

2020-2021

NEHS



WRESTLING

UNDEFEATED 10-0, NIAGARA CUP CHAMPIONS, 'SUPER LEAGUE' CHAMPIONS, SECTION 6 DIVISION 1 CHAMPIONS.

SUPER LEAGUE



Coaches: Josh Eagan, Don McCoy, Jon Eagan & Palmer Archie.

Team Dual Record

Undefeated 10-0

1. Niagara Falls 51 - North Tonawanda 18
2. Niagara Falls 51 – Medina 18
3. Niagara Falls 62 – Lockport 6
4. Niagara Falls 63 – Lewiston Porter 3
5. Niagara Falls 78 – Wilson 0
6. Niagara Falls 67 – Albion 6
7. Niagara Falls 61 – Roy-Hart/Barker 6
8. Niagara Falls 57 – Newfane 10
9. Niagara Falls 35 – Niagara Wheatfield 22
10. Niagara Falls 39 – Starpoint 19

SUPER LEAGUE



CHAMPIONS

Section 6 Division 1 Team Champions

Place	Team	Points
1	Niagara Falls	113
2	Lancaster	108
3	Starpoint	104.5
4	Williamsville NE	96
5	Niagara Wheatfield	75
6	Clarence	37
7	Amherst	34
8	Frontier	30
9	North Tonawanda	26
10	Hamburg	21
11	Grand Island	20
12	Ken-Ton	20
13	Lockport	18
14	Orchard Park	18
15	Williamsville South	14
16	West Seneca WE	7
17	Jamestown	0



Section 6 Champions

- Jaden Crumpler – 110lbs
- Jr. Reynolds – 118lbs
- Jesiere Carter – 152lbs

Section 6 Place Finishers

- Ja'Shad Bumpers – 3rd, 110lbs
- Grady Peterson – 4th, 132lbs
- Levi Cox – 3rd 172lbs
- Carl Ealy- 2nd 189lbs



Niagara Frontier League

1st Team:

- Jr. Reynolds
- Jesiere Carter
- Mike Syposs
- Jaden Crumpler
- Carl Ealy

2nd Team

- Levi Cox
- Ja'shad Bumpers
- Darren Christian
- Cameron Hall

3rd Team

- Max Hill
- Javion Carter
- Eian Peterson
- Grady Peterson
- AJ Conklin

Individual Statistics

Wrestler	Wins2	Fall	T2	TF	MD	Match Points	Team Points	E1	R2	N2	N3
Bumpers, Ja'shad	14	4	8	0	0	28	57	3	1	0	1
Carter, Javion	13	5	17	0	0	72	42	11	3	0	3
Carter, Jesiere	14	7	24	1	0	78	73	4	2	3	4
Christian, Darren	16	6	26	1	2	87	60	6	0	2	8
Conklin, Allen	11	6	9	0	0	34	45	5	2	3	0
Cox, Leviticus	15	7	27	1	2	87	69	5	2	4	3
Crumpler, Jaden	10	5	6	0	0	29	64	0	2	0	0
Ealy, Carl	11	6	15	0	1	68	61	2	4	4	5
Eidhah, Mohamed	1	0	0	0	0	7	3	0	0	0	0
Falsetti, Vincenzo	2	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0
Hall, Cameron	6	2	1	0	0	2	18	0	0	0	0
Hill, Edward	13	3	27	1	1	101	47	3	4	8	5
Miller, Lewis	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
Peterson, Eian	8	1	4	0	1	24	37	6	1	0	0
Peterson, Grady	7	0	8	0	1	36	37	2	2	3	0
Reynolds, Amarfio	16	4	19	1	2	93	74	5	12	5	2
Smalls, Elijah	4	2	1	0	0	7	18	5	0	0	0
Syposs, Michael	13	4	14	1	0	85	53	8	9	4	6
Syposs, Nicholas	0	0	2	0	0	11	0	1	2	1	0
Totals	171	62	208	6	10	852	770	69	46	37	37

NFL, N-O, Starpoint join forces in strange wrestling season

By Matt O'Rourke scoreboard@gnnewspaper.com,
May 11, 2021

After missing out on a traditional winter season and an unexpected delay to the spring season, high school wrestlers of Section VI schools in Niagara and Orleans counties are finally getting an opportunity to get back to practice and compete through the end of the school year in mid-June.



