



**ANNUAL ALL-STAR
AWARDS PRESENTATION
MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2023**

IMPORTANT DATES 2023-2024 SEASON

*Subject to change

Hydration: May begin on November 1, 2022

Wednesday, November 15th - GMC Pre Season Meeting 6:00, EBHS

Tryouts: November 20, 21, and 22, 2022

NOTE: No practices allowed on November 23, 24, 25, & 26

Official Practices Begins - Monday, November 28, 2022

Thursday, December 14, 2022 - Opening Day

January 15th - 2 Pound Allowance

GMC GIRLS TOURNAMENT TO BE ANNOUNCED

Thursday, January 25th GMC Seeding Meeting 5:00

No matches on this day

(Even with seeding done by committee)

Boys GMC Tournament January 26th and 27th

Saturday, January 27th - Team Playoff Cut Off

Tuesday, January 30th - Team Playoff Seeding Meeting

Saturday, February 3th - 30 Match Limit Cut-Off (Boys)

SECTIONALS: February 5th, 7th, and 9th

Thursday, February 15th District Seeding Meetings

Saturday, February 17th - District Tournaments

Monday, February 19th - Region Seeding Meetings

February 23th and 24th - Region Tournaments

Tuesday, February 27th - State Seeding Meeting

Feb 29th, March 1st, 2nd - State Tournament in Atlantic City

Wednesday, March 6th - Post Season Meeting 6:00pm, EBHS

****No Girls postseason dates - anticipate major changes ****



GREATER MIDDLESEX CONFERENCE WRESTLING COACHES ASSOCIATION

2023 All-Star Wrestlers

*All-Star Selections have been Awarded to all Top 4 in the GMCT and Any Other Wrestler Who Qualified for States
Girls were done by GMCT Allocation based on size of weight class and Any Other Wrestler Who Qualified for States*

COLONIA

Michael Feliciano

EAST BRUNSWICK

Bailey Cuomo
Risa Ferrari
Aliya Graca
Jake Gujski
Abigail Lydon
Russel Novak

EDISON

Julian Dawson

JOHN F KENNEDY

Giovanni Maglione
Mark Roche

JOHN P STEVENS

Adolfo Malabanan
Casey Wong

METUCHEN

Alex Osborn-Jones
Caelum Ritzdorf
Francesco Rossiter

MIDDLESEX

RJ Stradling

MONROE

Wyatt Olma

NEW BRUNSWICK

Yasir Johnson

NORTH BRUNSWICK

Rahkai Degrasse
Karol Mendez Trivino
Melanie Luna Vasquez
William Wilson

NORTH PLAINFIELD

Omar Elkouli

OLD BRIDGE

Nicholas Caruso
Adriana Farese
Aurora Gardner
Mandy Gavares
Daniel Hennessey
Brandon Koczon
Jesse Koczon
Avery Mack
Jenna Magrino
Austin Miller
Joseph Nalewajko
Robert Orzol
Logan Roman
Emma Sagi
Tyler Sagi
Jake Tenebruso

PERTH AMBOY

Elizabeth Adebola
Emily Fazzino
Leeah Gutierrez
Aeriel Stallworth
Leilani Zapata

PISCATAWAY

Richard Boateng Baah
Brian Butler
Malachi Wyatt

SAINT JOSEPH METUCHEN

Giovanni Alejandro
Julian Arango
Zachary Beadling
Andrew Bouchard
Brian Christie
Vincent Genna
Evan Mendez
Morgan Schwarz
Jake Tulli
John Whitacre
Tyler Whitford
Jake Zargo

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

Jahir Aguilar
Apryl Coffman
Steven Cohan
Makayla Decker
Mariana DeLaHoz
Ben DiCocco
Landon Kearns
Reed Kerstetter
Alex Pasquale
Nazareth Pina
Alessandra Socio
Saniyah Queen
Julianna Van Ness

SAYREVILLE

CJ McCrea
Meave Witte

SOUTH BRUNSWICK

Adam Derbala
Dionne Hooper
Michael Kurilla
Mustafa Oudeh
Rose Marie Pavley

SOUTH PLAINFIELD

Eva Altamirano
Adam Bowles
Nick Campagna
JJ Giordano
Nick Irizzary
Andrew Loniewski
Justus Niemeyer
Aldo Pigna
Joseph Stanzione

SPOTSWOOD

Melissa Wehrle

Team MVPs - Jetzeel Huertas - Carteret, Jimmy Boelhower-Woodbridge



GREATER MIDDLESEX CONFERENCE WRESTLING COACHES ASSOCIATION

2023 Special Awards

Courageous Wrestler

Giovanni Alejandro - Saint Joseph
JJ Giordano - South Plainfield

Tom Flanagan Memorial Scholarship Award

Bailey Cuomo - East Brunswick
Mandy Gavares - Old Bridge

Dean Family Scholarship

Melissa Wehrle - Spotswood

Wrestlers of the Year

113 - Logan Roman - Old Bridge
185 - Apryl Coffman - St Thomas Aquinas

Senior of the Year

138 - Giovanni Alejandro

Junior of the Year

152 - Elizabeth Adebola - Perth Amboy

Sophomore of the Year

144 - Jake Tenebruso - Old Bridge
145 - Saniyah Queen - St Thomas Aquinas

Freshman of the Year

107 - Leeah Gutierrez - Perth Amboy
126 - Morgan Schwarz - Saint Joseph

Top Team

Saint Joseph Metuchen

Best Team

Group I, II, III - South Plainfield
Group III, IV, V - Old Bridge

Most Improved Team

Group I, II, III - Middlesex
Group III, IV, V - Edison

Coach of the Year

Matt Creighton - John F Kennedy

Assistant Coach of the Year

Rachel Daddio - East Brunswick

Coaching Recognition Award

Joe Eurell - Monroe (100 wins)

Man of the Year

Luca Rispoli

Media Man of the Year

Jake Aferiat

Cliff Loysen Official of the Year

Rocco Oppedisano #175



GREATER MIDDLESEX CONFERENCE WRESTLING COACHES ASSOCIATION

STATE TOURNAMENTS TEAM

Carteret

North 2 Group 2 Qualifier

Colonia

North 2 Group 4 Qualifier

East Brunswick

Central Jersey Group 5 Qualifier

Edison

Central Jersey Group 5 Qualifier

JFK

North 2 Group 4 Qualifier

Metuchen

Central Jersey Group 1 Qualifier

Middlesex/Dunellen

Central Jersey Group 3 Qualifier

Monroe

Central Jersey Group 5 Qualifier

Old Bridge

Central Jersey Group 5 Semi-Finalist

Piscataway

North 2 Group 5 Qualifier

Saint Joseph

Non Public A Quarter-Finalist

Saint Thomas Aquinas

Non Public B Semi- Finalist

Sayreville

North 2 Group 4 Qualifier

South Plainfield

Central Jersey Group 3 Sectional Champs
Group 3 Semi-Finalist

Spotswood

Central Jersey Group 2 Qualifier

INDIVIDUAL

Boys Wrestling

Champion

113 - Logan Roman, Old Bridge

2nd Place

138 - Giovanni Alejandro, Saint Joseph

4th Place

157 - Tyler Sagi, Old Bridge

Top 12

106 - Ben DiCocco, Saint Thomas Aquinas
150 - Nicholas Campagna, South Plainfield
150 - Landon Kearns, Saint Thomas Aquinas
165 - William Wilson, North Brunswick

Top 16

126 - Morgan Schwarz, Saint Joseph
285 - Jake Tulli, Saint Joseph

Top 24

144 - Tyler Whitford, Saint Joseph
150 - Evan Mendez, Saint Joseph
165 - Justus Niemeyer, South Plainfield
175 - Michael Feliciano, Colonia
190 - Brian Christie, Saint Joseph

Qualifiers

120 - Jahir Aguiliar, Saint Thomas Aquinas
132 - Andrew Loniewski, South Plainfield
144 - Jake Tenebruso, Old Bridge
157 - Francesco Rossiter, Metuchen
157 - Vincent Genna, Saint Joseph
175 - Adam Bowles, South Plainfield
175 - Avery Mack, Old Bridge
215 - Steven Cohan, St Thomas Aquinas

Girls Wrestling

Champion

185 - Apryl Coffman, Saint Thomas Aquinas

2nd Place

145 - Saniyah Queen, Saint Thomas Aquinas

4th Place

152 - Elizabeth Adebola, Perth Amboy

5th Place

107 - Leeah Gutierrez, Perth Amboy
126 - Emma Sagi, Old Bridge

6th Place

100 - Mandy Gavarez, Old Bridge
165 - Alex Osborn-Jones, Metuchen

7th Place

138 - Melissa Wehrle, Spotswood

8th Place

145 - Aliya Graca, East Brunswick

Qualifiers

126 - Eva Altamirano, South Plainfield
132 - Jenna Magrino, Old Bridge
152 - Makayla Decker, Saint Thomas Aquinas
185 - Aurora Gardner, Old Bridge



100



Mandy Gavares, Old Bridge

- See Tim Flanagan Memorial Scholarship -



107



Leeah Gutierrez, Perth Amboy

- See Freshman of the Year -

Rose Marie Pavley, South Brunswick

Rose finished up her senior year as a model for all Viking wrestlers to follow. She was the captain of the team and had a strong 2023 season which included a 2nd place finish at the GMC Tournament. After the covid year, Rose showed well and placed 2nd at last year's GMC championship tournament as well. Overcoming, at times, lack of eligible girl wrestlers to compete against, Rose scored victories wrestling up weight classes in recording her victories this season. Rose's leadership, work ethic and high academic standing has helped set the bar high for the Vikings still in the wrestling program and those to come. The team and coaching staff will miss Rose immensely and wish her well as she finalizes her college plans.

Casey Wong, John P Stevens

Casey is a two-year starter for the JP Stevens Varsity team. Casey wrestled 106 for our co-ed team, and 107 in female competitions. Casey's commitment and discipline are unparalleled. She has managed to grow and develop her skills in the wrestling room all while maintaining her career in competitive gymnastics. Casey has exemplified to our program a "No Excuse" attitude when it comes to being at practice, and matches. This season Casey took 3rd in the GMC tournament and 4th in a fully seeded region II bracket. Our program is lucky to have an underclassman with so much potential heading into her junior campaign next season.



114



Juliana Van Ness, Saint Thomas Aquinas

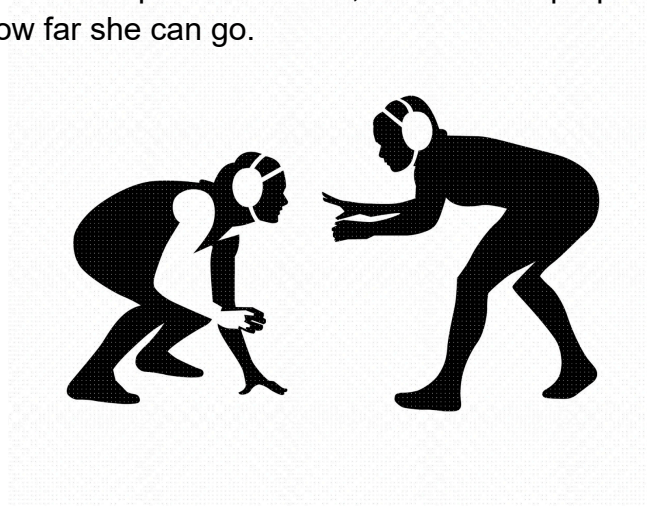
Julianna "Venom" Van Ness used a super fast snake-like low single and deadly venom to take out 54 opponents in her career. Julianna was a two time regional placewinner and a one time top 8 in the state finisher when she became STAs' first ever female state qualifier. She was a two time GMC champion and as a captain was instrumental in leading the Lady Trojans to the first ever GMC team championship. This season Julianna compiled a season record of 21-4 bringing her career mark to 54-13. Using her speed and intense attitude Julianna is going to make an excellent college wrestler as she looks to extend her wrestling career at Lock Haven university. Her coaches will miss the way she challenged all of us on a daily basis but she will be in the room on our wall of fame forever. Julianna, always remember you are forever a part of the STA wrestling family. Congratulations on an amazing Career and good luck.

Meave Witte, Sayreville

After a lifetime of dance, Maeve decided to make a switch to wrestling. While working out with some friends who wrestled, Maeve went for it and the rest is history. Maeve is the first female wrestler in Sayreville high school history. Maeve's courageousness got two other young ladies to come out and join the team mid-season. In Maeve's debut season she ended with a record of 10-4. Along the run of great wins Maeve took 2nd in the Ron Mazzola Holiday tournament, 2nd in the Freehold holiday tournament, and 2nd in the GMC tournament at 114 lbs. Unfortunately, Maeve's season ended shortly due to a nagging injury. Maeve is all in on wrestling and has lofty goals she is working towards for the upcoming seasons. Maeve truly is a trailblazer, and we can't wait to see what she does next.

Leilani Zapata, Perth Amboy

With Leilani, it's headlock or bust. She finished her freshman season with a respectable 16-10 record and a 3rd place finish at this year's GMC tournament. Leilani is the fierce competitor and is one the hardest workers in the wrestling room. Through injuries and other distractions, we are proud of LiLi and what she was able to accomplish this season. She is looking forward to getting back on the mats to improve her skills, and with the proper focus and discipline, she has no limitations on how far she can go.





