

**2022-2023**

# **NIAGARA FALLS**

# **WRESTLING**

**2023**

**2<sup>nd</sup>- SECTION 6 AA**

**6<sup>TH</sup>- NEW YORK STATE**

**State Champion: Jaden Crumpler**

**All State: Amarfio Reynolds & Mike Syposs**

**COACHES: Joshua Eagan, Don McCoy, Jon Eagan, Josh McCoy, Jason Vranic & Ken White**

# Team Dual Record

13-3

1. Niagara Falls W – Alexander L
2. Niagara Falls 32 – Clarence 28
3. Niagara Falls 48 – Iroquois 26
4. Niagara Falls 35 – Southwestern 20
5. Niagara Falls 26 – Starpoint 47
6. Niagara Falls 58 – Lockport 18
7. Niagara Falls 51 – KenTon 18
8. Niagara Falls 49 – Grand Island 18
9. Niagara Falls 54 – North Tonawanda 21
10. Niagara Falls 37 – Williamsville North 27
11. Niagara Falls 21 – Wheatfield 27
12. Niagara Falls 44 – Lancaster 27
13. Niagara Falls 54 – Amherst 21
14. Niagara Falls 64 – Lewiston Porter 9
15. Niagara Falls 19 – Wheatfield 37
16. Niagara Falls 66 – CSAT 6

## Section 6 Champions

- Eian Peterson – 110
- Jaden Crumpler – 126
- Mike Syposs – 160



## Section 6 Place Finishers

- Amarfio Reynolds – 126, 2nd
- Cameron Hall – 215, 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Grady Peterson – 132, 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Vinny Falsetti – 145, 6<sup>th</sup>
- Jayden Hilson – 160, 6<sup>th</sup>
- Atreal Mayfield – 285, 6<sup>th</sup>





# BOYS WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2023

MVP ARENA | SECTION 2

- Jaden Crumpler - State Champion
- Amarfio Reynolds – 4<sup>th</sup> Place
- Mike Syposs – 7<sup>th</sup> Place
- Eian Peterson
- Cameron Hall



## NYS Division 1 Team Scores

- |                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Minisink Valley 95.5      | 11. Middletown 42.0  |
| 2. Iona Prep 75.5            | 12. Long Beach 40.0  |
| 3. Wantagh 72.5              | 13. Fairport 39.5    |
| 4. Ballston Spa              | 14. Mohonasen 39.0   |
| 5. Burnt Hills 61.0          | 15. Longwood 38.0    |
| <b>6. Niagara Falls 55.0</b> | 16. East Islip 36.0  |
| 7. Hauppauge 49.5            | 17. Spencerport 36.0 |
| 8. Newburgh FA 45.0          | 18. Valley Central   |
| 9. Hilton 44.0               | 19. Will North 30.0  |
| 10. Chenango Forks 43.0      | 20. Cornwall 28      |



# NIAGARA FALLS WRESTLING

2023



Jaden Crumpler  
Niagara Falls



JADEN CRUMPLER

2023 New York State Div I  
126 lb Champion



**SENIOR**  
Class of 2023

# NIAGARA FALLS WRESTLING

2023



AMARFIO REYNOLDS



**SENIOR**  
Class of 2023





# NIAGARA FALLS WRESTLING

2023

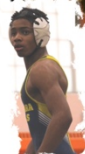


# NIAGARA FALLS WRESTLING

2023



**SENIOR**  
Class of 2023



**SENIOR**  
Class of 2023

# NIAGARA FALLS WRESTLING

2023

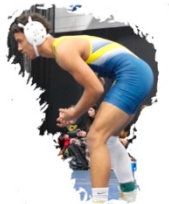


CAMERON HALL

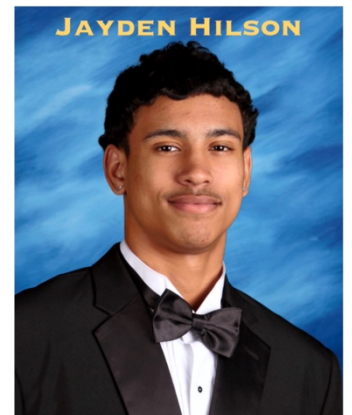


# NIAGARA FALLS WRESTLING

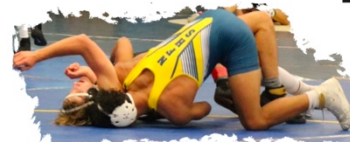
2023



JAYDEN HILSON



**SENIOR**  
Class of 2023



**SENIOR**  
Class of 2023



# NIAGARA FALLS WRESTLING

2023



ATREAL MAYFIELD



**SENIOR**  
Class of 2023

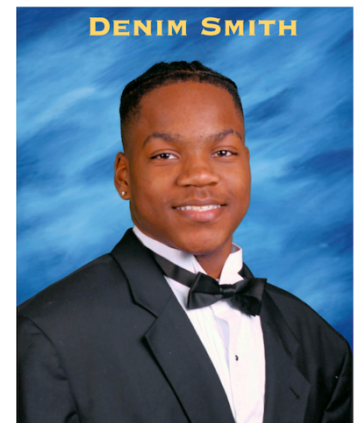


ETHE HEMPHILL



# NIAGARA FALLS WRESTLING

2023



DENIM SMITH

# Crumpler, Reynolds Jr. a dynamic duo for Niagara Falls wrestling

By Joe Kraus | joseph.kraus@niagara-gazette.com ; Feb 7, 2023



**Niagara Falls senior** wrestler Jaden Crumpler locks down Jamestown's Connor Bush in the Section VI Class AA semifinals this past Saturday at Williamsville North High School.

NIAGARA FALLS — Iron sharpens iron.

That's how Niagara Falls senior tandem Jaden Crumpler and Amarfio Reynolds Jr. would describe their relationship as they have progressed through the ranks of Section VI wrestling and across the state.