In this Jan. 29, 2020 file photo, Niagara Falls' Jaden Crumpler attempts to pin Grand Island's Nick Massaro during a 99-pound match at Grand Island High School.
JAMES NEISS JamesNeiss.com

“I’m excited for the opportunity to compete in my Lew-Port singlet for my senior season,” said Lancers senior captain Ciaran Edwards. [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [p](#) [@](#)

“Over the past few months, it was looking less and less like we would have that opportunity here in (Western New York). I am grateful that Section VI and county health officials have allowed the season to commence.”

Edwards has been the face of the student-athlete wrestlers in WNY advocating for a safe return to wrestling and fair treatment for high school wrestling in the region.

The competition schedule for Section VI teams in Niagara and Orleans counties will look slightly different this season. Because Erie County health officials did not clear wrestling during COVID-19, the Niagara Frontier League will be without three of its member schools — Charter School for Applied Technologies, Kenmore West/East and Grand Island — while the Niagara-Orleans League will be without Akron. Starpoint, the only ECIC member school in Niagara County, will be left without the rest of its ECIC II league rivals, all of whom with the exception of Pioneer reside in Erie County. Also, Lewiston-Porter and Wilson will wrestle an identical schedule and share duties of hosting dual meets at either school.

For the 2021 spring season, the Niagara County NFL teams, the five remaining N-O teams and Starpoint will join forces to create a joint wrestling league with dual matches running May 18 through June 17. The league will mix large school NFL powers like 2019-20 champion Niagara Falls and the defending Section VI Division I champion Niagara Wheatfield Falcons against seven-time defending N-O champion Newfane, as well as the consistent and rising power Starpoint Spartans in a round robin format where everybody wrestles everybody, regardless of school size or current league affiliation.

The lowest weight that wrestlers will be able to compete at throughout the season is the weight they weigh in at in their first dual meet.

The 'super' league is sanctioned by NYSPHSAA and Section VI, meaning wins and losses will count toward team dual and individual varsity records.

“The idea to do this really came from Jon Hoover (head coach) at Lew-Port,” said NFL wrestling chairman Joe Scapelitti. “When (the NFL) lost Kenmore, CSAT, and Grand Island, it left us with five schools. Then, the Niagara-Orleans League lost Akron, that left them with five schools as well. Then, you had Starpoint dangling by themselves. Hoover said, ‘Why don’t we just combine with the N-O league?’ That’s when I stepped in as the NFL wrestling chairman and scheduler and said ‘This can happen. ... We can make this work.’”

Scapelitti continued: “We have a great opportunity that might be really good for both of our leagues. It might lead to some talks of a potential merger and strengthening of sports overall in Niagara County. Who knows the doors that this experiment could open?”

Eagan takes over Niagara Falls wrestling

By Matt O'Rourke scoreboard@gnnewspaper.com, May 17, 2021

The defending Niagara Frontier League wrestling champions are under new leadership starting this spring as 2004 graduate and former assistant coach Josh Eagan takes over as head coach at Niagara Falls.

“It’s awesome to be able to coach my alma mater,” Eagan said. “When I was thinking about what I wanted to go to school for I was like, ‘I want to coach.’ This is what I have wanted to do. I’ve been coaching, and it’s cool to have the title Head Coach, but like we say, we’re all running the program.”



In this Jan. 29, 2020 photo, Niagara Falls wrestling coaches Josh Eagan (left) and DJ Giancola (right) stand in front of their bench during the Niagara Frontier League championship match against host Grand Island.
Matt O'Rourke/Contributor

Eagan has served as an assistant for the last decade on the staff of former head coach DJ Giancola, who stepped down at the conclusion of the 2019-20 season to spend more time with his family.

Even though Eagan will take on the title of head coach, he is confident in the ‘coaching by committee’ relationship that he, Giancola and fellow assistant Don McCoy have shared over 10 years.

“I was there from the very beginning when he (Giancola) was a new coach so I got to see some of the things that might happen that you might face as a new coach that I didn’t have to go through, so I learned through that,” Eagan said. “... With him stepping down, it doesn’t really feel like we would skip a beat. DJ would bounce stuff off us, we’d bounce stuff off him. He was the head coach, he had that title, but he would even tell you it was a team thing. We all learned from each other.”

Eagan’s staff will consist of McCoy, Palmer Archie and John Eagan, his brother.