120



Adriana Farese, Old Bridge

Adriana decided to make the jump from soccer to wrestling this season, and Old Bridge is so glad that she did. Farese worked hard heading into this season to make up for a lack of technical experience in our sport, and that hard work showed. She was a match shy of having an opportunity at the state tournament, and defeated some opponents through the year that made it to the dance and placed. But along the way, Adriana achieved her own pieces of success. She finished 5th in the Ron Mazzola, 1st in the GMC, and was a Region Wrestleback 3. We believe the sky is the limit for this motivated junior, and can't wait to see what her senior year holds.

Karol Mendez Trivino, North Brunswick

A 2nd year wrestler, Karol entered her 2nd season with a desire to improve on last year's performance. Not only did she improve wrestling for the girls, but she even helped on the boy's team. Karol is always positive and eager to learn and it paid off with her 3rd place win at GMCs. We are proud of her accomplishments this year, and look forward to what she will do next year.

Caelum Ritzdorf, Metuchen

Caelum Ritzdorf continues to compete at a high level. She showcased her skills this year at the GMC Tournament, with a 2nd place finish. Caelum is a hard working, skilled wrestler looking to put points on the board! She is looking forward to two more years on the mat as a Bulldog.



126



Emma Sagi, Old Bridge

Emma was just only a year into her wrestling career when the season began. This was actually her first full season, as she split time between wrestling and cheer. This season she dedicated herself fully to the sport, and her hard work and dedication paid off. Emma carried a lot of expectations, perhaps unfairly, as her brother has achieved so much in this sport. But Emma has accomplishments of her own to stand on now. Emma took 1st in the Ron Mazzola, 3rd in the EB Lady Bear, 3rd in the Elizabeth Lady Minutemen, 1st in the GMC, 1st in the Central Region, and 5th in the state of New Jersey. We believe Emma has only begun to tap into her potential as a wrestler, and know she has everything in her abilities to reach the top of the podium next season. Old Bridge is so proud of Emma Sagi.



132



Eva Altamirano, South Plainfield

Eva had another successful season in her second year with South Plainfield. She started out by placing 2nd at the Bloomfield Tournament losing in the finals to the eventual 132 lb State Champion 10-2. Eva would then go on to win the Lady Mustang Zoo Tournament and the very next day, finish 2nd at the Lady Bear Invitational, losing to the 138lb State finalist in a close back and forth match. Eva continued her streak of making it to the finals of every tournament she wrestled by finishing 2nd at the Lady Minutemen Classic at Elizabeth losing again to the 138lb state finalist in a close match. Eva would also go on to win her first GMC Tournament Title pinning her way through the tournament. Nagged by a shoulder injury all season, Eva entered the region tournament as the number two seed and would go on to place 2nd giving Kira Pipkins all she could handle losing an 8-2 decision. Eva entered the state tournament as the #3 seed, but did not have the performance she was hoping for as she went 1-2. She finished the season with 16 pins and all losses to state place-winners. With an off-season full of training and recovery, we expect Eva will be back for her best season yet as she enters her Junior year. Congrats Eva on a great Sophomore season!!

Mariana DeLaHoz, Saint Thomas Aquinas

Junior Marianna "Dozer" DelaHoz bulldozed her way through her first year ever wrestling compiling a 16 - 5 record . Working hard and listening to her coaches Marianna improved every day . Avenging an early season loss and wrestling to a 3rd place finish in the GMC was instrumental in helping the Lady Trojans secure the first ever GMC team championship. Showing great mental and physical toughness Marianna went 2-2 in regional competition. Having all the tools needed to excel in the sport of wrestling and the attitude to put in the work this off season the sky is the limit for Mari next year. Her coaches are looking forward to her leadership helping the Lady Trojans defend their title.Way to Marianna ,Great Season!

Jenna Magrino, Old Bridge

Jenna can be described succinctly as a "natural" when it comes to wrestling. Of all the girls Coach Post tried recruiting, Jenna was not one. She was a committed soccer player who made the decision on her own to discuss the possibility of coming out for the wrestling team. What started out as a three-day trial turned into one of the most successful seasons any Knight experienced this season, across both boys' and girls' teams. Jenna has natural aggression and competitiveness that cannot be taught. She competed all year long up two weight-classes to stretch out our line-up, and in spite of giving up 10-12 lbs per match, she achieved great success. Jenna finished 2nd in the Ron Mazzola, 4th in the Elizabeth Lady Minutemen, 2nd in the GMC, and 3rd in the Central Region with a pin to secure her state qualification. Though her state tournament did not end as she had hoped, the confidence and experience gained this season can only help carry her to continued success next year. For a girl with three months of experience, she finished top-12 in the state. We cannot wait to see what the future holds for Jenna.



138



Dionne Hooper, South Brunswick

Dionne stormed the Viking wrestling room with her athletic ability. She finished up her freshman year with 12 wins, a GMC 2nd place and an opening day surprise Ron Mazzola Tournament Championship. The sky's the limit and the future is bright for this growing Viking athlete. We look forward to growing her talent and watching her reach the potential that she has been gifted with. Dionne will be looked upon to help mold the future of the Viking wrestlers coming up as she will be the most decorated Viking returning to action next season.

Alessandra Socio, Saint Thomas Aquinas

Alessandra "Pit Bull" Socio in only her second year of wrestling compiled a season record of 13-7 improving her career mark to 25-15. Without question she is a pit bull on the mat ready to fight and bite and scrap for every point. Her intensity and hatred of losing combined with her work ethic is gonna take her to the next level very fast. Her 3rd place in the GMC was key in helping the Lady Trojans hold off the field and win the first ever GMC team championship. Ali is also a pit bull on the soccer field as the varsity goalie since her freshman season. Her coaches know that with her practice habits there is no limit to how high she can rise. We will be counting on her leadership of all the new girls joining the team. Great season Ali. Way to go!

Melissa Wehrle, Spotswood

- See Dean Family Scholarship -





145



Aliya Graca, East Brunswick

Aliya started out as a brand new wrestler last season and slowly started to put the sport together. At the end of the season, she made it her goal to qualify for the state tournament the following year. Despite great improvements in her wrestling from the year before, Aliya was still struggling with her confidence on the mat, especially in tournaments, impacting her performance. Most of Aliya's losses this season came from matches she was winning. At the very end of the season, something changed for Aliya. Her confidence improved and her technique became more fine-tuned. After a disappointing loss in the semi-finals of the region tournament, Aliya beat two tough opponents and surprised even herself with a quick first-period pin to qualify for her first state tournament as only a sophomore! Despite suffering an injury at the state tournament, Aliya won 2 matches to secure her spot on the podium as 8th in the state. We are so proud of Aliya accomplishing her goal this season and cannot wait to see her work her way up the podium in her next 2 years!

Aeriel Stallworth, Perth Amboy

Aeriel, a freshman, never missed a practice or a wrestling event. She might not have been the most talented wrestler, but she was the toughest wrestler. She would wrestle four, sometimes five times in each tournament this season. She was our team's anchor for the middleweights. She finished this season with a record of 19-11 and was runner up at the GMC tournament and placed 4th at the North 2 Region. Unfortunately, Aeriel will be moving to Allentown, PA next year. She may be a little dramatic at times but she gave us great effort every day and every time she went out on the mat. She battled through some foot injuries all season and never complained. She wanted to keep wrestling no matter what the situation and how she was feeling that day. She will be missed; we wish her all the best.

Saniyah Queen, Saint Thomas Aquinas

- See Sophomore of the Year -





152

**Elizabeth Adebola, Perth Amboy**

- See Junior of the Year -

Makayla Decker, Saint Thomas Aquinas

Makayla "Deck You" Decker used a great top ride and turn to deck most of her opponents while finishing her sophomore campaign with a 22-4 record raising her career mark to 37 - 17. Makayla was Queen of the East Champion, GMC champion and 3rd in the region. In her second trip to states in as many years Makayla fell just short of her podium goals with two hard fought defeats. Her coaches know that with her off season work ethic and love of the sport of wrestling there is no limit to how high she can rise on the podium. We will be counting on Makayla to lead the charge of the Lady Trojans in defending their GMC team championship. Way to go Makayla great season ! Lets Gooooooo!!!

Abigail Lydon, East Brunswick

Abby really stepped up this year to be a leader both on and off the mat. She never shied away from tough competition or an extra match. Of Abby's 10 losses this season, 7 came from eventual state qualifiers or placers and she had multiple wins over other state placewinners, despite finishing her season 5/6 in the region. When asked what her favorite wrestling moment was, Abby chose a match that she lost as her moment that stuck out, saying that is when she realized she needed to be mentally tougher. In only one year, Abby almost quadrupled her wins, from 5 wins last season to 19 this season. Abby also played a large role in us having the most girls on the team to date and still continues to try to get girls interested in joining wrestling. We are so excited to see what our Team Captain will accomplish on her senior campaign!





165



Emily Fazzino, Perth Amboy

Emily wrestled for our middle school program. Once she entered high school she decided not to wrestle and joined the cheerleading team. This year, the junior decided to come out for the team in late December and missed the first 2 tournaments. Even though she was away for a few years, she didn't forget how to wrestle. With a week of practice, she burst onto the scene and went out and won the Elizabeth tournament by pinning her opponent in the finals in 14 secs. Her opponent went on the place 2nd in the STATE tournament. She also, like most of our team this season, had a few injuries. She placed 2nd in the GMC and finish with a 10-3 record. She has the talent to make it far next season and we all hope she will come back to finish the job senior year.

Risa Ferrari, East Brunswick

Risa came out as a senior to wrestle one season for the Bears. To say she had a successful season would be an understatement. Risa had 25 wins this season and all 25 were by pin. A 6-seed in the GMC tournament, she pinned a former GMC champ in the first round, a former GMC champ/state qualifier who she lost to twice in the semi-final, and the 1-seed in the finals. She was a force to be reckoned with on the mat. It is hard to imagine how her success could have grown with a little more confidence in herself or one more year on the team. Although she was only on the team for one year, Risa became an integral part of the team and she will be sorely missed next season. Risa plans to attend college in Canada, where she is considering wrestling.

Alex Osborn-Jones, Metuchen

Alex Osborn-Jones made great strides in her Senior campaign, she put a lot of work into the season and it showed when it counted. Alex showed her resilience and toughness this postseason placing 3rd at the GMC's and 1st in North Region II and placing 6th in the NJSIAA Individual Tournament. Alex is leading the way for a new era of Girls Bulldog wrestling, we are very proud of her prestigious accomplishments.



185



Apryl Coffman, Saint Thomas Aquinas

- See Outstanding Wrestler -

Aurora Gardner, Old Bridge

Aurora has a very similar story to her classmate Mandy. Aurora had strong success her freshman year, winning the GMC and finished 6th in the South Region. But injuries to her shoulder and back took her out of competition over her sophomore and junior years. It was this season she decided to wrestle through some lingering issues to see what was left in the tank. We are so happy she did. Aurora was the anchor at the top of our line-up, wrestling to a 13-9 record with plenty of bonus point victories. Aurora finished 1st in the Ron Mazzola, 3rd in the EB Lady Bear, 2nd in the GMC, 2nd in the Central Region, securing a top-12 finish in the state of New Jersey. We are so proud of Aurora's perseverance and performance throughout the year, and will always remember her contributions as one of the original Lady Knights wrestlers.



235



Rahkai Degrasse, North Brunswick

A 1st year wrestler, Rahkai helped lead the team as a captain. Rahkai starting the season with an open mind and the determination to learn how to wrestle and win at the same time. Even though she only had 11 matches for the season, she improved with each match and even took 1st place at the girl's GMC 235lb weight class. We are proud of her accomplishments this year, and look forward to what she will do next year.

Melanie Luna Vazquez, North Brunswick

A 1st year wrestler, Melanie started the season with an open mind and the determination to learn how to wrestle and win at the same time. Even though she only had 16 matches for the season, she improved with each match and even took 2nd place at the girl's GMC 235 lb weight class. We are proud of her accomplishments this year, and look forward to what she will do next year.





106



Julian Arango, Saint Joseph

Julian started off his career at St. Joe's with a great freshman campaign that saw him pick up 20 wins while wrestling a tough schedule where he wrestled 9 state qualifiers from this year's 106 pound State tournament. Despite the schedule, Julian wrestled tough for the Falcons all year long saving bonus points and securing them for St. Joe's when given the opportunity. Julian came into the GMCT as the 7 seed and quickly proved that his rigorous schedule and training had prepared him for the moment as he ended up taking 3rd place and became a GMC All-Star as a freshman. Julian followed that up by making it to the District finals at 106 pounds and taking 2nd place, advancing him to the Regions where he would win his opening round match. The future is bright for this hard working individual.