"We're just here for the same goal," Crumpler said, now holding a 33-1 record this season. "We're (both here) to make the state finals. We're both here to compete."

And this 1-2 punch certainly has elevated their game side-by-side over the years with contrasting styles on the mat. Reynolds is known for his strength while Crumpler strives on using various techniques to defeat opponents. Last winter, Crumpler was the Section VI Division I state qualifier and finished as the runner-up in

the 118-pound bracket at states. Reynolds, meanwhile, won the state qualifier and finished seventh in the 126 bracket.

One year later, both are now competing in the 126 bracket and went head-to-head in the Section VI Class AA finals this past Saturday at Williamsville North High School, ending with Crumpler clinching his third consecutive sectional title. The two are both competing in the 126 bracket of the Division I state qualifiers this upcoming Saturday. And should both finish as the top two finalists and advance to the state championships held in Albany later this month, Crumpler and Reynolds could hypothetically find themselves competing against each other for a state championship. This is all based on the fact that, as of Tuesday, Crumpler and Reynolds are ranked second and third, respectively, in the 126 large schools bracket.

But when they square off on the mat — or even in practice — it's not out of envy toward each other's abilities or individual successes. It's a challenge the long-time friends have embraced to help each other improve.

"They just push each other," said Don McCoy, who has watched the duo compete since they joined the Niagara Falls Power Cats Wrestling program as preschoolers roughly 15 years ago. "It's a testament to each other, how they've pushed each other to get to where they are."

"I have known Jaden my whole life, so, it's like, I'm not even wrestling a teammate," Reynolds Jr. said, entering the weekend with a 31-4 record. "It's like I'm wrestling like a brother. So, it hurts, but at the same time, you don't get a lot of kids like Jaden that you can wrestle in Section VI."

Along with finding success, both grapplers agreed that last season came with lessons learned that were carried over into their senior campaigns.

For Reynolds, at the end of the day, the constant variable that remained is the two men battling in the six-minute dual.



**Niagara Falls senior wrestler** Amarfio Reynolds Jr. takes down Lancaster's Alex Monile in the Section VI Class AA semifinals this past Saturday at Williamsville North High School

“Every tournament is just like a regular tournament, no matter (if) it’s class finals, sectional finals or even like (consolation quarterfinals) at states,” Reynolds said, whose father and namesake competed at the former LaSalle High School in Niagara Falls High School roughly 30 years ago. “You just got to go into every tournament like it’s just a regular tournament to you, you know?”

Crumpler said his big learning moment came at the state tournament itself. When he competed for the state title, he became nervous competing in front of the large crowd gathered inside MVP Arena in Albany. Now, with the experience under his belt as he makes one last run, Crumpler aims to compete with even more confidence.

“This year, I’m gonna go in there, knowing that it’s my last match, just bring it all in there,” he said.

And as the accolades have expanded, so has the unofficial bulls-eye on the backs of both Crumpler and Reynolds as opponents hope to defeat the successful seniors.

“Of course, there’s a target on your back, but, you got to put yourself in the position of there’s always going to be somebody out there better than you,” Reynolds said. “So while I have a target on my back, there’s also a target on everybody else’s backs... People are fighting for me but I’m also trying to fight and work harder to beat other people. So, just stay humble and calm.”

Describing the seniors as “hard workers,” Niagara Falls head coach Josh Eagan hopes the work ethic they gathered from their six years on the mat will carry over into their next phases of life, like it did for him nearly 20 years ago.

“It’s instilled in you through the sport,” Eagan said, who added it has been a pleasure to coach the young men. “So, if you don’t have the work ethic, you’re not going to find any success and that holds true in life too.”

As their letterman careers wind down, Crumpler and Reynolds have embraced the opportunity to lead in the Cataract City through their athletic talents.

“We’re making a way for people — showing people — that you can be good, no matter where you’re from,” Reynolds said. “It’s just a good feeling coming from Niagara Falls and being some of the best kids in the section and even the state.”

The Division I state qualifier will begin at 9 a.m. this Saturday at North Tonawanda High School. The finals are scheduled to start at 2:30 p.m.

# THE BUFFALO NEWS

## Niagara Wheatfield, Niagara Falls dominate Section VI Division I Wrestling Championships

Clevis Murray Feb 11, 2023, Updated Feb 11, 2023



*Niagara Falls' Jaden Crumpler (#1 NYS) attempts to control Niagara Falls' Amarfio Reynolds (#2 NYS) in a clash of New York States best 126-pound wrestlers.*

The Section VI Division I wrestling championships were quite the spectacle Saturday at North Tonawanda High School.

The finalists for each weight class walked to the mat with a song of their choice with the gym lights off, with only strobes keeping the place from complete darkness.

With trips to Albany on the line for the New York State Public High School Athletic Association individual championships, the day featured the very best the area has to offer. Standing above the rest were the squads from Niagara Wheatfield and Niagara Falls, who share a “Team Niagara” team during the offseason that features members of both the Falcons and Wolverines.

“This is just great,” Niagara Falls coach Josh Eagan said. “We’re all in this for the same reasons. The teams are successful because it’s about the kids. It’s about the individuals, and the individual commitment is what makes the team great.”

Eian Peterson (110 pounds), Jaden Crumpler (126 pounds) and Michael Syposs (160 pounds) were the sectional champions for Niagara Falls, while Amarfio Reynolds (126 pounds) and Cameron Hall (215 pounds) won second-place matches to qualify for the state tournament.

According to [armdrag.com](http://armdrag.com), Niagara Falls is ranked No. 3 among teams in Western New York. Crumpler, ranked No. 3 in armdrag's pound-for-pound rankings, returns to the state tournament after finishing as a runner-up at 118 pounds.