“Don has been in the district for a long time. Obviously, he knows wrestling and since he works in the district, he knows the ins and outs of the whole athletic process. My brother John has coached with us in the past. I think it’s huge because he’s a really great technician. Palmer is really great with the kids,” Eagan said.

After graduating from Canisius College in 2009, Eagan joined the coaching staff at Niagara Wheatfield under current head coach Rick Sweney for the 2009-10 season while helping to train the Falcons' Angelo Malvestuto, who captured a NYS individual title. Then, beginning with the 2010-11 season, Eagan was back at his alma mater.

The Wolverines will compete as part of the spring 2021 Niagara and Orleans counties 'super league' since the status of a number of rivals was uncertain as Erie County had not permitted wrestling during COVID-19 before Friday.

Eagan should enjoy a robust group of 14 returning Class AA tournament place winners and eight Section VI Division I place winners, including returning sectional finalist and state tournament wildcard entry sophomore Amarfio Reynolds Jr. With as much talent as Eagan expects to return this spring throughout the lineup, the Wolverines may be the odds-on favorite to claim the 'super league' title.

Being the biggest single school by Basic Education Data System numbers in Western New York, Falls normally boasts one of the largest rosters in the region. However, NYSPHSAA approved a weight class reduction from 15 to 13 per dual meet, which may make starting lineup spots even more competitive in the Wolverines' wrestling room.

Due to challenges caused by COVID, Eagan and his staff have had to get creative when it comes to getting their wrestlers prepared for the spring season.

"Kids need to get 10 practices. We have some guys playing baseball so we are working together with the baseball coaches to get them wrestling practices too," Eagan said. "I'm running two practices sometimes to make sure they get them in, an early practice for some and then a regular late practice with the team."

Eagan placed third at states in Division I in 2004, the first year of the split large-school/small-school state tournament. He holds a master's in health and physical education from Canisius and a master's in school leadership and educational technology from New York Institute of Technology, and is currently a high school physical education teacher at Falls.

Niagara Falls opens the spring wrestling season at 5 p.m. Thursday when the Wolverines host North Tonawanda in a dual meet. Then, they visit Medina on May 25.

Niagara Falls, NW earn big wrestling wins in Super League

Super League wrestling heats up down the stretch

By Matt O'Rourke scoreboard@gnnewspaper.com, Jun 10, 2021

Followers of 2021 Niagara/Orleans 'super league' wrestling surely have had Thursday, June 10 circled on the calendar since the schedule released over a month ago.

The league's top four teams collided in separate duals on Thursday, as the unbeaten Niagara Falls Wolverines (8-0) hosted Newfane (8-2) for a 'super league' showdown between the area's No. 3 and No. 6 ranked teams, respectively.

Meanwhile, No. 7 Niagara Wheatfield (7-1) tied with No. 4 Starpoint (6-2), 24-24, but were winners on criteria, winning seven bouts to Starpoint's six.



Niagara Falls' Javion Carter (left) and Newfane's Noah Roberts face off in the 189-pound bout in Thursday's dual at Niagara Falls. Carter won this bout, as the Wolverines pulled out a 57-10 win over the Panthers and now sit at 8-0 in super league action. (Paul Battson/Contributor)

Paul Battson

Falls improved to 8-0 on the season with a convincing 57-10 win over a light Panthers squad. In spite of the low number of head-to-head matches, the dual did feature a handful of bouts between top talent in the area. The Wolverines' Mike Syposs was a 13-12 decision winner over returning sectional champion Aidan Gillings at 126 pounds. In the very next match, Newfane's Adam Huntington was an overtime winner by decision, 6-4, over Niagara Falls' returning state tournament qualifier Amarfio Reynolds Jr. at 132.

With only one week left in 'super league' action, Falls will visit arch enemy Niagara Wheatfield on Tuesday, June 15, trying to avoid a loss to a Falcons squad with revenge on its mind. Falls was a 39-30 winner in the 2019-2020 edition of the Niagara Cup and the Falcons do still have a chance to at least tie for the league title, but need a win over the Wolverines to do so.

"The Niagara Cup will be on the line Tuesday and the 'super league' championship Wednesday. Most big tournaments are two days, so I am comfortable with it," said Falls head coach Josh Eagan on the big final week ahead. "We have to stay focused and wrestle tough and smart. We have had this circled on our calendars since May."

