

Matmen Fall Short In Spartan Classic



Brett Carr got off to a great start at the Spartan Classic by putting his opponent on his back.

[January 10, 2011]

The Warren Mott wrestling team ventured into the friendly confines of Fitzgerald High School with grand aspirations and high hopes. The young team was on a roll and seemed to be poised to compete for the title of the always tough Spartan Classic, Fitzgerald's sixteen team individual tournament. The team came up short, though, finishing 5th in the team scoring.

The Marauders were in a hole before the competition even got under way due to the loss of two of their better wrestlers to illness. Evan Pugh (171lb) and Quentin Soard (189lb) would both have garnered high seeds, but were side-lined with health issues.

Despite the adversity, the team soldiered on and actually held third place for most of the day, trailing eventual champion Avondale and runner-up DeLasalle. Going into the finals, the Marauders had three wrestlers still competing for the title, two wrestlers going for third place and two more trying to salvage a 5th place finish. Unfortunately, only three of the seven won their final matches and the Marauders dropped to fifth place in the final standings.

Individually, Mott was once again led by senior standout Kyle Gray (285lb). Gray was 3-0 on the day, defeating Devin Whitman of Center Line and JaBree Harris of Lakeview, both of whom were ranked in the top eight of the state by Michigan Grappler. Gray's match against Harris was a classic heavyweight match. Heading into the third period, Gray led 1-0 before scoring a takedown in the waning moments of the match to cap off a 3-0 win.

In other finals action, freshman Garret Strube (103lb) and junior Matt Jundy (130lb) both dropped finals matches to finish second in their respective weight classes. Strube lost to a veteran 103lb wrestler, Matt Cusumano of Warren DeLasalle, and learned some valuable lessons in the match.

In a bizarre match, Matt Jundy lost to Elvin Laskie of Center Line in the 130lb final match. Jundy had beaten Laskie on two prior occasions this year and led by a 7-2 margin before finding himself on the losing end of a 12-9 score.

On a positive note, Head Coach Gary Skop was particularly pleased with the performances of senior Rafi Razzouq (152lb) and junior Ben Cantrell (160lb). "Rafi and Ben made me smile, today. It was good to see them put together consecutive quality wins."

Senior Rafi Razzouq was 3-1 on the day, finishing third at 152lb. Razzouq won his first two matches before dropping a close match to Center Line's Avery Wyer. In their earlier meeting this year, Wyer had pinned Razzouq and Razzouq came within a hair's breadth of winning their second meeting. In the consolation finals, Razzouq was matched with Javin Matti of Troy Athens. In their previous match, Razzouq had squeaked out an overtime win against Matti. On this occasion, however, Razzouq dominated Matti with a 15-6 victory.

Likewise, junior Ben Cantrell's performance at 160lb was inspiring. Cantrell lost his first match of the day and then ran off three straight wins to claim fifth place. Cantrell's season has been an up and down affair, winning a match and then losing a match. As the day went on, he seemed to grow stronger, wrestling tightly controlled matches and winning each of his final three matches by scores of 4-0, 8-2 and 10-6.

Brett Rodzos (135lb) and Matt Debski (215lb) also wrestled with distinction. Rodzos claimed 4th at 135lb and Debski finished 6th at 215.

The Marauders will be in action again on Thursday, January 13, 2011, when they travel to Lakeshore High School to continue MAC Blue dual competition against Lakeshore and Fraser.