“This was a successful day for us,” Eagan said. “Anytime you can send five kids, it’s a good day.”

As for Niagara Wheatfield, its sectional winners are Tremell Matthews (132 pounds), Te’Shaun Matthews (138 pounds), Casey Robinson (215 pounds), Evan Azbell (110 pounds), Chase Richards (138 pounds), Garrett Chase (145 pounds) and Joseph Cicco (160 pounds).

Both teams were excited for each other and cheering, screaming, hugging and high-fiving in celebration. When Richards clinched his spot in the state tournament, he was overcome with emotion as his dad was his loudest supporter, and his mom broke down in tears while hugging her son.

“I was just emotional,” Richards said. “It was such a great moment for me, my family and the team, and my mom started crying when we hugged.”

The Niagara neighbors alone won six sectional championships and had 12 state qualifiers once the day was done.

“We’re walking home with a lot of medals tonight,” Niagara Wheatfield coach Rick Sweeney said. “We compete all year and tournaments throughout the summer, and not just during the winter season. Our youth program has helped feed us. I’m really proud of all the kids.”

When all of the athletes received their sectional patches and hoodies, the Niagara schools were the last to leave as they celebrated the area’s accomplishment by taking as many pictures as possible. They consider themselves a family, which was displayed throughout the day through their success.

“Days like this are great for Team Niagara,” Eagan said. “We don’t even shake hands anymore. Instead, we huddle up in the middle, talk, prayer, and on three say, ‘Niagara.’ It’s not a rivalry. We have each other’s back. We might be practicing together this week. We try to make each other better. That’s what makes the kids from Niagara Falls and Niagara Wheatfield so competitive. In the

summer, they're wrestling together because iron sharpens iron. That's what it takes, coming together to get better, and it builds character."

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## NIAGARA GAZETTE

# Niagara Wheatfield, Niagara Falls combine to send 12 to states

By Joe Kraus | joseph.kraus@niagara-gazette.com ; Feb 12, 2023



Niagara Wheatfield senior Te'Shaun Matthews sends teammate Chase Richards airborne in the 138-pound finals of the Section VI Division I state qualifier Saturday at North Tonawanda High School.

RobShots

NORTH TONAWANDA — Time for the Falcons to fly.

That's how you could describe the feeling around Niagara Wheatfield wrestling as they progressed through the brackets at the Section VI Division I state qualifier Saturday at North Tonawanda High School.

After fighting through challenging tournaments all season — including an at-large bid that ended in an early exit at the NYSPHSAA State Duals last month — the Falcons are sending seven wrestlers to the state championships Feb. 24-25 inside the MVP Arena in Albany.

Niagara Wheatfield's seven state qualifiers make up nearly a third of the total Greater Niagara region wrestlers (20) competing again in two weeks, one less from a year ago (21).

Behind the Falcons are their Division I counterpart Niagara Falls are once again sending a quintet to the state capital, with four of them returnees from a year ago. Long-time Niagara Orleans League rivals Newfane and Wilson are sending three apiece.

For Niagara Wheatfield head coach Rick Sweney, Saturday was an “awesome day” for the program in a season that included winning the Niagara Frontier League title, among other individual and team accolades.

“Taking seven is pretty good,” Sweney said, who has spent nearly half a century coaching, including previously at Niagara Falls. “Wheatfield’s been a powerhouse for years. Never taken seven (wrestlers) to state and I don’t know if any other school has ever done it, to tell you the truth. ... We’re pretty excited. And, what can you say, you’re walking home with a lot of metal, you know?”

Sweney said, who has spent nearly half a century coaching high school wrestlers in Western New York, including previously at Niagara Falls. who has spent nearly half a century coaching high school wrestlers in Western New York.

Headlining the seven are seniors and brothers Tremell and Te’Shaun Matthews. Tremell, who was the second seed, pinned Niagara Falls’ Grady Peterson in the semifinals and defeated Clarence’s AJ Didas in an 8-3 decision to secure the 132-pound title. Te’Shaun entered as the top-seed in the 138 bracket and showed everyone why, pinning all three opponents, including teammate Chase Richards in the championship. Richards then defeated Ken-Ton’s Sawyer Dickinson in the second-place match.

After advancing last year with a second-place victory, Falcons’ senior Casey Robinson took home the 215 title, by defeating Niagara Falls’ Cameron Hall in the semifinals and then pinning Williamsville North-East’s Max Smith in the championship. Along with Richards, Evan Azbell (110), Garrett Chase (145) and Joe Cicco (160) all had runner-up finishes in their respective brackets to head to Albany. Muntathar Abbas had a third-place finish in the 118.





Niagara Falls senior Michael Syposs takes down Niagara Wheatfield's Joe Cicco in the 160-pound finals of the Section VI Division I state qualifier Saturday at North Tonawanda High School.

For the Wolverines, head coach Josh Eagan reacted like a kid on Christmas morning at the event, especially after how senior Cameron Hall clawed his way back to finish in second-place. After falling to Robinson in the semifinals, Hall then pinned Ken-Ton's Islam Dubashi in the third-place match to advance to a Section VI Class AA championship rematch with North-East's Smith. In what was the final match of the day, Hall defeated Smith in a 3-1 finish. Eagan said the postseason is all about individual success.

"If you would have asked me, would we rather, as a team, win the class (AA) tournament or send to him to states next week? 100%," Eagan said. "It's all about the end. It's all about the individual kids, you know what I mean? Like, team scores. Great. You know, dual meets are awesome. and it would have been nice to win a class tournament. But if I can trade going to states for the class title, 100%, without a doubt. Because at the end of the day, that's what it's all about — this time of year."