For Eagan, his first Niagara Cup as head coach taps into memories of wrestling both as a youth and as a new coach.

“It’s going to be fun seeing (head coach Rick) Sweney and (assistant coach Bill) Ploetz,” Eagan said. “I’ve known Sweney since I was a toddler. He and my dad coached together in the '80s and '90s. He has been a great mentor. He even gave me my first coaching job back in 2009. Rick’s faith and reasons for loving the sport have definitely impacted how I coach.”

On Thursday night in Sanborn, the Falcons were already playing spoiler, as they were winners on tie breaking criteria over the Spartans who came into the match with a perfect 6-0 league record. The tie breaker came down to individual matches won, which landed in Wheatfield’s favor, 7-6. All but one weight class was contested in the dual as well.

The dual started with a pair of overtime matches at 126 and 132 pounds. NW’s Tremell Mathews earned a quality win over Starpoint’s CJ Uptegrove with an 8-6 overtime win. Gage LaPlante followed that up with the exact same score at 132 earning an OT win over Te’Shaun Mathews to earn three team points for Starpoint.

Wheatfield claimed all seven of its wins in the first 10 weights, including Collin Coughenour’s critical pin at 138 pounds to jump out to a 24-12 lead with only three weights left. Peyton Lyness earned Starpoint’s only pin of the match immediately after at 145 pounds.

With Starpoint down three points and needing more than a decision victory, it was up to NW 8th grader Garrett Chase at 118 pounds to hold off any Starpoint opponent in the final match of the night. While falling by decision, 7-6, Chase held off a Spartans senior but also helped the Falcons to victory by not giving up any more than a three-team-point match.

While the Spartans dropped their first league dual of the season, wins over Lewiston-Porter and Wilson and a Niagara Falls win over Wheatfield would set up next Wednesday’s Falls at Starpoint showdown to be for at least a share of the ‘super league’ title.

“(Head coach Steve) Hart at Starpoint is fun to coach against,” Eagan said. “We joke around a lot and have been talking a lot this entire season. He definitely has a passion for the sport that I love to see. Both teams are well coached and committed to offseason wrestling which obviously helps. I’m excited to get out there, have some fun, and see how our roster moves play out.”

Wolverines win wrestling 'super league,' Niagara Cup in big week

By Matt O'Rourke scoreboard@gnnewspaper.com, Jun 17, 2021

The defending Niagara Frontier League champion Niagara Falls wrestling team ended the final week of the 'regular' spring 2021 season with a pair of high profile wins and got some hardware for its efforts.

On Tuesday, the Wolverines paid a visit to NFL archrival Niagara Wheatfield for the annual Niagara Cup showdown. The one-loss Falcons had earned a decisive victory over Starpoint only five days

prior to the dual with Falls, disrupting the top of the standings in the combined Niagara/Orleans 'super league.' An upset-minded Wheatfield squad could not only take back the Niagara Cup with a win, but also potentially set itself up for at the very least a share of the league title.

"I thought I was going to be nervous because it was my first time as head coach in that match but honestly, I was just really excited," said first-year Falls head coach Josh Eagan. "(Assistant coach Don McCoy) and I crunched the numbers and even though you can never count (Wheatfield head coach Rick) Sweney out, I was confident we would come out on top."

Eagan continued: "Don is amazing at researching lineups and having instinct on where our kids should win. He has been pretty spot on with his predictions. We have a digital spreadsheet that helps us do the math with dual meets. ... It has helped take a bit of the stress out of a dual meet day and I can't wait to use it again next year."



The Niagara Falls wrestling team poses after clinching the combined Niagara/Orleans 'super league' championship with a victory Wednesday over the host Spartans at Starpoint.

Matt O'Rourke/Contributor

The Wolverines, ranked No. 3 in Western New York by WNY Athletics, earned a 35-22 win over the No. 5 Falcons and kept their unbeaten 9-0 record, the coveted Niagara Cup and the possibility of winning the 'super league' title outright with a road victory over Starpoint on Wednesday.

In the rivalry dual, Falls captured eight wins in the 13 matches, led by Jaden Crumpler, Amarfio Reynolds Jr., Michael Syposs, Darren Christian, Max Hill, Levi Cox, Carl Ealy and Javion Carter, with pins secured by Crumpler and Cox. Winning for NW were Chase Richards, Joseph Cicco, Te'Shaun Mathews, Collin Coughenour and Trevon Mathews.