Ben DiCocco, St Thomas Aquinas

Benny " BullDog " DiCocco got after it with dogged determination and a relentless chase of points on the mat. This attack of points helped Ben achieve many big come from behind wins and exciting last second takedowns aging his coaches terribly. He compiled a season record of 32-7 , finishing top 12 in the state. However his coaches would argue for 9th because all of Benny's 7 very competitive losses were to top 8 finishers. He had 1 loss to the champ, 2 losses to 3rd, 1 loss to 4th, 2 losses to 6th and a loss to 8th. He was 4th in region 4 finishing behind 1,3 and 6 in the state , what a region. Benny was leader of the pack in practice as a captain and his leadership helped the Trojans with the white division . Ben was 1st in the GMC, 2nd in the Governor Livingston tourney and 2nd in District 16 improving his career mark to 72-14. Besides leading the Trojans on the mat Benny also led the pack during cross country season . His love of wrestling and animal like drive to compete will be counted on by his coaches to set the pace in Ahr wrestling room and achieve new heights personally while elevating all around him. What a season! Way to go Benny.

Joseph Nalewajko, Old Bridge

Freshman Joseph Nalewajko came out after taking his 8th grade year off. He showed real promise in the practice room, but his season did not get off to the start he had hoped for. As we know in this sport, it is not about how you start, but how you finish. JoJo made strides throughout the year, with his first confidence win coming against South Plainfield, in which his pin secured the dual meet victory for the Knights. JoJo continued to improve as he placed 4th in the GMC and 4th in the district. His passion for wrestling has been reinvigorated, and we are extremely encouraged by what his future holds.

Joseph Stanzione, South Plainfield

Joseph had a solid freshman campaign for the Tigers. He started out by capturing a Morris Knolls Tournament Championship. Joe also went undefeated in the Red Division scoring a major upset against John Whitacre of St. Joseph's Metuchen in the dual meet. Joe would also go on to help the Tigers defeat Group 4 Champions North Hunterdon by pinning a solid wrestler as well. He finished as a GMC Runner-up and would go on to win the District 14 Tournament. The coaching staff has the utmost confidence that Joseph has the ability to accomplish great things in his high school career provided he puts in the time this off-season on the mat and in the weight room. Congrats Joe on a great year!



113



Jake Gujski, East Brunswick

Jake is one of four Freshman to start for East Brunswick this year. From the very start of the season he showed he was not to be taken lightly, winning 29 matches 18 of which by fall. In the opening weekend he won his first High School match by fall and went on to place 5th at the Ron Mazzola Memorial Tournament. Jake then continued his success going on to take 2nd at the Bears Invitational. Starting the new year Jake would go on to win 9 matches in a row, going into the GMC Tournament where he finished 4th. He topped off a great freshman season taking 2nd in the Districts. Jake has a bright future ahead of him and is willing to put in the hard work to get to the top GMC Podium.

Cj McCrae, Sayreville

CJ continued his strong high school career with 21 more wins on the season. CJ was the definition of a team player. Coming into the season the bombers had multiple strong 120'lbbers being the leader he is CJ took on the endeavor of making 113lbs. It was a tall task but CJ made 113 and the Bombers went 16-10 on the season as a result of him making the lineup as strong as it could possibly be. CJ is a year-round wrestler who never stops working and always works for the fall. CJ will go into his senior year leading the team in wins and most other categories. CJ's senior year will be something to keep an eye out for!

Logan Roman Old Bridge

- See Outstanding Wrestler -

John Whitacre, St Joes Metuchen

John wrestled through injuries this year, as well as a tough schedule, yet still found his way into the top 3 of the GMCT and the district finals for the 2nd year in a row. John's toughness and hard work were on display as the Falcons had no back ups at the 106/113 pound weight class, so despite injuries, he stayed on the mat to help his team as team points were needed in almost every match this year. John picked up big wins for the Falcons against Brick Memorial, Hanover Park, and Raritan which allowed us to pull away from those teams and pick up momentum in the middle of those matches. Look for John to bulk up this off season and go up a few weight classes as he prepares for his final year of high school.



120



Jahir Aguilar, Saint Thomas Aquinas

Jahir "Astrosmash" Aguilar came to the Trojans from outer space with some extraterrestrial moves throughout this season. As the 11th seed in the GMC tournament Jahir defeated seeds 6,3, and 2 enroute to the finals. Jumping to light speed at the end of the season as 5th seed in the District Jahir was able to place 3rd in the district and land in the regions as the tenth seed. With no fear Jahir used his alien ankle attacks to place 4th in the region and advance to Atlantic City. He finished his season with a 22-9 record improving his career mark to 42-14. With two more seasons left to soar his coaches know that with Jahirs work ethic and concrete smashing intensity he will make it to new heights. The coaches are counting on Jahir's leadership to help the Trojans defend their division title and are excited to be along for the ride. Great season Jahir and Good Luck!

Zachary Beadling, Saint Joseph

If you talk to Zach, he will tell you that his sophomore year was a disappointment, because he did not meet his ultimate goal of qualifying for the state tournament. However, a deeper dive into his season shows that he won 3 different tournaments, pinned his way through the GMC tournament all by 1st period falls, and pinned his way through the District tournament to win his 2nd District title in as many years. Zach defeated Max Elton at Beast of the East, who ended up taking 4th in the state at his weight, and wrestled 6 of the 8 state placers at his weight class during the season. To say that Zach earned his 26 wins this year would be an understatement. With 59 wins in 2 seasons, Zach has set himself up to make a run at the 100 win mark as well as much more as he enters his junior year. We can't wait to see what lies ahead for this young man.

Nicholas Irizarry, South Plainfield

Nicholas compiled a 19-13 wrestler against very tough competition throughout the year. He captured his first Morris Knolls Tournament title, to open the year. Nick also went 2-2 at the prestigious Sam Cali Invitational losing close matches to State Qualifier caliber wrestlers. Nick continued his success in the GMC by placing 3rd at the conference tournament and went 3-1 during the week of the Team Sectional Playoffs. Nick's season ended by placing 4th in the district tournament in a weight class that featured two rounds of 12 wrestlers and a region 6th place finisher. Congrats Nick on another solid year in the Tiger green and white. The coaching staff is looking forward to two more years with him.

Adolfo Malabanan, John P Stevens

As a two-year starter for John P Stevens, Adolfo led the hawks as one of our team captains. Adolfo led by example, constantly working hard and demonstrating extreme self-discipline. As the captain of a very young and inexperienced team, Adolfo set the standard of what it takes to be a successful wrestler. Adolfo finished his sophomore campaign with 28 wins, a 4th place GMC finish at 120, and a 2nd place finish at the east Brunswick bears classic. Our program is extremely excited to see all that Adolfo has to offer as an upperclassman next season.



126



Julian Dawson, Edison

Julian Dawson is a senior who finished with 97 wins with 2 covid seasons. He was a 4x region qualifier, once wrestling in the semifinals. In his career he championed at the Holmdel Tournament, Edison Classic, Dessino Classic and East Brunswick Invitational. Julian was a GMC champion and the tournament MVP to highlight his incredible career. He will be attending Morgan State!

Jesse Koczon, Old Bridge

Jesse Koczon has always been a talented wrestler, and during his senior season he really began to realize his potential. Jesse began the season on a roll, with a 3rd place finish at the Ron Mazzola, and a 1st place finish at the Hunterdon Central Invitational with a win in the finals over returning state-qualifier Liss of Matawan. Jesse continued to excel throughout the season with a GMC finals appearance, and a 3rd place finish in the district. Jesse avenged his GMC finals loss to Dawson of Edison by finishing his high school career with a win in the region 5th/6th place match. Jesse will be continuing his wrestling career at the collegiate level with his brother Brandon at Middlesex CC.

Aldo Pigna, South Plainfield

Aldo had a great Junior year for the Tigers finishing with a 19-14 record. He opened the season winning the Morris Knolls tournament by defeating an eventual state qualifier from Morris Hills in the finals. Aldo also had a huge win in the dual meet against North Hunterdon in which he dominated a pretty good region qualifier to help propel the Tigers to the victory. He placed 4th on the GMC losing a close 2-1 match to a SWB3. Aldo would go on to place 3rd in the district to qualify for the Region 4 tournament. The coaching staff believes Aldo has the ability to become a state qualifying caliber wrestler with dedication and determination this off-season. Congrats Aldo and we are excited to have one more season to make it your best yet

Morgan Schwarz, Saint Joseph

- See Freshman of the year -



132



Reed Kerstetter, Saint Thomas Aquinas

Reed "killer" Kerstetter finished his sophomore season with a 21-10 record. This improved his two year total to 44-25. Reed's work ethic in practice and his toughness on the mat and cross country course are the reason why he is constantly leveling up. Train to beat the best, work to over achieve and always be scoring. Reed has yet to scratch the surface of his potential but with his positive attitude and coachability the sky's the limit. This year Reed was 2nd in the Governor Livingston Tournament, won two matches at Sam Cali and finished 4th in the GMC. Suffering a knee injury that kept him out after the counties, Reed showed no fear when he was cleared to compete one day before districts. With conditioning not where it was at counties and technique that was rusty as well Reed fought through the district on guts and determination. He placed 3rd advancing to the regions for the 2nd time in as many years. Reed was undefeated in divisional matches and helped the Trojans win the white division title. His leadership and toughness will be counted on next year as he takes himself and the Trojan team to the next level. Great season Reed. Let's goooooo!

Brandon Koczon, Old Bridge

Brandon, like his brother Jesse, came up in his earlier years behind some talented upperclassmen, and this was his year to shine. Though Brandon had his season shortened last year, he came in determined to make the most of his senior campaign. Wrestling to a 28-11 record, he picked up some crucial wins along the way to put his name on the map. Brandon finished 3rd in the Ron Mazzola, 3rd in the GMCs and 3rd in the District 19 Tournament. Brandon has made great strides over the past four years, and will continue to tap into his potential as he will be wrestling at Middlesex CC next year.

Andrew Loniewski, South Plainfield

Andrew saved his best season in a Tiger uniform for his senior campaign. He started out the year winning the Morris Knolls Tournament and placing 6th in the Sam Cali defeating multiple state qualifiers that went deep into the state tournament. Andy would continue his winning ways into January going undefeated in the Division and scoring big wins in dual meets against North Hunterdon and Delsea. As January came to a close, he picked up his wrestling even more as he won his first county title, something which had plagued him and his oldest brother David throughout their high school career, and he did it in dominating fashion winning 6-1 in the finals over a wrestler that beat him in the county and region tournament the previous year. Andrew would go on to suffer a sprained MCL in practice before the sectional tournament and still was able to come through with a big pin in the sectional finals against Hopewell Valley. Andy would go on to win his first district title and place 4th in Region 4 qualifying him for the state tournament. Congrats to him on a great career and best of luck as he continues his educational and wrestling careers at Muhlenberg College, your leadership and dedication to the South Plainfield Wrestling Program will be missed!

Giovanni Maglione, John F Kennedy

A 4 year starter for the Mustangs and 3 year captain, Giovanni Maglione came into his senior year with a lot of unknowns after tearing his ACL in football midway through October. However, he chose to forgo surgery and wrestled the entire season. He finished the season with an overall record of 35-4. He took 2nd in the GMC County Tournament at 132 lbs. He captured a District 13 Championship and finished his career with over 100 wins. He also led the Mustangs to their first division championship since 2010. His leadership and commitment to this team for the last 4 years will truly be missed and impossible to replace.



138



Giovanni Alejandro, Saint Joseph

- See Senior of the Year/Courageous Wrestler -

Brian Butler, Piscataway

Brian improved on his stellar sophomore season a year ago and helped lead the Chiefs to a successful season. He finished off the season with a second straight District 19 championship and was an alternate for the state tournament, finishing in 5th place in the Region 5 tournament. Brian started the season strong with a 3rd place finish at the Mike Dessino Invitational and a 1st place finish at the Anthony Caselli Invitational. He continued to roll through the season finishing with 33 wins, 21 pins, and his first GMC finals appearance. Brian is a leader both on and off the mat for all the wrestlers in the room and the Chiefs look forward to another successful season from him next year.

Wyatt Olma, Monroe

Wyatt Olma had a breakout junior season leading Monroe in with 28 wins and 18 falls. Last season Olma suffered a broken hand last season and was limited to only eleven matches. Wyatt used the injury as motivation to have a strong offseason and make the most out of his junior campaign. Olma's work ethic and determination were on display this season as he placed 3rd in the GMC tournament and was a District 24 finalist at 138 pounds. His success on the mat and leadership in the room made Olma a key leader for Monroe this season. With another season ahead of him, Olma is looking forward to continuing to improve his skills and lead his team to the next level. As he looks towards the future, there is no doubt that he will continue to impress both on and off the mat.

Mark Roche, John F Kennedy

A 3 year starter for the Mustangs and 3 year captain, Mark Roche cemented his legacy at JFK during his senior season. Mark finished the season with a record of 29-7. He took 4th in the GMC Tournament at 138 lbs. He captured a District 13 Championship and advanced to regions for the first time in his career. After a gritty performance in Regions, he placed 5th in the Region 4 tournament. Another Mustang who persevered through injury throughout the season, Mark and his fellow seniors set the standard for years to come. Mark will continue his wrestling career at East Stroudsburg University next fall!