Earlier in the finals, senior teammates and long-time friends Jaden Crumpler and Amarfio Reynolds Jr. once again met in the finals of the 126 bracket. Crumpler defeated Reynolds in a 7-2 decision. Teammates Eian Peterson and Michael Syposs defended the 110 and 160 brackets. Eian, the sophomore, defeated Grand Island's Dylan Castiglia in the 110 final while Syposs defeated Wheatfield's Cicco in a 12-0 major decision. Older brother Grady finished third in the 138 bracket.

In what was one of the most intense finishes of the day, North Tonawanda junior Dylan Gagnon defeated Sweet Home's Cameron Millender in a sudden-death victory in the 152 finals, now representing the Lumberjacks on the biggest stage, who were hosting the state qualifiers for the first time since 2018. As Gagnon said, the two had just faced off last Saturday at the Section VI Class A championships, so there was some familiarity heading into the state qualifier.

"We knew all we had to do was push, push, push, push, push all the way to the end," Gagnon said. "Grind out a hard win but wins come how they come so we'll take it." A Gagnon-Millender rematch could happen again in Albany as the Sweet Home senior then defeated Clarence's Joey Kelleher in the second-place match.

After entering the day as the sixth-seed in the 172 bracket, Lockport junior Liam Whalen had an impressive day, knocking off Niagara Wheatfield's Dante DiFiglia in the consolation semifinals and then Jamestown's Carson Bane in a 2-1 decision in the third place match. Whalen was then pinned by Lancaster's Mikey Schaefer, the bracket's top-seed.

Grand Island finished the day with three top-finishers, including Dylan Castiglia's third place finish in the 110 bracket.

# Greater Niagara Division I wrestlers preparing brawn and brains ahead of states

By Joe Kraus | joseph.kraus@niagara-gazette.com ; February 20, 2023

NIAGARA FALLS — “One hard practice left! Do you want to get on the podium?”

That’s what Niagara Falls wrestling head coach Josh Eagan shouted in the final minutes of Monday’s training session toward the Greater Niagara region wrestlers (Niagara Wheatfield, Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda) set to compete in the Division I bracket of the NYSPHSAA wrestling championships Feb. 24-25 at the MVP Arena in Albany.

During the heart of the season, the only time these 13 wrestlers from Niagara Wheatfield, Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda would find themselves in the same gym would either be at Niagara Frontier League dual meets or in sectional or state qualifier competition.

Now, just mere days away from the big moment, the mentality inside the Niagara Falls Athletics Field House Monday and Tuesday — plus two days at Niagara Wheatfield High School last week and a Section VI-wide practice Thursday at Williamsville North High School — is seeking daily improvement.

“Working with these guys, it’s like a blessing,” Niagara Wheatfield junior and the No. 4 seed in the 138-pound bracket Te’Shaun Matthews said. “They make me better. They’re basically the reason why I’m going to states because I’m pushing myself because of them. They’re getting me ready for states, they’re getting me in shape, they’re getting me mentally prepared — everything for the states.”

At this stage of the season, Eagan said the wrestlers should be physically ready for the two-day state competition. Now, from a coaching perspective, the goal is make sure the young grapplers are also mentally prepared when they first step onto the mat.

“You’re talking about (sectional) champions and second-place kids,” Eagan said of the overall field of competition at states. “They’re not used to losing. So, they don’t want to lose in practice either. So, it keeps (the energy) high. You just got to make sure they stay focused and they’re working on the right stuff (and) getting ready.”

Ranging between an hour to 90 minutes, the intense practices are designed to prevent significant injury but also to make sure the wrestlers can still break a sweat with a variety of drills, one-on-one practices and, in the last few minutes, jogging, to help in the overall recovery. With his iPad in hand, Eagan jots down notes on his practice plan while practice is going on and confers with both long-time assistant Don McCoy and Niagara Wheatfield head coach Rick Sweney on how to plan the following session and other areas of discussion while the high-quality wrestlers are able to train by themselves.

Having these different coaches around him, Eagan said, has been very beneficial.

“(Don) is very organized and he’s been around the sport forever,” Eagan said. “He knows what you need to do, logistics wise, technique wise. Rick’s really good with the psychology of it (and) talking with kids. ... (Former Niagara Falls coach) Izzy (Martinez) was the most organized coach. So, you try to take the best parts and emulate those and use them.”

For Niagara Falls wrestler Amarfio Reynolds Jr., his experience on the big stage as an underclassman has all been beneficial as he prepares for his last shot at a state title. The first time he appeared at states, Reynolds didn't feel the pressure as he was behind Willie McDougald in the same bracket.

"It was just like, 'I'm going in just to wrestle,'" Reynolds said, who is the No. 2 seed behind teammate Jaden Crumpler in this year's 126 bracket. "Second year (last winter), it was like, 'I'm not younger anymore. I actually got to do something. I've got something to prove.' and then this year, it's more like, 'I gotta go so now I (can) accomplish it.'"

Others are excited to represent the Greater Niagara region one last time at the state championships, including Niagara Wheatfield's Casey Robinson, who returns in the 215 bracket as the No. 11 seed. Making it to this area of the bracket, Robinson said, was a season goal for him.

"I'm actually in the exact spot of the bracket that I've been hoping to be in," Robinson said. "The past year, I've been saying, I need to be in this spot of the bracket and here I am."

Regardless of how past trips went, Eagan said the fact some of these wrestlers made an appearance at the state championship gives them a bit of a competitive advantage.

"Even if you didn't have success, you have that little bit of a foundation to kind of know what to expect when you're there," Eagan said. "So, that'd be interesting to see if you know those wrestlers do better than some of the kids that have never been there before."

When Sweney previously coached at Niagara Falls for 25 years, he sent many wrestlers to the state finals, even inviting those who were projected to appear the following year to the event. Once the wrestlers stepped into the area, Sweney said, the light bulb went on for them.