"The win versus Wheatfield was awesome," said Eagan. "When the teams got together in the middle of the mat after the dual it gave me goosebumps."

While Eagan wrestled in big Falls-Wheatfield duals, he is credited with officially coining the 'Niagara Cup' in 2013 as an assistant coach with the Wolverines.

Neither Falls or Starpoint would receive much rest before Wednesday's 'super league' finale at Starpoint High School, as the Spartans took on Wilson and Lewiston-Porter the previous night.

The Falls-Starpoint dual would feature two more of WNY's top ranked squads as the unbeaten Wolverines and No. 6 Spartans (8-2 overall) would tangle with title implications on the line for both squads. A Falls win would guarantee the 'super league' title outright, while a Starpoint win would create a three way tie for first place between the Spartans, Wolverines and Wheatfield.

Starting in the middle of the lineup, Jesiere Carter received a forfeit to earn the first team points of the night in favor of Falls. For the next five weights up to the end of the lineup at 285 pounds, the Wolverines would capture wins at every weight class courtesy of Hill, Cox, Javion Carter, Ealy, and AJ Conklin to give the Wolverines a comfortable 23-0 lead heading into the lower weights.

While Starpoint claimed wins in four of the final seven weights, pins by Crumpler and Christian and a major decision by Reynolds put the match officially out of reach for a 39-19 Niagara Falls win. Winning for Starpoint were JR Leuer, Griffin LaPlante, Gage LaPlante and CJ Uptegrove.

"I was a little nervous about how the kids would rebound from a stressful match the day before, but they did a great job of staying focused. ... It was the best they wrestled all year at the perfect time," said Eagan after his team's grueling two-day campaign. "Hats off to (Starpoint head coach Steve) Hart and his program. He has turned that program into one to watch out for every year."

“We just worked hard and we had to push. ... It was a weird season,” said Falls junior Jesiere Carter. “We grinded, went 10-0 and won the super league. Coach Eagan pushes us hard and we push each other hard every day. It was a collective effort to get everyone back this year. We had to push a few guys to make sure they came back out, but really it was a collective effort.”

Carter continued: “It was a really easy transition with Coach Eagan. We’re already close with him. He's our dog.”

This season, Falls completed back-to-back league championship campaigns, coming off of the 2019-20 NFL title, won the Niagara Cup for the second straight year and finished with another league unbeaten record as it heads into Saturday’s individual sectional championship finale at Williamsville North High School.

Final Niagara/Orleans ‘super league’ standings

1. Niagara Falls (10-0)
2. Newfane (8-2)
2. Niagara Wheatfield (8-2)
2. Starpoint (8-2)
5. North Tonawanda (6-4)
6. Lewiston-Porter (5-5)
7. Albion (3-7)
7. Lockport (3-7)
7. Medina (3-7)
10. Barker/Royalton-Hartland (1-9)
11. Wilson (0-10)

Lockport's Stefaan Fearon, Niagara Falls wrestlers rock the house at Division I championships

Miguel Rodriguez, Jun 19, 2021 Updated Jun 19, 2021

On a day in which Niagara Falls proved its superiority on the wrestling mat, the likable heavyweight from Lockport stole the show.

And Stefaan Fearon did it with big-time flair and plenty of crowd support Saturday at Williamsville North High School.

Fearon, a junior, ended the long day of wrestling at the Section VI Division I tournament by capturing his first championship. He pulled away for a 9-3 victory over Amherst's Tyree Orange.

Fearon displayed lots of swagger in winning as a No. 3 seed. In a physical, entertaining match, he seized control late in the second period and then implored the crowd to cheer before the start of the third period. The crowd did and he fed off that energy during a 7-2 period.

"I'm a king," he said after putting the finishing touches to a 19-0 season. "I knew what I came here for ... first place was the only goal."

"We told Stefaan two years ago he had this in him," Lockport coach Bill Morello Jr. said. "He just needed to get his own confidence."

Fearon did, but he wasn't the only one feeling good Saturday.