144



JJ Giordano, South Plainfield

- See Courageous Wrestler -

Austin Miller, Old Bridge

Austin Miller had an every-man experience in his senior year. Austin selflessly moved between 144 and 150 throughout the dual meet season, often taking on tough competition. Miller did very well in this regard, and his record does not reflect the high quality of a wrestler he is. Austin had the ability to turn a match on its head with his high-leverage skill set, as he was dangerous from many positions with 13 of his 21 wins coming by pinfall. Austin went 144 for the GMCs and came away with a 3rd place finish after not placing in his prior attempts. Miller was in a very tough weight class in the district, finishing 4th while two of the three place-winners in his weight eventually made the state tournament. Austin is continuing his wrestling career as a coach now, operating as the elad technician for Jamesburg Rec. We are very proud of Austin and all of his contributions to our team over the last three seasons.

Mustafa Oudeh, South Brunswick

Mustafa transferred to South Brunswick mid-season during the 2021-2022 campaign. He became an instant starter for South Brunswick and put together an impressive senior resume as a Viking wrestler. After getting acclimated to the GMC, Mustafa showed well and placed 4th at this year's GMC championship tournament. At the District 18 Tournament Mustafa navigated a difficult 144 lb weight class placing third and winning the right to wrestle in the region 5 tournament. Overcoming an early season back injury, Mustafa recorded 27 victories this season. His leadership, work ethic and high academic standing has helped set the bar high for the Vikings still in the wrestling room and those to come. The team and coaching staff will miss Mustafa immensely and wish him luck as he finishes making his future plans.

Jake Tenebruso, Old Bridge

- See Sophomore of the Year -

Tyler Whitford, Saint Joseph

Tyler burst onto the scene early in the season down at the Egg Harbor Christmas tournament. He was given the 6 seed and after defeating the 11, he defeated the 3, 2, and 1 seeds all of whom were region qualifiers the year before. From there on, Tyler would only lose matches to wrestlers who were state ranked or who were returning state placers. He put a scare into many wrestlers and at the end of the season was finally given the championship he was looking for by winning a District title as a freshman and placing him into the Region quarterfinals. After a shocking first match loss, most freshmen would have put their head's down and lost the following match now that a Region title was out of reach, but Tyler regrouped and won three consecutive Region matches. This secured his spot as 3rd in the Region and qualified him for the state tournament as a freshman, which is an amazing accomplishment. More amazing was the resolve that Tyler showed by being able to shake off a loss and win 3 straight matches against tough competition with a state appearance on the line for everyone, which shows you that big things are in the future for this individual.



150



Nicholas Campagna, South Plainfield

Nick had another very successful season for the Tigers. He won the Morris Knolls tournament for the second straight year in dominating fashion. Nick would follow that performance up by placing 2nd at the Sam Cali Tournament. As the dual meet season began, Nick was called upon on many occasions to come up big for the team and he did that time and time again. Nick entered the GMC Tournament in the deepest weight class as the number 2 seed and dominated his first two matches even while battling a severe illness. Unfortunately, he had to default out of the tournament the next day to a sixth place finish. Once recovered, Nick was able to pick up his training again and turned in great performances at the end of the year. He went undefeated the week of sectionals going 4-0. Nick would win his second district title the following week and then go on to dominate in the Region tournament avenging his loss in the finals of the Sam Cali Tournament. Nick entered the state tournament as the 8 seed and finished in the round of 12 losing in sudden victory. Nick led the team in wins with 32 and tied for the team lead in pins with 15. Nick has the ability to be a State Champion and with another solid off-season the coaching staff feels he can reach that goal. Congrats Nick on another successful season!

Bailey Cuomo, East Brunswick

- See Tim Flanagan Scholar Wrestler Award -

Landon Kearns, Saint Thomas Aquinas

Landon " Lightning Strike " Kearns used one of the fastest shots in STA history to put together one of Ahr schools finest seasons and careers. His senior record was 41-5 improving his career mark to 115 -21. In his career Landon was 5th 3rd and 1st in the GMC tournament and a 2 time state qualifier finishing top 16 last year and top 12 this year. This year he was also champion outstanding wrestler of the Governor Livingston tournament and the schools first ever Sam Cali belt winning champion. Landon was district 16 champion and 2nd in region 4. His leadership as two year captain helped the Trojans win their first white division title in 10 yrs. Through success and setback Landon carried himself like a true leader should. Minutes after suffering what was probably the toughest loss of his 10yr wrestling career Landon was mat side coaching up and cheering on his teammates . At the next practice it was back to work business as usual. It's this mental toughness that helped Landon level up every season he wrestles , it's this character that makes Landon a success in the classroom and in all that he endeavors. As a coach of 33 seasons it was truly a blessing to watch Landon and learn from his process. All His coaches are so excited to watch Landon's career continue next year as a wrestler at the Coast Guard Academy. Never forget you are forever a part of the STA wrestling family ! Congratulations and good luck Landon.

Evan Mendez, Saint Joseph

Evan, after a disappointing freshman year finish, seemed poised to have a turnaround run in the postseason the following year as a sophomore. However, between COVID and nagging shoulder injury his sophomore year never took off as an MRI revealed a slap tear in his labrum and biceps that would need to be surgically repaired. After a year off, Evan burst back on the scene as a junior and followed that up with an even better senior year. Starting off down at Beast of the East, Evan went 4-2 but unfortunately fell in the blood round with arguably the most wildly entertaining 2-0 match you will ever see. Evan did not let that deter him as the next week he would win the Egg Harbor tournament. Despite being given the 4 seed in the GMC tournament, he knocked off the 1 seed in the semi-finals by fall after leading 11-3. In the finals he defeated the 3 seed by a 6-1 score. Evan started firing on all cylinders until a shoulder injury flared up after wrestling Frank DiBella from St. Joseph Montvale in the sectionals. Tied 4-4 late in the match, Evan shot and felt his shoulder pop out. What could have been a season ending injury for most Evan finished the match and lost respectfully 7-4, and then would go onto win his second consecutive District final and his second consecutive Region title in dramatic fashion by securing a take-down in sudden victory with under 3 seconds left in the overtime. Evan's final two years at St. Joe's brought a bunch of high flying matches and emotions. He was a leader in the room, on the mat, and off the mat. He will be sorely missed by us but will continue his wrestling career at Muhlenberg University where we know he will find success as well.

RJ Stradling, Middlesex-Dunellen

RJ Stradling is a senior who has been wrestling with us for the past two seasons and has developed quite the impressive resume. After enduring countless hours of hard work and dedication, RJ's efforts have paid off with an impressive list of accomplishments. In just two seasons with the Blue Jays he has 58 wins, a two-time Mike Dessino Invitational champion, two-time GMC tournament placewinner, two-time district placewinner, and recently placed 6th in the region in one of the toughest weight classes in Region 5. RJ gives everything he's got each and every time he steps onto the mat. He has not only been a leader for our team but for our younger wrestlers in the rec and middle school programs. He always has a positive attitude and is the first one to lend a helping hand. RJ's success is a direct result of his hard work and dedication to the sport, and he has been an incredible asset to our program. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors and thank him for being an inspiring role model for future Blue Jay wrestlers.





157



Vincent Genna, Saint Joseph

Senior captain Vincent Genna has made a name for himself over the past 4 years as he and a few of his teammates have slowly developed into the face of St. Joe's wrestling. Vince's work ethic in the room, dedication to wrestling outside of the room, and overall hard work have led to him being a 2 time GMC All-Star, a 3 time District finalist, 1 time District Champ, 4 time Region qualifier, a 2 time Region placer, and 2 time state qualifier. A rash of injuries and illnesses this year could have derailed his season but he fought through everything, and despite never really being fully healthy all year, saved his best for last. After falling in the quarterfinals of the Regions Vince found himself 1 loss away from his season ending, but he picked up two consecutive wins to qualify him for states including a huge 6-3 win over returning state qualifier Kevin McBride from SJV in the blood round. Just like some other wrestlers, Vincent most likely would have joined the 100 win club had his sophomore year not been cut short due to COVID as he ended up with 86 career wins in essentially 3 seasons of wrestling. Either way, a great career at St. Joe's comes to an end and a new beginning starts for Vince as he has committed to TCNJ to continue his academic and athletic career.

Michael Kurilla, South Brunswick

Finishing up his third year as a full time starter for South Brunswick, Mikey has left his mark on the Viking wrestling program. Mickey had to overcome a serious injury that did not allow him to compete in the 2021-2022 season. Mickey was determined to have a successful campaign anyway. Mickey's accomplishments included a 4th place finish at the GMC Tournament, a 2nd place finish at the District 18 Tournament, and he was the calming leader of the Viking program. Mickey recorded 28 victories this season. Mickey's leadership and focus had a huge impact on this Viking team. Mickey's wholesome fun loving attitude will be greatly missed. Both the team and the coaching staff will miss Mickey and wish him well in college.

Tyler Sagi, Old Bridge

Season Summary: Tyler Sagi has had a historic career at Old Bridge, and he capped off his senior season in a declarative form. Tyler wrestled to a 42-3 record, only falling twice in the state tournament to the eventual state champion and 3rd place finisher, whom he also wrestled during the year. Outside of those blemishes, his season was stellar and one of the best in school history. Tyler became a three-time GMC Champion and a three-time District Champion, and odds are he would have been a four-timer in both regards had it not been for the Covid-shortened season his sophomore year. Tyler was a Super Region Champion his sophomore year, and a Region 5 Champion this season. Tyler is one of only a few of OBHS wrestlers to qualify for the state tournament four times. In the state tournament, he defeated the #1 seed in the quarterfinals, and the #2 seed in the consi-semifinals. Tyler put his best efforts on the mat this season, and was rewarded by placing top 4 in one of the toughest weight classes in the state. Tyler will continue his wrestling career at the Naval Academy at Annapolis as he pursues an engineering degree. Old Bridge is extremely proud of Tyler Sagi, and all of his contributions to Old Bridge Wrestling.

Francesco Rossiter, Metuchen

Francesco Rossiter had a historic career for the bulldogs, he is the first NJSIAA State Qualifier for Metuchen wrestling in two decades, the first 2x NJSIAA State Qualifier in school history. He is the most decorated wrestler to put on the Bulldog singlet and one of the all-time great athletes in Metuchen athletics. Boasting 35 season wins, 100 career wins, a second place County finish, Walter Woods Tournament Title and a Mike Dessino Tournament Title. Francesco is a poised student athlete, determined to have a very strong showing collegiately at The College of New Jersey



165



Daniel Hennessey, Old Bridge

Danny Hennessey has been a four-year starter his entire career at Old Bridge. This is even more impressive when you consider that Danny is a three-sport varsity athlete and a captain for all three teams. Danny is inherently a leader, and while only being a four-month wrestler, has achieved many worthy and notable accomplishments. This young man was 1-point from qualifying for states last year and was determined to make it to Atlantic City this season. Danny had a strong dual season, including the clinching win in the final bout of Old Bridge's win over then-#15 Cranford with a major decision. Danny was undeniable in the GMC finals with a come-from-behind victory on a third period takedown of Neimeyer of South Plainfield. Though he suffered a defeat in the district finals, he avenged that loss en route to a 3rd place finish in the Region 5 tournament. Danny went 1-2 at states, picking up a victory along the way and finishing among the top-24 in his weight in the state of New Jersey. Old Bridge is very proud of our senior captain who will be continuing his academic and athletic career at the College of New Jersey where he plans to play football and potentially wrestle as well.

Justus Niemeyer, South Plainfield

Justus entered the season as a virtual unknown to most of the GMC and State of New Jersey. He quickly got on a lot of teams radar within the first two weeks of the season as he dominated his way to a Morris Knolls Tournament Championship and would finish 7th/8th at the Sam Cali Tournament. Justus would continue to impress and shock opposing teams as he came up with a huge pin against a very tough opponent from North Hunterdon and defeated a SWB2 from Delsea. Justus never would never shy away from competition, always wanting to wrestle the best competition. He placed 2nd at the GMC Tournament and would finish the dual meet season by going 4-0 the week of the team post-season including the dual meet clinching fall against Hopewell Valley. As the individual postseason rolled in, Justus would go on to win his first district title and place 4th in region 4 that featured 3 of the top six seeds in the state tournament. The coaching staff will miss having Justus in the room as he brought an exciting perspective and outlook on the sport of wrestling and life in general. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors!