"They came up, year by year, to get up there and realize that it was just another tournament," Sweney said, a four-year wrestler at Niagara Falls High School himself before a nearly 50-year career as a coach in Western New York. "It wasn't this big glorious thing as they thought and they would look at (the bracket) and say, 'I could beat that kid. I could do well up here'. ... So, it's to get the concept that it's just another tournament. There's good wrestlers, bad wrestlers and everybody in between, so, you gotta go up there and do your best."

Before the group ended Monday's session, Eagan emphasized to the new podium hopefuls to continue controlling what each of them can control and not abandon their individual routines, all to stay mentally prepared for their opening matches. In fact, Eagan has even displayed on the wall inside the wrestling gym and on a Smartboard in the locker room a four-step mindset guide in preparing for states.

"If it's in the back of their mind, they might be in that situation," Eagan said. "And those little things click like, 'Oh, all right, I'm good. All right, it's just me and this other kid out here right now I'm down by one but I'm still in this' or 'I'm up by one I got to finish this match.' It's those small things because in these close matches, it can go either way."

The first round matches for Division I & II will start at 10 a.m. on Friday and the championship finals are scheduled to begin at 6:05 p.m. on Saturday.

# State wrestling wrap: Five Greater Niagara region wrestlers still have state title hopes

By Joe Kraus | joseph.kraus@niagara-gazette.com ; Feb 24,, 2023



**Niagara Falls' Amarfio Reynolds Jr.** battles for position with Bellport's Camryn Howard during a Division I 126-pound quarterfinal match at the state wrestling tournament, Friday, in Albany.

ALBANY — Still in the fight.

Whether it's competing for a title or trying to end their season on a high note in the consolation round, that's the sentiment most are feeling hours after the first day of the NYSPHSAA wrestling championships concluded Friday night inside the MVP Arena.

Like in past tournaments all season, Niagara County's wrestling stardom was on full display, in both Division I and Division II action, as [20 Greater Niagara region wrestlers competed for the ultimate glory](#), with five still alive for a state championship

[Leading the way were Niagara Falls senior duo Jaden Crumpler and Amarfio Reynolds, Jr.](#), both long-time friends and the top two seeds in this year's Division I 126-pound bracket who now find each.

The top-seed and the state runner-up in the 118 bracket last winter, Crumpler had the first-round bye before defeating Fox Lane's Justin Gierum in a 9-8 decision in the second round. Crumpler then followed this with a 7-2 decision against St. Joe's junior and ninth-seeded Nik Massoro, punching his ticket to Saturday's semifinal against the fourth-seed and Calhoun senior Ray Adams.

Reynolds, the No. 2 seed, started his day with a statement — a 15-2 major decision victory over Ballston Spa's Cameron Hinchcliff. Reynolds then went the distance and defeated Bellport's Camryn Howard — the seventh seed — in a 3-2 ultimate tie-breaker. Reynolds will face Wantagh's Joseph Celm in Saturday's second semifinal.

“They both wrestled well,” Niagara Falls head coach Josh Eagan said. “Anytime you’re getting two wins to start the tournament, at states, I mean, you’re in the semifinals now. You’re setting yourself up. You’re already an all state wrestler. You win one more tomorrow, you’re at the final, so, yeah, I was happy with the way they wrestled.”

With both Wolverines competing in the semifinals, there is a strong possibility there will be an all Niagara Falls championship tonight. Focusing on the mental aspect of the entire day, Eagan said, is what the coaching staff will still emphasize with the wrestlers. He did, however, note the confidence he has seen in both of them.

“I do sense a lot of confidence, especially in Jaden and Junior,” Eagan said. “I think they really believe they can win and they think they’re gonna face each other in the finals, which is what you need going into these matches.”

For Niagara Wheatfield, junior Te'Shaun Matthews advanced to the 138 semifinals as the No. 4 seed after defeating Long Beach's Freedom Excel in a 12-4 major decision and Spencerport's Cal Arthur Russo in an 8-2 decision. Matthews will now face top-seeded Nick LaMorte of Rocky Point in the semifinals. Older brother Tremell lost to Plainedge's Luke Nieto in the 132 quarterfinals in a 5-4 decision.

Making his return to states as the No. 11 seed, Falcons senior Casey Robinson competed in the 215 bracket won a 3-0 decision over Chaminade's Zach Gallagher but lost to the No. 3 seed, Bellport's Jaiden Green, in the quarterfinals by an 8-1 decision.

Meanwhile, in Division II, Newfane fans will have plenty to cheer about as junior JJ Lucinski and sophomore Aidan Gillings both advanced into the semifinals of the 102 and 132 brackets, respectively.

Lucinski entered as the No. 3 seed and defeated Falconer / Cassadaga Valley's Dylan Newman in a 9-6 decision in the second round before taking down Beaver River's Derek Waiseman in a 7-3 decision. He will now face second-seeded Logan Bellis of Tioga in the semifinals today.

In what is his second straight year appearing in the 138 bracket, Gillings cruised into tomorrow's semifinal with a pair of pins against Duanesburg / Schohaire's Scott Nicoella and Schalomont's Dylan Devine — the latter taking just 30 seconds in the quarterfinals.

Zimmerman plugging away at 110

[Fresh off defending his 110-pound title in the CHSAA championship on Feb. 12 in Long Island](#), St. Joe's junior and Niagara Falls resident Austin Zimmerman appeared in Albany. Entering as the No. 7 seed, Zimmerman competed in the 110 bracket and defeated 10-seed Mason Mangiaino of Comsewogue and defeated 10-seed Mason Mangialino in a 3-2 ultimate-tiebreaker finish.

“He definitely showed some mental toughness and some fortitude to gather himself during that match and get refocused and finish the win,” St. Joe's wrestling coach Pete Kennedy said.

Zimmerman then lost to Chenago Forks' Ryan Ferrara in the quarterfinals (4-2) and will now face Niagara Falls' Eian Peterson in one of the 110 consolation matches today.