Niagara Falls reminded folks that there's more to the school's athletics program than just a powerhouse boys basketball team. The Wolverines wrestlers again shined under the bright lights of the section tournament. The Wolverines crowned three champions – Jaden Crumpler (110 pounds), Amarfio Reynolds (118 pounds) and Jesiere Carter (152 pounds) – en route to securing the team title with 113 points. Lancaster scored 108, followed by Starpoint with 104.5.

This tournament usually crowns 13 individual champions and serves as a state qualifier. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in the season being moved from winter to spring – and the state tournament also being cancelled – officials opted to keep team scores during this meet. The traditional Section VI dual meet team championship tournament was canceled due to the shortness of the season.

"It's awesome," first-year Niagara Falls coach Josh Eagan said. "To be able to say we did it is special because it may never happen again like this – winning a Section VI title at the same tournament as individual sectional championships."

Williamsville North may not have won the team title, but two of its wrestlers pulled off championship three-peats in senior and 138-pounder Michael Catanzaro and 132-pound freshman Cameron Catrabone.



Stefaan Fearon of Lockport beats Tyree Orange of Amherst in the 285 weight class during the Section VI Division I wrestling meet at Williamsville North High School.

The event was held in split sessions, with bleacher seating on one side of the gym for spectators. The bigger crowd showed up for the second session, which featured wrestlers from 145-pound class and up.

Fearon gave those fans and the remaining wrestlers in the gym plenty of reasons to cheer.

He and Amherst's Orange battled fiercely, with Fearon coming close to scoring early via takedown, which occurred just outside the circle, according to an official. Orange, the No. 1 seed and last year's runner-up, carried a 1-0 lead late into the second period. That's when Fearon finally struck, getting a two-point takedown in bounds to take the lead into the third.

Before the start of the third, Fearon's showmanship was on full display as he waved his arms up to get the crowd shouting and excited before the start of period. They responded, getting behind him and quickly cheering when he added to his lead, first earning an escape point and then points for a takedown.

"We don't like that he did that, but that's Stefaan's personality," Morello said. "Let him live in the moment. ... Stefaan is one of the most likable wrestlers I know. Wherever I go, people are asking 'Is Stefaan here?' He's a favorite of officials, coaches and wrestlers."

Fearon came in fourth last year. He said Morello and his father, Bill Sr., helped him become the wrestler he is today. He put in the work necessary to learn the skills to succeed. He just kept reminding himself to do one thing Saturday as worked his way to the top of the podium.

"Wrestle smart and take good shots. I'll be good (at the end)," he said.

Falls was great at the end, but its journey to the team crown began with two of the lighter weights fulfilling their goal of winning championships and gaining measures of revenge.

Crumpler scored a 6-4 overtime win over North's Brendan Dellinger to win at 110 pounds. Dellinger was the top seed, while Crumpler was No. 2. Crumpler scored via takedown with 28 seconds left to secure his first championship.

In doing that, he also helped teammate Reynolds gain a measure of revenge because Reynolds lost in last year's final to Dellinger.

Reynolds followed by earning a 9-8 win over Frontier's Travis Browning at 118 pounds to secure his first title after missing out last year.

"Last year was my first being front of a lot of people," said Reynolds, who also noted that with five-time Section VI champion Willie McDougald now an Oklahoma Sooner, somebody needed to step up.

Falls has had at least one Section VI champion in each of the past five tournaments, Eagan said.

Carter, the son of former standout amateur boxer Terry Carter, cruised to an 11-4 triumph, with his grandmother cheering with glee during the match and afterwards with Carter.

"You have to push everybody on the team," Carter said. "I've got great partners, great coaching and my own personal work outside wrestling. ... It feels good."

Catanzaro, who will wrestle at Ohio University in the winter, went from potentially not having a season to winning another championship and going 14-0 to boot. He won two of his three matches via pin Saturday, including the title in 1:02 against Lancaster's Carter Tedusz. Title No. 3 definitely felt the sweetest of them all.

“We had the (tournament) in my home gym, so it’s meaningful,” Catanzaro said. “It’s my last one and it’s a nice sendoff (to college).”

Catrabone finished a 12-0 season with an 8-0 win over Gage LaPlante of Starpoint.

Tremell Mathews of Niagara Wheatfield captured the 126-pound title with a win over Griffin LaPlante of Starpoint.

Ken Schmitz of Hamburg opened the finals by securing the 102-pound class title.