Alex Pasquale, Saint Thomas Aquinas

Alex " Bridge-n-Pin" Pasquale was forced to join wrestling as a junior by his physics teacher and freshman brother . With no choice he came out of the hallways and onto the mats. Even though Alex was only a beginner it did not take his coaches long to see that his mental and physical toughness made him a natural for the sport of wrestling .In his first year of wrestling Alex fought off his back a lot, competed in a lot of matches, went 1-0 varsity and took 3rd in the GMC JV county tournament.Attending the STA wrestling camp, Roselle Park tourney along with being soccer team goalie and captain set the stage for Alex's debut varsity season.After being bumped out of the line-up and missing the GL tourney with the too many snacks flu Alex settled in.As 5th seed he brought home the gold at the Rahway Christmas tournament . He compiled a 6-1 divisional record helping the Trojans win the white division and as the 11th seed in AHR Gmc tournament Alex pinned the 6th seed , 5th seed and 3rd seed to take 4th.Alex finished his season with a 23-11 record ,placing 4th in district 16. His presence in the wrestling room and the match hysteria every time he went on his back (pinned 11 guys with his bridge) will be greatly missed. The coaches encourage Alex to try to wrestle wherever he chooses to go to college and look forward to seeing him back at practice next year beating up his brother Anthony.Thank you for joining our wrestling family forever . Congratulations Alex

Jake Zargo, Saint Joseph

Jake Zargo's season did not start off as swimmingly as a senior looking to finally earn his starting spot would have liked it to go. Jake, while starting to look like his old self in practice, tore his meniscus and badly sprained his ACL, just 2 days before Beast of the East. After a stem cell and PRP injection, Jake eagerly waited for his knee to heal while unfortunately having to rest, which in the wrestling world can kill any conditioning that you have already built up through weeks of practice. After 4 weeks off Jake came back and started practicing. His knee hurt him but he powered through and ended up taking 3rd in the GMC tournament despite being seeded at #10. A few weeks later, Jake's knee finally started feeling better which led to a great District run and ended with him winning his first career District title. This gives Jake something to look back on this season after all the hard work, sweat, and injuries and be able to realize that he had a successful senior year despite the cards he was dealt. Jake next year looks to attend either University of Wisconsin, Stevens Institute of Technology, NJIT, or TCNJ.





175



Andrew Bouchard, Saint Joseph

Andrew in his 2 years at St. Joe's has faced a lot of tough competition. Of his 17 losses, 14 have come against state qualifiers and 4 of those state qualifiers have either been state champions or state finalists. Those losses and tough competition have prepared Andrew for the bigger tournaments, as he made the County finals for the first time this year and is a two time District finalist. One of Andrew's biggest matches this year came in the sectionals against Seton Hall Prep, when he ended up pinning Anthony Cerruto in a toss up match, opening the floodgates in that match and creating momentum for the team that carried throughout the dual meet as we defeated the #11 team in the state at the time 55-12. Andrew has a bright future ahead of him as he looks to put in a healthy workload this off-season.

Adam Bowles, South Plainfield

Adam had a very successful Junior campaign for the Tigers. He started off the season by placing 2nd at the Morris Knolls tournament. Adam faced a ton of tough competition throughout the season including wrestling state qualifiers and placers in 12 of his 33 matches this season. That level of tough competition benefited him toward the end of the season. Adam placed 4th in the GMC Tournament, won his first District 14 title and would go on to take 2nd in the Region, making him a state qualifier for the first time in his high school career. Adam has the ability to have a tremendous amount of success in this sport and with a solid off-season of work, the coaching staff is looking forward to his final season with the Tigers as his best season yet! Congrats on a great year!

Michael Feliciano, Colonia

A three year starter for Colonia, Michael also served as one of the Patriots captains. Michael started his junior season very strong. He captured the 175lb championship at the Ricky I Tournament on opening weekend and followed that up by winning at the Minuteman tournament a few weeks later also capturing (OW) at that event. Michael's GMC tournament was the kick start for his great postseason run. He went on to win the District 15 tournament. He kept the momentum going into the Regions, where he won another title at 175lbs. His season concluded with him going 1-2 in the State Tournament. He had 33 victories on the season with several of them helping the Patriots to secure a victory. Michael displayed what it takes to be successful every day in practice, and has been a great role model for the younger wrestlers in the program. The Patriots staff is looking forward to what he will do next season to finish out his career at Colonia. The future is very bright for this young man.

Avery Mack, Old Bridge

Avery Mack is a wrestler with all the natural ability in the world. This was the first year he was able to turn in a full campaign, and he did not disappoint. Avery's approach to wrestling is very exciting, as most of his matches involve 5-point throws, early and often. 24 of his 29 wins were by pinfall. Avery faced a setback in the GMC quarters but bounced back to take 3rd. In the District 19 final, Avery avenged a regular season decision loss with a first period pin. Avery continued his momentum in the Region 5 tournament, pinning last year's region champion Brunetti of Hunterdon Central with a come-from-behind victory in the 3rd period of the consi-semifinals to clinch his state tournament qualification. Avery's dynamic presence in the line-up will be greatly missed. Mack may continue to tap into his vast potential as he explores wrestling at Middlesex CC next season.

William Wilson, North Brunswick

William Wilson is a gifted, natural athlete and a 4 year Varsity wrestling starter at NBTHS. William led the team as Captain ensuring the growth of the team's mindset as well as physical abilities on the mat. William was passionate about training all year long, splitting his time between football and wrestling to excel in sportsmanship, agility, and physical dominance. He kicked off the 2023 year by winning the Kearny championship title at 175lbs and continued that success entering the post season undefeated 33-0. Willie went on to win the GMC title at 175lbs, District title at 165, placing 2nd in the regions at 165lbs, and placing 12th in the States, with several impressive wins. Willie plans on playing football and perhaps wrestling in college. We wish him the best of luck.





190



Brian Christie, Saint Joseph

To say that an individual generally produces bonus points every time they step on the mat for their team would be an understatement for Brian Christie. In his career as a junior, Brian has now garnered 82 career wins putting himself in position to become just the 3rd St. Joe's wrestler ever to get 100 wins. Out of those 82 wins, Brian has 74 pins, 3 major decisions, and 3 forfeit wins. 97.5% of Brian's wins in his career have come with bonus points, which is an incredible number. Brian this year won 3 matches down at Beast of the East and finished in the top 20, he won the Egg Harbor tournament, won his first GMC Tournament title, won his first career District title, and then the following weekend completed the trifecta by winning his first ever Region 5 title. This would all be impressive by any means, but two weeks before the season Brian fully tore the labrum in his shoulder and was told by doctors that he would need surgery effectively ending his season before it started. After discussion with the doctors, Physical Therapists, and his family, Brian said he was going to go as long as the shoulder would let him because he did not want to let his team down with such a big year ahead of us. Brian surely did not let anyone down as he led the team in bonus points for the 3rd consecutive year, and became a 3 time state qualifier this year. We look forward to big things on the horizon for a healthy Brian during his senior campaign.

Omar Elkhoul, North Plainfield

Omar had a very honorable wrestling career at North Plainfield. He missed his freshman year due to an injury. He had a good sophomore year, finishing 3rd in the Somerset County Tournament. His Junior year: he placed 3rd in Somerset County and 2nd in District 14. This season he, again, dealt with an injury that held him to under 20 matches. He did, however, manage a 4th place finish in the GMCs and compile a 14-5 record. Again, finishing his career at 39-14. In addition, he was a two-year captain. His academic career is going to guide his future well. He is currently ranked Number 1 in his class. He has been accepted to Rutgers and Purdue and others. He is awaiting to hear from Princeton and Columbia as well. We wish him all the best in his extremely promising future. Congrats and best wishes for eternity.

Russel Novak, East Brunswick

Russell is a very talented Junior at East Brunswick, he had a career high 27 wins this season. Russell took 3rd at the Bears Invitational. Throughout the season Russell stepped up with big wins in dual meets getting him named the NJ.com GMC Wrestler of the week in January. He took the momentum into the GMC tournament being East Brunswick best finish taking 3rd. Russell isn't afraid to take on any challenge and always wants to go out against the best. This season Russell has become one of East Brunswick's top wrestlers teams will have to watch out for.

Nazareth Pena, Saint Thomas

Nazareth "nuke" Pina exploded onto the STA wrestling scene this year compiling a season record of 31- 11, with all of his losses coming against the highest level of competition. It was with nuclear devastation that Naz was able to use his explosive techniques to finish 2nd in the Governor Livingston Tournament, win 3 matches at Sam Cali, place 2nd in the GMC, 2nd in district 16 and 5th in region 4 raising his career mark to 57 - 15. The coaches will be counting on his leadership next season to help the Trojans defend their white division title. That leadership and his love for wrestling showed clearly through his relentless training and work ethic. Because of this his coaches will have to coach with sunglasses on cause next season is gonna be the bomb! Way to Go Nazareth on a great year!



215



Richard Boateng Baah, Piscataway

Richard had a successful senior season this year. He was able to cap off his career by becoming a district finalist and making the Region 5 tournament for the first time. Another major highlight for him was being able to compete in the GMC finals under the lights in front of our home crowd. Even with missing some matches and a tournament while fighting through illness and injury for a good portion of the season, he was still able to accumulate an impressive 27 victories. He placed 3rd for the second year in a row at the Middlesex Mike Dessino invitational on the opening weekend of the season. His coaches are proud to be able to call him captain for 2 consecutive years. He was and is a great leader for our program and a good role model/mentor to our new and younger wrestlers. Being 1 of only 7 kids on the mat that first day of the covid season, Richard was a driving force in getting more kids to come out for the wrestling team to help build our program back up. He continues to work hard each day to get better and stronger and hopes to take his wrestling to the collegiate level next year.

Steven Cohan, Saint Thomas Aquinas

Crushing opponents to their backs from all positions on the mat Steven "The Crusher " Cohan finished his Junior campaign with a 33-9 record improving his career mark to 63-19. Starting the season hot, Steven was Champion and upper weight OW pinning the wrestler ranked 4th in the state helping the Trojans win the Governor Livingston Tournament . He placed 6th out of 50 teams in the Sam Cali Tournament , was 1ST in Ahr GMC tournament , 2nd in district 16 and 3rd in region 4 qualifying for the states in Atlantic city. Steven's 6-1 record in divisional matches helped the Trojans win the white division. Besides being a leader on the mats Steven also led the football team to a division title. His football and wrestling coaches are excited for what Steve's senior seasons will bring. We will be counting on his leadership to elevate our programs to another level. With continued improvement in his work ethic and attitude there is no limit to how high on the podium he can rise . Way to go Steve and good luck.

Yasir Johnson, New Brunswick

Yasir 'Yaz' Johnson had a stellar senior year after coming into the season with very little experience. During the year of COVID, the NJSIAA created an additional winter season, which pushed wrestling to a March starting date. Because wrestling did not take place during the basketball season, Yaz came out for wrestling and amassed a 2-2 varsity record in the constricted season. As a junior, Yaz competed in winter track in order to best prepare himself for his senior year of football. This extra preparation secured him a Division 2 football scholarship to Assumption University. One week prior to the first wrestling match of the year, Yaz came out for the wrestling team and was voted as a captain by his peers. He compiled a 22-7 record, placed 2nd at the BUC Classic, 4th in the GMC and 1st in the District 18 tournament. One of the most respectful, humble and hard working individuals to come through New Brunswick, Yasir set an excellent example for his teammates and will be missed.

Robert Orzol, Old Bridge

Senior Robert Orzol has had a workmanlike career as a four-year starter for Old Bridge. Orzol is a two-sport varsity stand-out, earning conference and division honors in both football and wrestling. Rob was thrust into the line-up as a freshman at 152/160 and was a grinder all year long. That experience has translated to his success in his senior year, wrestling to a 31-10 record. Orzol wrestled to a 2nd place finish in the Ron Mazzola, and a first place finish in the Hunterdon Central Invitational. Rob's approach has always been methodical, which has led to his many nicknames (Bobby Overtime, Bobby Offense, Big Bar Bobby). Even if you knew what he was going to throw at you as an opponent, Rob was undeniable, becoming a dominant presence on top. Robert's presence at the top of the line-up solidified a very dangerous one-two punch between himself and our heavyweight Nick Caruso. We will miss the bonus points and hard-nose wrestling Rob provided our team for so many years. He will continue his academic career at Rutgers.



285

**Nicholas Caruso, Old Bridge**

Nick Caruso has always been a consummate professional when it comes to wrestling at Old Bridge. In the practice room, he leads by example and is very vocal when it comes to our younger wrestlers. He has always been the type to look to for an exemplary approach. His quiet confidence translated to some big success this season. Nick finished 3rd in the Ron Mazzola, 3rd in the GMC, and 3rd in District 19. Nick solidified our line-up at the top, and was never over-matched. This two-sport athlete earned his captain status this season, and did not disappoint. He will be continuing his academic career next year at one of the many four year schools he has been accepted into, including Ramapo, Montclair, Rowan, among others.

Adam Derbala, South Brunswick

Adam was a two year starter for South Brunswick and put a nice stamp on the Viking wrestling program. Adam had a 27 win season, nearly doubling his win total from the prior season. Adam's accomplishments included a 4th place finish at the GMC Tournament, a 2nd place finish at the District 18 Tournament, a wrestleback victory at the Region V Tournament and was a Buc Classic champion. Adam's 27 victories this season was tied for 2nd on the team in wins. Adam's leadership and focus had a huge impact on this Viking team. Both the team and the coaching staff will miss Adam and wish him well in college.

