SECTION

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NYSPHSAA WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

finally wins state title



Michael Johnson/For The Daily News

THE LOOK OF A CHAMPION: Byron Bergen's Mike McInally (front) — seen beating Jorge Muniz of the PSAL in his first match — captured the state championship in the 119-pound weight class at the NYSPHSAA Wrestling Championships Saturday on Long Island.

By Chris Metcalf

For The Daily News

UNIONDALE — With six seconds left in his state title match, Mike McNally was already planning his first hug.

And Byron-Bergen coach Mike Jeffords was more than happy to be the recipient.

McNally's dream of winning a state crown became a reality as the senior finished the season with a perfect 43-0 record, topping Mohawk's Justin Seifried (Section 3) by a convincing 6-1 score in the 119-pound finals at the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Wrestling Championships Saturday at the Nassau Coliseum on Long Island.

"I am so proud of what he has accomplished. He has worked so hard to reach the ultimate goal of winning a state title," Jeffords said. "There is no word to describe how proud I am of him."

McNally took it to Seifried from the opening whistle as he wiped away demons from his two previous state final appearances, both one-sided setbacks.

"I wanted this one, especially because this was my senior year and I knew I wouldn't get another chance," McNally said. "The last two years were in the past; there was nothing I could do about them. But tonight was

See Wrestling — page B-3

Wrestling

— From page B-1

my night. I felt like it was going to be a special night."

Seifried came into the title match with a perfect 49-0 record and looking for number 50. But the senior would be denied by McNally's aggressive, go-right-at-it style as McNally took him down right away.

But when McNally built a two-point lead, he faced Seifried's toughest move — a fierce half-nelson with legs — early in the second period.

"My eyes were blurry — that was the sickest half-nelson I have ever been in," said McNally, who fought out of it before being turned. "I wasn't going to my back, not a chance. The motivation I had for this match was incredible. There was no way I was going to my back in my final high school match — especially in the state finals."

Instead, McNally reversed Seifried and took a commanding lead entering the third period.

That's when McNally's conditioning took over — the same conditioning that got him an all-state finish at the 2005 NYSPHSAA Cross Country Championships last fall.

"The third period is why I ran cross country," McNally said. "I knew if it came down to the third period, I could win it. I felt great late in the match."

He felt even better with six seconds left.

"I heard the ref say 'six seconds left, keep him inbounds,' and that's when I knew I was going to win the state title," McNally said. "I couldn't believe it. The feeling I had when my hand was raised was worth the wait."

It was also worth the 24 years that Jeffords had to wait before getting his first state championship.

"From the first moment I met Mike and Steve (Mike's brother), I knew there was something special inside them," Jeffords said. "They would soak things up like a sponge. They absorb things so quickly. We would teach them a move in the morning and they would be doing it in a match that night. They are truly special kids and this is a special moment for them both."

"I would wait another 24 years if I knew it was going to feel as good as this."

McNally was more than happy to give his coach a state title.

"Coach Jeffords has done so much for me. I really wanted to give him one," McNally said. "He deserves this state title."

McNally was dominant throughout the entire tournament.

After two straight pins to make the semifinals, McNally handed Schuylerville's Erik Johanson his first loss in 33 matches as he beat the Section 2 grappler by an impressive 12-0 count.

"I just felt like it was my tournament," McNally said. "I really felt good all week and everything was clicking. It was meant to be. Third time's a charm."

The state crown for McNally was the first individual one in school history.

The girls volleyball team won the school's first team state title two years ago and repeated the feat this past season.

"To be a part of history means so much," McNally said. "It's something you just can't explain."

Warsaw's Paddock brothers, Ian and Paul, both missed a chance to repeat last year's individual titles.

Ian, a freshman, was upset in the 103-pound semifinals by a 4-3 score by eighth-grader Nick Wilcox of Greene.

The Section 4 grappler took it to Ian in the opening period, doing something no other wrestler had done all year — take him down to build a 2-0 lead.

Paddock, who brought 85 consecutive wins into his semifinal bout, managed an escape with 45 seconds left and added a takedown with 12 seconds remaining in the period to take a 3-2 lead after one.

But Wilcox reversed Paddock with 27 seconds left in the second period to regain the lead at 4-3 after two.

Wilcox somehow managed to hold Paddock down the entire third period — several times getting his hips out of a bad situation — to hold on to the biggest win of his life.

"I knew I could beat him but I knew it would be tough — very tough," said Wilcox, who went on to the state title six hours later with a 6-4 victory over Immaculate Heart's Ken Kampnich. "I wanted to get him early and show him that I was

ready for him. It was nice to beat him."

Paul Paddock earned a second-place finish in the 160-pound class where he lost a nail-biting 3-1 title match to Bainbridge grappler Eric Decker (Section 4), who was fresh off back-to-back state titles.

After both wrestlers jockeyed for position in the first period, Decker took the 1-0 lead off an escape with a minute left in the second period.

Paddock tied it 30 seconds into the third period when he got out of Decker's paws and worked for the escape.

After several Decker timeouts for a cut above his nose, Decker shot a double leg on Paddock, putting him on his rear end just near the out-of-bounds line with 25 seconds left. Although there was no apparent control, the mat official credited Decker with a takedown with 20 seconds left, giving him his third consecutive state title.

"Paul wrestled tough," Warsaw coach Rob Hirsch said. "It was one of those matches that could have went either way. It was anyone's match. I just wish it would have ended differently."

Caledonia-Mumford's Nate Schiedel placed third in the 171-pound class as the sophomore shook off a 5-4 heartbreaking loss in the semis, a match that he was leading 3-0 in the third period, and wrestled back to win his next two.

In his consolation final, Schiedel edged defending state champion Darrick Smith of South Jefferson (Section 3) by a 3-1 count.

"Nate wrestled a very good, and very smart, match," Cal-Mum coach John Wilbur said. "When he wrestles a person that is aggressive like Smith, it really fits into his style."

The victory over Smith, coupled with the tough semifinal loss, will help Schiedel down the road.

"The experience of both those matches will help me," said Schiedel, who finished the season 46-2. "I would like to get back here again next year and this time not let what happened in the semis happen again."

Pembroke junior Sam Domthongmivanh also enjoyed a stellar tournament as he placed third in the 125-pound class.

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Mike McNally

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Byron-Bergen coach Mike Jeffords

After losing a 10-2 quarterfinal match, Domthongmivanh ran off four consecutive wins, including a one-sided 10-2 victory over defending state champion and former Holley standout Anwar Goeres of Phoenix High School (Section 3) in the consolation semifinals. Domthongmivanh pinned Mineola's Nick Tonini in 1:52 for third place.

"The first day, I was really nervous and I didn't wrestle as well as I would have liked," Domthongmivanh said. "Today, my nerves were a lot better and I definitely wrestled a lot better. I just need to keep working hard and hopefully I can get back here again next year."

Attica's Jamie Carpenter placed fifth at 96 pounds as the senior pinned Beekmantown's Peter Avellanda in 2:56 in his final match.

His teammate, senior Dylan Rusiniak wasn't as fortunate.

After dropping his quarterfinal 3-1 to eventual champion Joe Widrick of Beaver River (Section 3), Rusiniak defeated Beekmantown's Adam Roberts by a 5-1 score before bowing out of the tournament with a 2-0 setback to Tioga's Miles Keene (Section 4) just one match before he would have hit the medal platform.

Medina's Derrick Adams took fourth place at 135 pounds. Adams lost 8-4 to Peru's Caleb Remillard in the third-place match.