“ (Austin) came out and wrestled really, really tough in the quarterfinal match,” Kennedy said. “He had an opportunity to finish and take down the win, and, you know, that kid did too. and that kid was able to finish the takedown. I think he showed he can wrestle with anybody at this tournament, for sure, because that kid was in the finals last year.”

### Callara still fighting for Mustangs

Last season, Dominick Callara finished seventh overall in the 110 bracket. After picking up 26 wins during the season, Callara was hoping to improve upon that finish this weekend as he re-entered with the No. 8 bracket, but entered Friday just starting to recover from an illness that sidelined him from training for all of last week.

After having a bye into the second-round, Callara lost to Brock Frederick of South Jefferson / Sandy Creek in a 10-2 major decision. Medina head coach Eric Gross said the senior still has the heart of a battler, despite not being fully healthy this weekend.

“He always is just a battler and brawler out there and goes after points,” Gross said. “The first match didn’t go our way and the way he wanted it, but the kid he wrestled was very defensive and had a good strategy to keep us away from scoring points. and Dom wasn’t able to get to his attacks that he wanted to. But, he improved on that in the second match and was able to come away with a major decision win to advance to the blood rounds tomorrow morning.”

The second and final day of the NYSPHSAA championships for both Division I & II starts with the semifinal and consolation matches at 9:30 a.m. The overall championship finals will begin at 6:05 p.m.

# THE BUFFALO NEWS

## Four WNY wrestlers bring home state championships

Pete Tobey Special to the News Feb 25, 2023



ALBANY – Admittedly, the idea sounded better than it tasted to Cam Catrabone.

The Williamsville North junior finished off his first New York State Public High School Athletic Association wrestling title by pinning Amsterdam's Renso Montalvo 2:56 into their Division I 145-pound championship match Saturday night at MVP Arena.

Then following the handshakes, Catrabone removed his right shoe, poured water into it and drank from it.

Turning to a fellow wrestler after the bout, Catrabone admitted that it didn't taste that great. "Dude, that was disgusting," he said with a laugh.

Far sweeter, though, was the feeling of winning the state crown after a season of nagging injuries and illness.

He is North's first state wrestling champion.



"It feels better knowing I did it battling through adversity," said Catrabone (47-2), who has committed to wrestle at the University of Michigan. "You're never going to feel perfect after a whole season. Battling through everything just proves to myself that I can do it in college and beyond."



Niagara Falls' Jaden Crumpler has his hand raised after winning the state wrestling title at 126 pounds.

Bob Koshinski

Catrabone was joined as a state champ by three other Section VI wrestlers – Niagara Falls senior Jaden Crumpler at 126 in Division I, and a pair of surprises in Division II: Chautauqua Lake/Westfield/Panama/Clymer junior Jordan Joslyn, the seventh seed at 126, and Southwestern freshman Tavio Hoose, the sixth seed at 172. Hoose's title was the most dramatic, as he scored a takedown in the final seconds for a 5-4 victory over Cold Spring Harbor's Greyson Meak.

Newfane sophomore Aidan Gillings (47-5) was runner-up in Division II at 132, dropping a 6-4 decision to Mt. Sinai's Brayden Farhbach.

Crumpler (41-1) capitalized on his opportunities, scoring a reversal in the first and second periods to take the lead, then held on for his first state championship, 4-2 over Wantagh's Joseph Clem.

"I came in with nothing to lose, I'm a senior," said Crumpler, who lost last year's state final at 118 in the final seconds. "I saw the kid two months before, so I knew what to do and I applied it. Everything I did, all the hard work and dedication for the last 13 years, led up to this moment."

Crumpler prevented Clem from getting out of bounds for the final 30 seconds of the match, clawing Clem back in every time he lunged for the boundary.

"Usually in a tough match, they call a stalemate," Crumpler said. "I was trying to burn time off the clock."

Crumpler became the second state champ from Niagara Falls, following Willie McDougald, who is now at Oklahoma and won titles in 2018 and 2020.

Joslyn (45-2) used what he felt was a poor performance at last year's state meet as fuel for the upset of the Division II finals. He wrestled with a chip on his shoulder, knocking off the No. 2 and 3 seeds before taking down Tioga's top-seeded Gianni Silvestri – a two-time state champion – with a 6-4 victory in the finals.

"If you've been around Jordan, you don't expect anything but that," Chautauqua Lake assistant coach Ryan Gibbs said. "He wrestled with an edge today."

"I knew what I could do if I just wrestled," Joslyn said. "Last year, I lost in the 'blood round' and I didn't place. I was seeded fifth, but I didn't wrestle well."

Joslyn scored a pair of takedowns on Silvestri in the first period, rode him out hard in the second, then gave himself a 6-2 cushion with a reversal with 35 seconds left in regulation.

"I just needed to wrestle my match, not my opponents'," Joslyn said. "My style is aggressive, attacking and scoring a lot of points. I needed to make sure I had enough of a lead so I didn't put myself at risk."

Hoose (44-1) put himself in an awkward position before finishing his takedown of Meak with only two seconds to spare, bringing a roar of triumph from the burly young wrestler.

"I took a bad shot with 40 seconds to go," said Hoose, the youngest of six brothers, three of whom also placed at state, none higher than third. "My heart was racing and I knew I just had to shoot, I had to get in there, and I got in. I don't even know how I did it, it's all second nature."

Hoose said he was inspired by his first trip to the state meet as a kid.

"I've been thinking about this since the first time I was here. I just knew that I was going to have my hand raised here someday," he said. "I want to do this three more times and be a four-time champion."

Beyond the finalists, 11 wrestlers from Western New York placed in Division I and eight placed in Division II.