Jake Tulli, Saint Joseph

Jake Tulli became a leader in the room his senior year, as his commitment to wrestling surged this off-season. Jake traveled all around the country this off-season to get better, including qualifying for and wrestling out at Fargo. His hard work stems from his dedication to his own body as the year before Jake lost an incredible 63 pounds between football and wrestling season to make the 285 pound weight class. This off-season, he paid attention to his diet, lifestyle, and food habits, never getting his body above 300 pounds all while getting stronger and quicker. This dedication to the sport, himself, and his team led to him having an amazing senior year for the Falcons. Jake narrowly missed placing top 8 at Beast of the East as he was a blood round (final 12) wrestler down in Delaware, and then took 2nd at the Egg Harbor Christmas tournament which led Jake to believe that he was on the right track. He wanted to win that big tournament, not just finish close to the top. That happened at the GMC tournament this year as he won an UTB match in the finals to secure his first GMC tournament title, and that win led to even more confidence, leading to Jake winning his first ever District title, and then becoming a Region finalist to qualify for his second consecutive state tournament. The improvement that Jake has made from 18 months ago is incredible. He currently is deciding between LIU Post, East Stroudsburg, Roanoke College, and the University of Buffalo to continue his wrestling career.

Malachi Wyatt, Piscataway

Malachi had a successful senior campaign this year. He was able to cap off his career by becoming a district finalist and making the Region 5 tournament for the second time. He placed 6th at the Region 5 tournament. Another major highlight for him was being able to compete in the GMC finals under the lights in front of our home crowd. Malachi placed 1st at the Middlesex Mike Dessino invitational on the opening weekend of the season where he won the OW award! He also placed 1st in the Roselle Park tournament. His coaches are proud to have him as a captain for 2 consecutive years. He was and is a great leader for our program and a good role model/mentor to our new and younger wrestlers. Malachi is one of the hardest workers on the team and a great example for our program. Malachi will be going to play football at the next level at Wilkes University.



TEAM MVP'S



Jetzeel Huertas, Carteret

A 3-year starter for Carteret, Jetzeel served as the team captain for the rambler leading us to a total 7 team wins. Jetzeel finished this season with a record of 26-8. Jetzeel also finished 2nd in the Rahway Holiday Tournament, 6th place at the Buc Classic, and 5th in the GMC tournament. Jetzeel work ethic, mannerisms, and leadership were a great asset to the Ramblers wrestling program. He will be missed, and the Carteret Ramblers wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors!

Jimmy Boelhower, Woodbridge

A 3-year starter for Woodbridge, Jimmy also served as one of the Baron's Captains. Jimmy was a fantastic leader for the team throughout his career. This season Jimmy recorded 24 wins, 16 coming by pin-fall. Jimmy earned a 4th place finish in the East Brunswick Tournament, 5th Place finish in the Elizabeth Tournament, a 7/8th place finish in the GMC Tournament, and a 3rd place finish in the District Tournament. Jimmy also won his opening match in the Region 5 tournament finishing his career as a top 8 at his weight in the Region. Jimmy's leadership and tremendous work ethic throughout his career was something the younger wrestlers in the program greatly benefited from. Woodbridge will miss Jimmy very much next year and wish him the best of luck as he moves on to TCNJ.



FINAL GMC STANDINGS

Red Division Division Overall

1)	St Joes Metuchen	7-0	17-5
2)	Old Bridge	6-1	19-5
3)	South Plainfield	5-2	12-6
4)	Monroe	4-3	18-12
5)	Sayreville	3-4	16-10
6)	Piscataway	2-5	12-11
7)	South Brunswick	1-6	7-16
8)	Perth Amboy	0-7	2-15

White Division Division Overall

1)	St Thomas Aquinas	7-0	14-10
2)	Edison	6-1	20-4
3)	East Brunswick	5-2	16-9
4)	Colonia	4-3	10-7
5)	Woodbridge	3-4	10-10
6)	Middlesex	2-5	10-14
7)	North Brunswick	1-6	6-12
8)	New Brunswick	0-7	12-15

Blue Division Division Overall

1)	John F Kennedy	7-0	18-3
2)	Metuchen	6-1	11-13
3)	Carteret	5-2	11-13
4)	Spotswood	4-3	9-12
5)	South River	2-5	3-10
5)	North Plainfield	2-5	6-13
7)	Highland Park	2-6	2-23
8)	John P Stevens	1-7	4-18





All Conference



Conference Champion: Saint Joseph

Conference Runner-Up: Old Bridge

- 106: Ben DiCocco - Saint Thomas Aquinas
- 113: Logan Roman - Old Bridge
- 120: Zachary Beadling - Saint Joseph
- 126: Julian Dawson - Edison
 - Jesse Koczon - Old Bridge
- 132: Andrew Loniewski - South Plainfield
 - Giovanni Maglione - John F Kennedy
- 138: Giovanni Alejandro - Saint Joseph
- 144: JJ Giordano - South Plainfield
- 150: Evan Mendez - Saint Joseph
 - RJ Stradling - Middlesex/Dunellen
- 157: Tyler Sagi - Old Bridge
 - Francesco Rossiter - Metuchen
- 165: Daniel Hennessey - Old Bridge
 - Justus Niemeyer - South Plainfield
- 175: William Wilson, North Brunswick
- 190: Brian Christie - Saint Joseph
- 215: Steven Cohan - Saint Thomas Aquinas
 - Richard Boateng Baah - Piscataway
- 285: Jake Tulli - Saint Joseph
 - Malachi Wyatt - Piscataway

Coach of the Year: Mike Carbone - Saint Joseph



All Red Division



Division Champion: Saint Joseph Metuchen

- 106: Joseph Stanzione - South Plainfield
- 113: Logan Roman - Old Bridge
- 120: Zachary Beadling - Saint Joseph
- 126: Jesse Koczon - Old Bridge
 - Morgan Schwarz - Saint Joseph
- 132: Andrew Loniewski - South Plainfield
 - Brian Butler - Piscataway
- 138: Giovanni Alejandro - Saint Joseph
- 144: J.J. Giordano - South Plainfield
- 150: Evan Mendez - Saint Joseph
 - Nick Campagna - South Plainfield
- 157: Tyler Sagi - Old Bridge
- 165: Daniel Hennessey - Old Bridge
 - Justus Niemeyer - South Plainfield
- 175: Andrew Bouchard - Saint Joseph
 - Avery Mack - Old Bridge
- 190: Brian Christie - Saint Joseph
- 215: Richard Boateng-Baah - Piscataway
- 285: Jake Tulli- Saint Joseph
 - Malachi Wyatt - Piscataway
 - Connor Walsh - Sayreville

COACH OF THE YEAR: Mike Carbone - Saint Joseph Metuchen

Sportsmanship Award: Perth Amboy



All White Division



Division Champion: St Thomas Aquinas

- 106: Dominick Lezark - East Brunswick**
- 113: Ben DiCocco - Saint Thomas Aquinas**
- 120: Joshua Parks - Colonia**
- 126: Julian Dawson - Edison**
 - Aedan Samson-Huggins-East Brunswick**
- 132: Reed Kerstetter - Saint Thomas Aquinas**
- 138: Fernando Avellon - Edison**
 - Omar Elomousy - North Brunswick**
- 144: Liam Zeh - Saint Thomas Aquinas**
- 150: Landon Kearns - Saint Thomas Aquinas**
- 157: RJ Stradling - Middlesex/Dunellen**
- 165: Tyler Boelhower - Woodbridge**
 - Alex Pasquale - Saint Thomas Aquinas**
- 175: William Wilson - North Brunswick**
 - Jimmy Boelhower - Woodbridge**
- 190: Nazareth Pina - Saint Thomas Aquinas**
- 215: Steven Cohan - Saint Thomas Aquinas**
 - Caleb Barahona - Woodbridge**
 - Yasir Johnson - New Brunswick**
- 285: Cadon Sternlieb - Saint Thomas Aquinas**

***COACH OF THE YEAR* - Nick Tonzola - Saint Thomas Aquinas**

Sportsmanship Award: New Brunswick



All Blue Division



Division Champion: John F Kennedy

- 106: Cam Daniels- JFK
Thomas Nielsen - South River
- 113: Aiden Roche - JFK
- 120: Adolfo Malabanan - JP Stevens
Jetzeel Huertas - Carteret
- 126: Derek Cistrelli - JFK
Nate DeCoite - Metuchen
- 132: Giovanni Maglione - JFK
Joe Lepore - South River
- 138: Mark Rocke - JFK
- 144: Dan Ayala - Metuchen
- 150: Fran Rossiter - Metuchen
- 157: Ben Michaliszyn - Metuchen
- 165: Youssef Abdeladi - JFK
Matt Verga - Spotswood
- 175: William Schermmer - Spotswood
Subtain Ali - JFK
- 190: Hassan Khan - Carteret
- 215: Yexon Mercado - North Plainfield
- 285: Kwabena Afirah - JP Stevens
Brian Santos - North Plainfield

COACH OF THE YEAR: Matt Creighton - John F Kennedy

Sportsmanship Award: North Plainfield

COURAGEOUS WRESTLER AWARD



Giovanni Alejandro



If you watch Gio on the wrestling mat, you may notice that he tends to wrestle with a bit of a chip on his shoulder. When you hear Gio's backstory, the style that he wrestles makes sense. His whole life, he has had to overcome the odds and fight through everything that life has thrown at him that would leave most people unphased.

Gio was born with Hypogammaglobulinemia, a disease that renders the immune system useless due to low serum levels and antibodies. Only 4,700 people worldwide have been diagnosed with the disease, but Gio and his 2 siblings are 3 of them. The disease does not allow for vaccines to be effective because his body cannot produce titers, making any illness life-threatening. A simple cold could put Gio into the hospital because his body cannot fight off these illnesses on its own.

Unfortunately, Gio has had to overcome some major complications in his young life. The first occurred at only 1 week old when he had to have almost 50% of his intestines removed due to Necrotizing Enterocolitis that was spreading throughout his digestive system despite antibiotics. After years of testing, Gio was finally diagnosed with Hypogammaglobulinemia and sent to CHOP in Philadelphia to see specialists. From that point forward, doctors told Gio he would receive monthly IVIG (Intravenous Immunoglobulin) infusions to give him enough antibodies to protect his body for the following 21 days. Unfortunately, you can only get the infusions every 28 days, so Gio's body is unprotected to any and all illnesses for 7 days every month. These treatments are the last Friday of the month, lasting 7-9 hours. The infusions also happen to occur the same weekend as the GMC and Region tournaments every year, forcing him to postpone treatment. This has led to Gio coming down with some type of illness each year, slowing him down and impeding his potential during those tournaments.

One of the most serious moments in Gio's life happened when he was in 7th grade; a small pimple on his leg would turn into a Staph Infection, leading to him being hospitalized. Due to his immune deficiency, antibiotics were not working and the disease started spreading down his leg despite multiple surgeries to remove infected tissue. Doctors were preparing to amputate Gio's leg to stop the spread when the last-resort antibiotic finally started to work. Gio's life and leg were both saved, but the scars on his body remind him that he cannot take anything for granted. Every doctor told Gio and his mother said that he should never wrestle again as the risk was too great that skin diseases common with wrestling could put his life in danger again. In addition to this, Gio developed Rheumatoid, restricting his joint movement for the rest of his life.

Gio has a love for this sport that not many others have; he still continues to compete in it despite the risks it poses. The fact that he made it through 4 years of high school with only hiccups is an amazing feat itself, but to talk about how Gio won 124 matches in his high school career, two County titles, three district titles, is a 3-time state qualifier, and now at the end of this career was a State Finalist, makes this story all the more impressive. To top that off, wrestling has allowed him to further his academic and athletic career at Rider University, putting a final ending on this wrestler's High School career which almost never happened.

COURAGEOUS WRESTLER AWARD



JJ Giordano



The name Giordano has been synonymous with South Plainfield wrestling since the 1980's. JJ's father (Steve) won a state title for the Tigers in 1989 and his brother's Jake and Marc both went on to have outstanding wrestling careers for the Tigers and JJ was not the exception. Coming off a 7th place finish in the State Tournament as a Junior, JJ was primed for an even better Senior season. He dominated his way to a Morris Knolls Championship and would go on the place 5th at the Sam Cali Tournament in an extremely difficult weight class. JJ continued to be a dedicated worker in the room and was extremely coachable and receptive to changing his wrestling style a bit. The change would come with some struggle, but ultimately the benefits of the change could be seen as he became more and more comfortable with it. He would have an undefeated record in the GMC this year and for his entire High School Wrestling Career. Jason went on to capture his 3rd county title and would really start doing his best wrestling of the season as he began to peak for the team and individual postseason. JJ was 4-0 the week of sectionals including defeating two-time state place-winner Jamar Dixon from Delsea (who had defeated him twice this season) by a score of 4-3. This win seemed to give him a tremendous amount of steam going into the District Tournament....Unfortunately, the day before the district tournament JJ got diagnosed with a serious, severe, and very rare form of Staph Infection in his knee. His first thought was, "Ok, I can just get through the first two matches and give myself a week to recover for Regions". Then everyone found out the severity of the infection. The infection began to spread and his knee began to swell like a balloon. The realization of his long-term health and possibly his life being in danger quickly set in. JJ underwent surgery to cut and clear out the infection. After about 8 or 9 days of being in the hospital, the infection began to dissipate, and his body started to respond positively to the antibiotics he was given. While JJ's high school career may have been cut short, the most important outcome was that he will make a full recovery and be able to follow his brother's Jake and Marc as he will continue his educational and wrestling career at TCNJ. The High School coaching staff wishes JJ the best and we look forward to him continuing to make the Giordano name proud! Congratulations JJ on an outstanding high school career and being named GMC Courageous Wrestler of the Year.