Other champions included Niagara Wheatfield’s Collin Coughenour (145 pounds), Lancaster’s Bryce Bolognese (160 pounds) and Josh Jelonek (189 pounds), Grand Island’s Brian Bielic (172 pounds) and North Tonawanda’s Aden Spina (215 pounds).

Niagara Falls wrestling captures Section VI Division I title

By Matt O'Rourke scoreboard@gnnewspaper.com, Jun 21, 2021

The Niagara/Orleans 'super league' champions wrapped up the 2021 'regular' spring season Saturday at Williamsville North High School, crowning a trio of Section VI champions while earning the Section VI Division I team title, coming out on top of the 17-team field.

Niagara Falls' earned the team title with three champions and six overall place winners, finishing with 113 points to second-place Lancaster's 108. Starpoint finished in third overall with 104.5 points while Niagara Wheatfield rounded out the top five with 75.



"We took some hard losses early, but our guys picked each other up with a pin, a big win or other unexpected things," said NF coach Josh Eagan. "... We were a little shorthanded and had a couple kids lose in the first round that we didn't expect ... We needed every single kid on our team to pull it together,."

"For example, Carl Ealy made it to the finals. He stepped it up and showed up big. If he didn't win his first match, we wouldn't have won the Section VI title."

Ealy was one of four Wolverine finalists Saturday. Teammates Jaden Crumpler, Amarlio Reynolds Jr. and Jesiere Carter claimed individual titles at 110, 118, and 152 pounds, respectively.

Team score has not been recorded at the Section VI Division I or II tournaments since 2010. The lack of a sectional Dual Meet Championship this season was a major reason why both tournaments were scored and a sectional champion team title awarded this spring.

Crumpler was the No. 2 seed in the 110-pound bracket and a returning third-place finisher from 2020. He earned pins in both his quarter- and semifinal matches to advance to the final, where he was a 6-4 overtime winner over Williamsville North/East's returning sectional champion Brendan Dellinger.

"There were some calls in that match that if it was last year, Jaden might have reacted very differently," said Eagan. "I am so proud of the way he handled that situation. He applied the

philosophy of wisdom that we have talked about in practice to help guide himself through and overcome that moment.”

Reynolds returned to the Division I final after a runner-up finish in 2020 that earned him a wildcard entry to the state federation tournament in Albany. Reynolds was a winner by pin in the first round and a decision winner, 6-1, in the semifinal to advance to the 118-pound large school finale. There, he captured an exciting 9-8 victory over Frontier’s Travis Browning, also a returning sectional finalist and state tournament qualifier.

Finally, at 152, Carter started the day as the No. 3 seed and earned pins over the Nos. 6 and 2 seeds to advance to the championship bout, where he would meet top-seeded Lancaster sophomore Michael Schaefer, a returning Section VI champion. In the final, it would be all Carter as he cruised to an 11-4 victory.

“In the semifinal, he let the emotion of the moment get to him for a minute,” Eagan said of Carter’s performance. “During an injury timeout I said, ‘Listen, that’s you and him out there. You look at us and worry about that match.’ Then he goes out there and pins him.”

Eagan continued: “In the final, we said, ‘(Schaefer) is the one seed due in large put to what he did last year. ... What did you put into this year?’ Jesiere said, ‘Everything.’ He went out and nearly majored him in the final. That helped us win the sectional championship.”

Also placing for the Wolverines were Ja’Shad Bumpers (3rd, 110), Levi Cox (3rd, 172) and Grady Peterson (4th, 132). Competing for Niagara Falls but missing placement were Eian Peterson, Mike Syposs, Darren Christian and Max Hill.

Falls completed a clean sweep in the final week of the spring 2021 wrestling season, defending the Niagara Cup last Tuesday, claiming the Niagara/Orleans ‘super league’ title outright Wednesday and winning the Section VI Division I team championship Saturday.

“We don’t win the sectional tournament without every single kid that placed,” said Eagan. “This year was definitely different, but we adapted and recruited anyway. The Wolverines came up big and big guys threw down at sectionals.”

“One of our mottos is humility, to never be satisfied with our goals,” said Eagan. “We try our best to teach our kids to wrestle with humility and tenacity and to never be satisfied.”

Eagan concluded: “We wouldn’t be able to do what we do without (assistant coaches) Don McCoy, Jon Eagan and Palmer Archie. I am a firm believer in that you don’t accomplish anything without a supporting crew.”