- **Amarfio Reynolds Jr. of Niagara Falls** was fourth at 126 pounds after a 5-4 loss to Calhoun's Ray Adams in the consolation bracket.
- St. Joe's had its two state Catholic champions place fifth. Austin Zimmerman, a three-time All-Catholic champion, competed at 110 pounds, and Nik Massaro competed at 126. Both won by pins in their last matches of the season.
- At 138, Niagara Wheatfield's Te'Shaun Matthews placed fifth after a victory against Islip's Jared Spahn by pinfall in 3:14.
- Hamburg-Eden's Luke Smeader was fifth at 172, and teammates Trevor DellaPenta, at 102, and Kenny Schmitz, at 118, both placed eighth. Hamburg has multiple state placewinners for the first time in program history.
- Lancaster's Tommy Carlsen was fifth at 285, finishing with a fall in 3:52 against Gabriel Garibaldi of Iona Prep.
- **Niagara Falls' Mike Syposs was seventh at 160.**
- Orchard Park's Jack MacDonald was seventh at 189, winning his final match by 6-2 decision against Lorenzo Palleschi of Saratoga Springs. MacDonald is the first Quaker to place in the state meet in 20 years.
- Sweet Home's Cam Millender placed eighth at 152 to become the school's first state placewinner of the 2000s. He also won his 100th career match during the tournament.

# Niagara Falls' Jaden Crumpler lead five WNY wrestlers to All-American honors.

**Clevis Murray** Mar 27, 2023 Updated Mar 27, 2023



Niagara Falls' Jaden Crumpler competes against Niagara Falls' Amarfio Reynolds during the Section VI Division I wrestling championships at North Tonawanda High School on Feb. 11, 2023.

Joseph Cooke/Buffalo News

**F**ive Western New York wrestlers were named All-Americans after their performances at the 34<sup>th</sup> annual National High School Coaches Association High Schools Nationals in Virginia Beach, Va.

Niagara Falls' Jaden Crumpler, the reigning Division I New York State Public High School Athletic Association champion at 126 pounds, reached the 126-pound final for seniors before losing a 4-1 decision to Georgia's Amantee Mills, a two-time state champion.

Crumpler's road to the final included a technical fall in a match he was leading 15-0, and four decisions, two being by majority.

The field was divided by class with champions and All-Americans crowned for freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors and girls. In all, New York State produced five national champions and 51 All-Americans.

Chautauqua Lake junior Jordan Joslyn, a NYSPHSAA Division II 126-pound state champion, placed third among juniors at 126 pounds, as he was pinned by eventual champion Pennsylvania's Nikolaus O'Neil in the semifinals. He bounced back with a 7-4 decision over Colorado's Lincoln Gregerson in the consolation semifinals and a 6-4 decision victory against Arizona's Christian Davis in the third-place match.

Three Starpoint wrestlers earned All-American status.

Griffin LaPlante finished in fourth place among freshmen at 138 pounds, losing an 8-6 decision in the semifinals to Pennsylvania's Jackson Butler. He finished the tournament 5-2, going 1-1 in the consolation bracket.

Griffin's brother, Gage, took fifth place at 160 pounds among juniors. His road to a national championship was thwarted by Georgia's Latrell Schafer in an 8-2 defeat in the semifinals. He finished the weekend 6-2.

Freshman Zachary Caldwell lost in the round of 16 at 160 pounds by a 12-2 majority decision to Pennsylvania's Dominic Sumpolec. Caldwell would end the event with a 5-3 record for eighth place.

# GNN WRESTLER OF THE YEAR: State title cements Jaden Crumpler's legacy at Niagara Falls

By Joe Kraus | joseph.kraus@niagara-gazette.com ; March 24 2023



Jaden Crumpler had accomplished enough, but wanted more.

After bursting onto the scene as a sectional champion as a Niagara Falls freshman, Crumpler kept his consistency and established himself as one of the top lightweights in Western New York scholastic wrestling. He even had the competitive blood instilled in him thanks to his uncle, Rashad Evans, who was a college wrestler at Michigan State before his UFC stardom.

But after finishing as the runner-up in the 118-pound bracket at the NYSPHSAA tournament last year, Crumpler had the desire to flip the script and spent the past year chasing one of his childhood dreams since taking on the sport as a youth 13 years ago — becoming a state champion.

Entering as the No. 1 seed in the Division I 126-pound bracket, Crumpler's unfinished business was settled as he defeated Wantagh's Joseph Clem, 4-2, inside MVP Arena, and thus, joined Willie McDougald as the only other Niagara Falls state champion.

It was this storybook ending to cap off an outstanding career that led to Crumpler being chosen as the Greater Niagara Newspapers wrestler of the year for a second straight season.

"Just a lot of hard work and dedication," said Crumpler, who finished his senior campaign with a 41-1 record and his entire career with a staggering 113-17 record. "I've really been working my tail off since I was four years (old) just for that moment. So, just a lot of hard work (that) I put into the sport and like finally starting to pay off."

Niagara Falls head coach Josh Eagan has watched plenty of wrestlers come through the program since he took over his alma mater in May 2021. But in his view, Crumpler was a one of a kind athlete, both on and off the mat, all with a humble approach.

"I've never had an athlete elevate their game," Eagan said. "We're here playing frisbee and then, all of a sudden, competition's coming close and he's just locked in. And, it's a different mentality. There's no goofing around. He's hitting the mat hard. Everything's a little bit more intense. He's a true competitor."

Jaden's work ethic towards becoming a state wrestler came from not just within the family but enhanced during his freshman season in the 2019-20 campaign. During that season, Crumpler was one of the few underclassmen at the varsity level and wrestled alongside McDougald, who won his second and final state championship that year, before becoming a NCAA Division I student-athlete at the University of Oklahoma.

Years later, McDougald still remembers watching Crumpler start out on the youth wrestling circuit, describing him as "super small." McDougald knew though, during their lone varsity season together, that Crumpler had the potential to be a solid varsity wrestler once he gained some strength and grew in size. It all came to fruition, McDougald said, when watching Crumpler's progression over the last two state tournaments.