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TOM FLANAGAN MEMORIAL SCHOLAR WRESTLER AWARD



Mandy Gavares Old Bridge



Mandy Gavares came to Old Bridge as an unassuming high school freshman with one year of wrestling experience, but a ton of success in a short amount of time. Many was a state champion as an 8th grader and achieved rapid success in her new sport. The transition to high school proved to be difficult, but she continued to achieve at the highest levels. This young lady came into high school during the earliest stages of girls' wrestling being sanctioned in the state and achieved quick success. Mandy went 14-4 as a freshman and finished 6th in the state. She quickly found herself back on the state podium, but a sixth-place finish wasn't what she desired. Mandy's hard work continued immediately that off-season.

However, her journey was not without its setbacks. In her sophomore and junior season, Mandy suffered through multiple catastrophic injuries to her MCL, ACL and meniscus. Prior to each of these season-ending injuries, Mandy was competing in high-level invitational events and beating the best competition in the state. Now she was facing the reality that she may never wrestle again. Most would not have continued wrestling facing this level of adversity, as she was completely out of each of these successive seasons. But Mandy persevered, fought her way back, and got cleared just before her senior year began.

Senior year had its ups and downs, as Gavares was literally getting back on her feet again for the first time in a long time. After some adjustments, she was back into her winning mindset. Mandy wrestled to an impressive 18-7 record, winning the GMCs for her second time in as many attempts, as well as winning the Central Region. In her first match of the state tournament, she faced the defending state champion Klein of Paramus, and came out on top, securing placement on the state podium once again. Mandy ultimately finished 6th in NJ, and though it was not the position she desired, she solidified herself once again as being among the best in the state of New Jersey.

Mandy will be continuing her wrestling career at Ursinus College, and is currently training for the World Team Trials in Spokane, Washington. Mandy's drive to continue to succeed at the highest levels will only propel her further into the stratosphere of success. Old Bridge is tremendously proud of Mandy Gavares, and could not think of a more deserving member of our wrestling community than Gavares for the GMC Scholarship.

TOM FLANAGAN MEMORIAL SCHOLAR WRESTLER AWARD



Bailey Cuomo East Brunswick



Bailey is a senior and four year varsity starter for East Brunswick. This season Bailey was the team Captain. As a leader of the team in and out of the season, Bailey led countless captain practices and set an example for the underclassmen by getting 50 matches in the off-season. All of this hard work paid off for Bailey getting a career high 25 wins this season and taking 4th in the GMC Tournament. He was a dangerous wrestler on his feet, never out of a match he could throw someone to their back and get the pin.

Bailey has achieved great things on and off the mat. Even with the rigorous demands of wrestling and all of the work outside of the season it takes to be successful, he was still part of several school clubs. As a part of the East Brunswick High School Model UN Bailey won the Best Delegate on the Environmental Programme at Rutgers Model United Nations. In addition Bailey holds an executive position for the S.A.V.E Club. Outside of school Bailey believes in giving back to his community being an active member of his church being the President of his Youth Group. He is currently employed by the YMCA where he used to be a volunteer.

Wrestling was a big part of all of Bailey's success and in his words "Wrestling is the hardest and most influential thing I have ever done." He can tell you about all of the lessons wrestling has taught him, the courage it takes to approach a task that seems impossible, that risks are worth taking to achieve success and the comradery that forms amongst teammates and fellow wrestlers.

Bailey will be taking all of this success and lessons he has learned to Rutgers University next year. He does not intend to end his wrestling career though, he has told Coach Langel many times he will be back to help Coach the Bears.

Dean Family Scholarship



Melissa Wehrle Spotswood



Melissa Wehrle entered her freshman year with only one year of wrestling experience and as the only girl. The Spotswood High School and the Memorial Middle School wrestling teams have always been co-ed. Over the years, girls have come out for wrestling, but none have completed a single entire season until Melissa came out during 8th grade. Missy competed in the GMC Small-School Tournament during her first season, placing 4th.

During her freshman year, Missy had few chances to wrestle girls and instead had multiple opportunities to wrestle on both the boys' Varsity and Junior Varsity teams. Quickly she became a fan favorite, wrestling for the full 6 minutes and taking any opportunity to be out on the mat. Her sole opportunity to wrestle on the girl's team was in the first-ever GMC-Girls tournament, where she placed 3rd.

Her Sophomore season was cut short due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This season was very similar to her freshman year, with few opportunities for wrestling girls. Melissa never became discouraged and made up for the few chances with a 4th place finish in the Girls GMC tournament. During that season, Melissa earned a spot on the boy's starting line-up, being the first girl to do so, in a place she would not relinquish over the rest of her high school career.

During her Junior campaign is when she began to truly shine as she compiled a 20-win season. Her only defeats were in the GMC tournament semi-finals, where she placed 3rd, and in the NJSIAA Girls Southern Regional tournament, where she narrowly missed a birth to the state tournament. During her senior year, she recorded 26 wins while becoming the first individual GMC champion in school history. In this year's postseason, she became the school's 2nd ever-regional finalist and state place-winner.

Melissa's dedication doesn't just stop on the wrestling mat. She has a deep passion for baking and runs her own small pastry business, is an honor student and GMC All-Star. Her teachers describe Melissa as passionate and high achieving. She will be taking this passion to the college level, where she will be majoring in Baking and Pastry at Johnson and Wales University in Providence, RI.

OUTSTANDING WRESTLER AWARD



Apryl Coffman **Saint Thomas Aquinas**



Do not get Apryl "She-Hulk" Coffman angry ! I can tell you that two opening weekend losses did and the rest of the state did not like it! Did not like it at all. When Apryl channeled her inner hulk she used an unstoppable firemans , stingy stalk and punish and crushing heavy and grind to become , after 53 yrs, Bishop AHR / St Thomas Aquinas's first and only NEW JERSEY STATE WRESTLING CHAMPION. "Fight for it ". Winning no matches as a freshman Apryl used her own tough life experience and love for the sport of wrestling to reach the ultimate summit. The mental and physical toughness inside her was evident . Her coaches saw it daily in practice, always at open mats, it showed through junior year at counties and states wrestling on one leg. This year Apryl was 32-2 (a female season record) making her career mark 59-20 (also a school record). She was a 2x GMC champion and a 3x state qualifier. She became the schools second ever female region champion by about 15 mins (you go Storm) and led the lady Trojans to the first ever GMC team Title. It is her toughness and leadership that makes her coaches know she will be a success at whatever she puts her heart into. We will not forget her mostly because every coach has some sort of injury that will linger for a long time put on us by She-Hulk! We hope Apryl pursues continuing her wrestling career as she weighs her college options. We will miss you and never forget you are forever part of AHR wrestling family .UNBELIEVABLE AMAZING season Congratulations Apryl.

OUTSTANDING WRESTLER AWARD



Logan Roman



Logan came into this year with a list of goals, and at the top was to get as high on the podium as he possibly could after losing in the blood rounds of states last year. This young man did everything in his ability to ensure that his goals were realized. He came firing out of the gate with a first place finish at the Ron Mazzola Memorial, and his one blemish on the season, an overtime loss from the finals of the Hunterdon Central Invitational, was avenged in the Region 5 final in dominant fashion.

Once Logan reached the state tournament, he was on a mission to take the weight class, and he did so in emphatic fashion. He recorded two pins, a technical fall, and decisions in the semifinal and finals. His pin in the quarters was against the #3 seed from CBA, and his semifinal overtime victory was against James of Delbarton, ranked #1 in NJ all season, and #12 in the country. Logan did not let rankings, seedings or projections get in the way of achieving his goals, and Old Bridge is extremely proud of their first boys state champion in Old Bridge High School history.

Season Record: 45-1

Career Record: 82-7

GMC Finish: 1st

Postseason Finish: D 1 st, R 1 st, NJ 1 st

Senior of the Year



Giovanni Alejandro
St Joes Metuchen



Giovanni started his career as a 97 pound freshman, who despite his lack of size, set the freshman record for wins and single season record for wins all in one season, going 35-7, and winning a District title at 106 pounds. Gio just barely missed out on qualifying for the State tournament by 2 points and his season felt unfulfilled.

His sophomore year, Gio seemed determined to make a run towards qualifying for States, but due to COVID, the NJSIAA went to a Super Region format where only the top 16 wrestlers would advance to tournament. While wrestling back, Gio tore his ACL but finished the match and won 9-3. However, that would be the end of the road; the injury was too much and he would fall in his next bout 8-0. Despite technically finishing top 20 in the state as a Super Region 5th, he had still not wrestled in the state tournament and he was upset about how the COVID season unfolded.

Junior year, an amazing thing happened for Gio as he went from 5'1" to a 5'9" overnight. The height and weight gain allowed his body to start cashing the checks that his mind had been writing all these years. He won his second District title, first GMC title, and finally qualified for that elusive state tournament he had missed so narrowly twice. However, after falling in the blood round at Beast of the East and Atlantic City, Gio once again felt unfulfilled.

Senior year saw a new Gio step on the mat as he was finally full size for his weight class and looked like he belonged in the 138 pound weight class. To start the season at Beast of the East, he lost in the quarterfinals to the #1 wrestler in the nation Collin Rath 8-3. This left Gio in another precarious position of having to wrestle in a blood round match, which had seemed to stymie him his entire career, but this time he would win his match 5-2 and end up placing 7th at Beast to become St. Joe's first ever placer down at the prestigious tournament. From here Gio would win 30 straight matches against New Jersey's best competition, only falling in a rematch during the Region finals. Down in AC, undeterred from his loss in the Region finals, Gio made a run no one at St. Joe's had ever made. He opened up the state tournament with a fall, and a 5-1 win against a tough Warren Hills opponent. Wayne Rold from Camden Catholic, who Gio defeated Junior year 4-0 was his quarterfinal opponent; Gio found himself in overtime 1-1 and scored on a reattack collecting the win and his first ever State placement in NJ with just 2 seconds left in SV. The celebration was great but short lived as Gio's next opponent, Joe Giordano, had beaten Gio the year before 5-0 in the Region semifinals and now stood as his opponent in the State semi-finals. Gio left no doubt this year, winning 5-1 and finding himself in the state finals. An amazing run by Gio was concluded in the finals as he fell to Tyler Vasquez 1-0, but history had been made for the school, the coaching staff, the team, and Gio himself.

Betting on himself and not committing to a college before the season paid off as Giovanni was offered a full scholarship offer from his number #1 choice Rider University and he committed the following day. 2022-23 will never be forgotten for a variety of reasons, but especially his amazing state run down in Atlantic City.

JUNIOR OF THE YEAR



Elizabeth Adebola Perth Amboy



A rarity in today's high school sports, Elizabeth is a three-sport student-athlete. She runs x-country in the fall and track in the Spring. But we all certainly think her best is when she is on the mat.

Liz, a Junior, finished with a record of 23-9, and became Perth Amboy's 8th Region champ when she won the North 2 Regional title. After losing her quarter-final bout at the State tournament, she wrestled unbelievable and won 3 difficult matches and finished 4th in the State of NJ. Hopefully now she believes in herself and has the confidence to become our 3rd State Champion in school history.

SOPHOMORE OF THE YEAR



Jake Tenebruso Old Bridge



This sophomore demonstrated tremendous growth and determination this season. Bouncing between 138, 144 and 150, Jake consistently faced some of the toughest competition of anyone in our line-up. Undeterred, Jake continued to step up to the plate throughout the season. Tenebruso finished 2nd in the Ron Mazzola, 5th in the GMC at 138, and began to realize his potential in the district semifinals, avenging a loss from the previous season to eventually take 2nd place in the district.

Jake continued to grind, facing a very tough opponent, Conroy of RBC, in the consi-semifinals of regions, and used his skills as a leg-rider to clinch victory and his state qualification in his sophomore year. Jake earned valuable experience in the state tournament this season, and we look forward to seeing how far his commitment and talents take him through his next two years.

Grade/Weight: So./144

Season Record: 27-16

Career Record: 49-33

GMC Finish: 5 th (138)

Postseason Finish: D 2nd, R 4th, SWB1

SOPHOMORE OF THE YEAR



Saniyah Queen Saint Thomas Aquinas



When Sanyah "STORM" Queen takes the mat tornado, hurricane, blizzard, thunderstorm are coming with her so you better be ready for all her attacks of destruction. With relentless aggression Sanyah blew past her 5th place state finish last year to make the state finals in Atlantic City. Sanyah made the finals of every tournament she entered this year putting together a sophomore season record of 22-4 Sanyah improved her two year mark to 44-10. In the process, by about 15 minutes, she became the schools first ever female region champion. Her GMC title was a big part of helping the lady Trojans win the first ever official Female wrestling GMC team championship. An even bigger part of it though was her work ethic, toughness, positive attitude and smile that lifted our whole program through the toughest practice grinds. Combine all of this with her genuine love for the sport of wrestling, makes Sanyah joining the Ahr team, such a blessing. Her coaches have no doubt with her continued efforts the top of the podium will be hers twice. We are looking forward to her leadership next year as the Lady Trojans gear up to defend their title. Wow what a season Sanyah, lets goooooo!!!!!!