"(Last year), he was kind of hanging in there with guys having close matches," McDougald said. "And then this year, it does take time, I think through the semis, I don't think he really gave up a take down. Not even sure but it was kind of just insane to see how good he was. And he's really good on top and that's a really big part of wrestling at the next level."

Having the opportunity to learn from McDougald as a freshman and also end his career with a state championship was a special moment for Crumpler.

"Everyone knows Willie for who he is," said Crumpler. "Willie was a great wrestler, so, me just being able to follow through and do what he did means a lot."

Crumpler was also known for being one of Niagara Falls wrestling's biggest cheerleaders. During the NYSPHSAA tournament in late February, Crumpler supported his long-time teammate and friend, Amarfio Reynolds Jr., as they made their way through the main bracket, continuing a bond that will likely last as they transition into adulthood.

"It was the iron sharpens iron thing," Reynolds Jr. said, who finished fourth in the 126 bracket at states. "There's nobody I would want to spend the whole season with just drilling, wrestling, spending countless hours together then Jaden."

Seeing the ripple effect countless times now in his coaching career, Eagan hopes to have Crumpler come back to the wrestling mat and train with the next generation of Wolverines to show them what preparing to win is about.

"Success breeds success," Eagan said. "It's just the way that it is. Hopefully some of the kids that are in ninth grade, eighth grade now saw Jaden... They're seniors. They're not going to be on our roster next year. But that doesn't mean they're not part of our program. They're gonna be a part of our program forever. They're gonna have their name on the wall."

Roughly a month since having his arm hoisted into the air, Crumpler said it is now sinking in that his high school wrestling career ended as a state champion and appreciates all the support he received when he returned to school that Monday — even from teachers and students he never talked to before.

For those trying to follow in his footsteps, Crumpler advises the young wrestlers that anything can be achieved if you put your mind to it.

"My freshman year, I didn't think I was going to be a state champion," said Crumpler, who is undecided on where he will wrestle in college. "Looking at guys like Willie, I didn't think I had that potential. I thought I could be good but I didn't think I'd be at that level. Just keep working and what you want to happen will happen."

# Niagara Falls' Jaden Crumpler commits to Michigan State wrestling

By Joe Kraus | joseph.kraus@niagara-gazette.com ; May 11, 2023



**Niagara Falls' Jaden Crumpler (left)** grapples with teammate Amarfio Reynolds Jr. during the Section VI Division I 126-pound final, Feb. 11, in North Tonawanda.

Jaden Crumpler has never shied away from going the extra mile to chase his dreams on the wrestling mat.

This burning desire to be the best has fueled Crumpler to become a Division I wrestler. He reached the state final last year as a junior, but still didn't have any concrete college offers.

One year, a 126-pound state championship and a berth in the NHSCA Nationals later, Crumpler committed to Michigan State University, finally accomplishing a 13-year goal.

Posting a 113-17 record in four years at Niagara Falls High School, Crumpler joins former teammate and current University of Oklahoma grappler Willie McDougald as the only Wolverines to win a state championship and then join the NCAA Division I ranks.

While he also visited West Virginia and Binghamton, the combination of having a shot to compete at 133 pounds and the welcoming atmosphere provided by head coach Roger Chandler placed Michigan State at the top of Crumpler's list.



“As soon as I touched there, it was different from all the other campuses,” Crumpler said. “I love the campus. It was a big campus. They showed me around. I feel like they took more of their time to show me around and get (to know) me. I loved their wrestlers (and) love the coaches.”

Crumpler is going from always being among the best in Western New York to Michigan State’s wrestling program, which has produced 25 national champions, 68 Big Ten champions and, as a team, have won eight conference championships and the 1967 national title.

Niagara Falls head coach Josh Eagan said he tries to stay out of his student-athletes’ final college decisions. Instead, he reminds them to look at the school’s academic catalog and find a major of interest and make sure the coaching staff is the right fit.

Already equipped with a strong work ethic and skill-set as his foundation, Eagan believes Crumpler is ready for the opportunity and will have top-notch support across campus, from nutritionists to tutors plus the coaching staff. Eagan said the young wrestler will have to have the inner motivation to succeed and compete at the Division I level, starting in the Spartans locker room itself.

“You’re going to be in a room with a lot of talent,” Eagan said. “You’re going to have good coaches, so, the idea is you should take leaps. You see it all the time (in college wrestling). Either it happens or it doesn’t. I mean, you got to try to be the hardest worker in the room. And it’s not going to be an easy task. But if you try to do that, then you’re going to make leaps every season and you’ll go on.”

Becoming a Spartan also comes with some personal meaning for Crumpler.

After becoming a national champion with Niagara County Community College in 2000, Crumpler’s uncle, Rashad Evans, wore the green-and-white for three years and had a pair of top-five finishes in the Big Ten Tournament before graduating in 2003 and later becoming a UFC Hall of Famer.

While he plans to create his own journey over the next four years as a Spartan, Crumpler said “it feels good” to follow in his uncle’s footsteps.

“So now it’s like, I’m continuing that family legacy,” said Crumpler, who is undecided for a college major currently but is interested in accounting. “And now it’s like, ‘What I can do and what I can do after that, and some history I can make?’”

With only a few weeks left before he graduates, Crumpler said he loved being a student at Niagara Falls High School, thanking his teachers in the college process as well as Eagan and Don McCoy, who both made a “huge impact” on his career.

For those who are coming through the Niagara Falls wrestling program — whether as part of the Power Cats Youth Club or through the school ranks — Crumpler said to keep putting the work in, no matter what. His own varsity journey started when he weighed only 90 pounds as a freshman year and wasn’t eligible for the 99 bracket.

“It’s never too late to step your game up,” Crumpler said.