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR



Morgan Schwarz
Saint Joseph



Morgan this year made a name for himself in a variety of different ways and one of those ways was wrestling tough against the best competition no matter who it was. Early on, Morgan wrestled at the Beast of the East tournament and in the first match of his high school career, fell in a close match to returning state qualifier Jake Zaltsman 4-0. A week later at the Egg Harbor Christmas tournament, Morgan came in as the 11 seed and pinned the 6, 3, 2, and 1 seeds all of whom were Region qualifiers from the year before.

One of the main ways Morgan will be remembered by his freshman year was he did not lose a second match to any wrestler he previously wrestled. He lost to 7 different individuals that he would come back to beat later in the season and 2 of those individuals he beat twice on back to back weekends.

Morgan's ability to bounce back from losses and compete against the highest level competition became a trend all year long. Whether it was finding a huge win in a dual meet, pinning in the sectionals, scoring 19 points in the District final, or avenging 3 straight regular season losses to take 3rd in the Region, Morgan just kept showing an innate ability to evolve and expand on his repertoire.

After winning a District title and then the following weekend taking 3rd in the Region to advance to the states as a freshman he had an impressive state tournament run, going 2-2 down in AC and finishing in the top 16 in the state. We can't wait to see what the future holds for this young man.

Season Record: 33-10
Egg Harbor Tournament: 1st
GMC Finish: 3rd
District Finish: 1st
Region Finish: 3rd

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR



Leeah Gutierrez Perth Amboy



Leeah has been in the weight room and going to club for the past year and a half. We weren't sure what to expect from our freshman. All the hard work paid off and she did not disappoint.

We knew we were in for a special season when she pinned a State champion in her 2nd Varsity tournament. She went on to finish with a 23-8 record, placed 2nd and 3rd at the East Brunswick and Elizabeth tournament respectively. She added a GMC title and placed 2nd at the North 2 Region. She ended her season with a 5th place finish at the State tournament.

Leeah has shown leadership qualities which we haven't seen in quite some time, especially from a freshman. She is a great teammate and an excellent student. We are very excited to see her grow and develop the next 3 years of her high school career.

TOP TEAM



St Joes Falcons

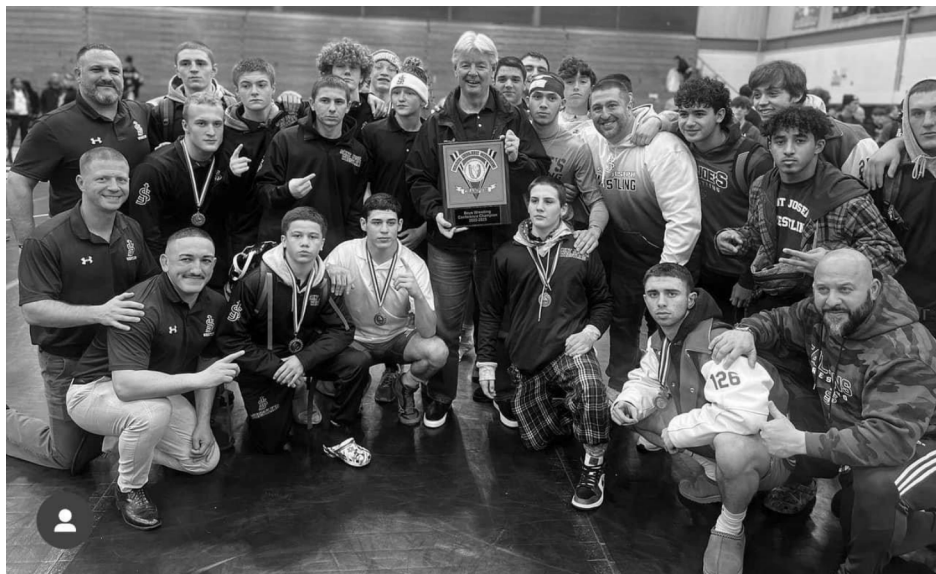


St. Joseph Metuchen had an amazing season this year that was highlighted by defeating two teams who were ranked in the Top 20 during the season in South Plainfield, 34-23, and Old Bridge, 48-18, to secure their first ever Red Division title.

Two weeks later St. Joe's would win its first GMC Tournament team title in school history. We would follow that up by winning the District team title. This was our second title in two years and only the third in school history.

St. Joe's was ranked as the #1 team in Region 5 by the coaches committee, and finished off being ranked #10 in the state by the New Jersey Coaches Poll. For the first time since 1977 and second time in school history, St. Joe's finished ranked in the state, which is an amazing accomplishment for a school that just started their wrestling program back up in 2018.

St. Joe's only 5 losses this season came to teams that finished in the top 10 in the state, and they defeated 4 other teams that finished in the top 20 in the state of NJ. On top of the team success that St. Joe's had, they had their first ever State finalist in Giovanni Alejandro, and put a team record 7 individuals into the State tournament.



MOST IMPROVED TEAM



Edison Eagles



Edison improved from a record of 7-12 in 2022 to leading all Middlesex county teams with 20 wins. Edison reversed decisions on 6 teams from the previous year and defeated 6 NJSIAA playoff qualifying teams in the process. Edison also qualified for the NJSIAA playoffs. An 83% winning percentage was among the highest in school history. Edison culminated their season with an impressive victory defeating 20 win Manville.

COACH OF THE YEAR



Matt Creighton
John F Kennedy



4 years ago, Coach Creighton had his hands full taking over a program that went 0-25 the previous season. Creighton, an alumni of JFK, wanted to restore the program back to what it was during his time there from 2007-2010.. In his first 5 seasons, he watched the win total each season continuously improve during his time. The Mustangs finished the season with a 18-3 record, 6-0 in the Blue Division, crowning them Champions. They also qualified for the State tournament for the first time in 8 seasons, eventually falling to Middletown North in a tough fought match. The biggest accomplishment according to Coach Creighton though was the rise in the number of wrestlers in his program. 2 years ago, they were down to 9 total wrestlers in the entire program. This year, they finished the season with 48 wrestlers. Coach Creighton believes if they consistently keep getting numbers, and continue to put in the work starting during the summer, the Mustangs will compete for many years to come!

ASSISTANT COACH OF THE YEAR



Rachel Daddio **East Brunswick**



Rachel Daddio started out her wrestling career in East Brunswick as an 8th grader and the only girl on the wrestling team. After graduating high school, she continued to help out the program in several ways, including coaching at the recreation level, helping her old Head Coach in season however she could, and coordinating/running workouts and competition for the high school and rec wrestlers in the off season. After undergoing hip surgery in 2018, Rachel thought that her wrestling days were behind her, but after a great recovery, she accepted a position as a full-time high school coach in 2019 shortly after girl's wrestling was sanctioned.

Once Rachel was in the room, the girls program began to grow by leaps and bounds. Despite only being an assistant coach, Rachel took it upon herself to create an entire girl's schedule, complete with dual meets, tournaments, and jamborees, running many of these events to create more opportunities for girls state-wide. In just a few short years, East Brunswick has become known for their girls, whose accomplishments include multiple GMC place winners, GMC champions, and State placewinners.

In addition to growing the girl's program, Coach Daddio also coaches the boy's program, helping out wherever she can. She is especially valuable when it comes to fundraisers and organizing events. Rachel is a big reason why Coach Langel decided to take over the East Brunswick program, which has improved greatly the last several years. A proud alumni, she helps to keep East Brunswick tradition alive, including keeping alumni abreast of the current accomplishments of the team and organizing events for them to come cheer on the Bears.

Her connections within the wrestling community and knowledge of the sport are unmatched. Rachel is always willing to help other coaches and cares deeply about the overall betterment of the sport. While she wants to help make East Brunswick successful, she understands that the success of the sport will trickle down to positively impact the Bears.

Finally, Rachel has taken on a huge role when it comes to helping run our Conference and State events. She played an integral role in the Inaugural GMC Girls Tournament, the first sanctioned girls conference in the state of New Jersey. She serves as a member of the Wrestling Committee and Girl's Wrestling Committee for the NJSIAA, helping to shape the rules and regulations for the sport each season. Rachel ran or assisted in running 21 tournaments this season, including both the Boys and Girls NJSIAA State Tournament.

Coach Daddio truly enjoys working with her former Head Coach Matt Pazinko and good friend Coach Langel. She hopes to continue to add to her team and personal accomplishments in the future.

COACHES AWARDS

NJWCA District Coaches of the Year

Joe Langel - East Brunswick - D18

John Post - Old Bridge - D19

NJWCA District Assistant Coaches of the Year

Andrew Flanagan - South Plainfield - D14

Joe Liquori - Saint Joe's - D18



Coaching Milestones

Joe Eurell - Monroe - 100 Wins!

Don Smith - Carteret - Retirement

RON MAZZOLA

WRESTLING MAN OF THE YEAR



Luca Rispoli

I want to thank the GMCWCA for recognizing me as this year's Ron Mazzola Man of the Year recipient. It is a tremendous honor being the first person to win the award since it was posthumously given to Ron last year and renamed in his honor. I'm celebrating my tenth and final season as the GMCWCA Treasurer. My proudest achievement is the creating the scholarship award and providing a vehicle that may be replicated in order to preserve its existence. Since 2018, I've organized and produced a broadcast of the GMC Finals that has funded the scholarship through various sponsorships. I first covered the GMC Tournament in 2007 by typing the agate (results in the pre-track era) and accurately depicting in-match actions of the finals for award winning reporter Greg Tufaro. This led to providing a live play-by-play blog on mycentraljersey.com. In 2012, the GMCWCA recognized me as "Writer of the Year". In 2016, the blog evolved into a broadcast and not only earned recognition again from the GMCWCA, but inspired the change in the award's name to Media Man of the Year". It was in Atlantic City for the 2017 postseason that I approached Ron about using the broadcast to raise money for a scholarship. In 2018, with the successful debut of sponsoring weight classes and providing the GMCWCA's first scholarship winners, I again earned the Media Man of the Year award.

I began wrestling in 7th grade and by my senior year was coached by Hall of Fame coaches Ken Scott and Gerry Bandola. In the summer of my senior year I helped out the Old Bridge Wrestling Festival. After graduation, I joined the Festival Board with Hall of Fame coach and founder Greg DeMarco and Ron Mazzola. It was during the Festival that I was persuaded by longtime referee Charlie Perez to become a wrestling official. Following graduation from Ramapo College, I became a wrestling referee beginning in 2005 and remained a member of the NJWOA Central Chapter until 2020. Following my graduation from Centenary College with my MBA is when I became Treasurer in 2013. I've had the pleasure of running many tournaments with the last one being District 20 this season. I even met my wife Mary, who was a South Plainfield scorekeeper under Hall of Fame Coach Bill Pavlak, at the GMC Tournament in 2000.

I've had an incredible journey through the sport of wrestling, considering that actual wrestling was the smallest part of it. However, the biggest thing I'm looking forward to now is being a parent on the sidelines. I have four children; my daughter Annalisa (age 5), my daughter Stefana (4), my son Dominic (3), and my son Luigi (1). I have no idea if any of them will want to be involved in wrestling, but I know that I want to be there to help make whatever it is that they want to do as special as possible. I want to be there for all the ups, the downs, and the inbetweens. Again, Thank you all.



MEDIA PERSON OF THE YEAR

Jake Aferiat

In his first year with NJ.com, Jake Aferiat returned to the Garden State after four years at Penn State, where he covered Penn State's multi-time national championship winning wrestling team during all four years for the student newspaper, The Daily Collegian.

While at the Collegian, Jake routinely interviewed Olympians, national champions and All-Americans and went the extra mile all with the goal of providing the most comprehensive coverage of Penn State wrestling of any outlet.

During his time at Penn State, Jake also covered Super Bowl 54 in Miami between the Kansas City Chiefs and San Francisco 49ers as one of 10 Penn State journalism students selected to cover the event.

Upon graduation, Jake worked for The Sporting News where he explored various trending and breaking news topics every day across many different sports and pursued in-depth features on topics like Australian punters in college football and on the work of Deion Sanders at Jackson State.

Jake landed at NJ.com in September of 2022, where he covers girls soccer in the fall, wrestling in the winter and softball in the spring, all with the goal of telling the best and most interesting stories about the Garden State's best athletes.

CLIFF LOYSEN MEMORIAL OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR



Rocco Oppedisano #175

Rocco Oppedisano is a graduate of St Thomas Aquinas High School in Edison. Rocco wrestled in high school under Scott Runkel. Rocco has been a Union Carpenter since 1986. He is currently Sr Project Manager for R&M Manufacturing in Monroe and has been with them for 25 years.

Rocco became a Referee 5 years ago because he enjoyed watching the kids wrestle and wanted to do something to give back and be more involved with the sport that he loves so much! He has officiated the Girl's Greater Middlesex Conference Finals, Districts, and Friday night of the Boys Greater Middlesex Conference.

Rocco lives in Edison with his wife of 32 years - Luray, his son Rocco, 28, who wrestled for Edison High School and his daughter Ashley, 25, who was an Edison High School Cheerleader.