

Irondequoit unseats ER as County wrestling champ

***Irondequoit unseats ER as County wrestling champ.**
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By JOHN KOLOMIC
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Irondequoit virtually had locked up the team title hours before last night's Monroe County League high school wrestling tournament finals at Rush-Henrietta Sperry.

Fortunately, by the time Irondequoit's Tim Lehmann stepped out to face Greece Athena's Dan Piensak at 119 pounds, the Indians officially had replaced East Rochester as team champion. Had the title depended on this match, the crowd still might be booing referee Bob Brown's unpopular decision.

They applauded mildly when Irondequoit received its team trophy. It offered another round of applause for Penfield's Larry Kane, voted the tournament's outstanding wrestler. As

a matter of fact, there seemed little to get excited about as favorites routinely mowed down the competition in 13 of the 14 title matches.

But the Lehmann-Piensak bout — and the decision that extended it into overtime — had the near-capacity throng standing and howling.

The undefeated Lehmann was losing, 6-5, when the two wrestlers forced each other off the edge of the mat and forced a standing start in the center circle with two seconds left in regulation. Piensak seemingly stepped towards Lehmann, then backed off as the Irondequoit wrestler desperately went for a match-saving two-point take-down.

The horn sounded, and the crowd started applauding what everyone thought was a major upset. Seconds

later they had riot in their eyes.

Brown felt Piensak purposely had stepped out of the circle, and awarded Lehmann one stalling point.

Oh, how they booed. After Lehmann had registered a 5-0 overtime victory, they booed some more. When Piensak stepped up to receive his runner-up trophy, they cheered wildly, then booed again when Lehmann received his championship trophy.

Athena Coach Tom Vergo had nothing to say when his wrestler came to the corner to prepare for an overtime most fans felt never should have occurred.

"The kid was in shock," Vergo said. "He didn't know what happened. To me, Danny won the meet and that's what I told the boy when he came off.

"I like Irondequoit, and their kid is a

good kid, but I honestly feel the guy made a bad call. Unfortunately, there's nothing I can do about it."

Irondequoit walked off with the team title, easily outdistancing runner-up East Rochester, 216-190½. Penfield finished third with 138 points, followed by Brockport (132½), Gates-Chili (127), Pittsford Mendon (120½), Rush-Henrietta Sperry (100½), Athena (98), Fairport (91½), Churchville-Chili (78½), Rush-Henrietta Both (71), Webster Schroeder (67½), Brighton (65), Greece Arcadia (38), Batavia (34), Greece Olympia (27), Webster Thomas (12) and Pittsford Sutherland (10).

ER had four individual champions — Mark Rosati (91 pounds), Mike Kuhn (126), Romeo Battazzi (132) and Joe Walczyk (138). Irondequoit had two —

Tony Cotroneo (112) and Lehmann, as did Churchville-Chili with Scott Trainor (145) and Terry Brown (250).

Cotroneo's 7-1 victory over ER's Scott McIntosh improved his four-year varsity career record to 100-9. But he was looking ahead, not back.

"It's a nice figure, 100 wins," the three-time county champ said. "But it really wasn't one of my goals. I want to be a two-time state champ. I know what it takes to be a state champ. I'm ready for it."

Cotroneo finished fourth in last year's state meet.

Irondequoit and ER bumped heads three times in the finals, with ER winning two of the three. Kuhn defeated Irondequoit's Glen Locke at 126 pounds, 3-1, and Walczyk defeated Jim Brault with an escape point with 19

seconds left for a 4-3 victory at 138.

Thoughts of a repeat team title were gone by the time Walczyk stepped in in the 10th match of the evening. But he had a mission, nonetheless.

ER Coach Don Quinn never has had a team finish lower than third in the county tournament. Walczyk, and six other Bombers who reached the finals, were sworn to protect that record. And, lest anyone forget, that was the brown and white ER uniform he had on.

"People always expect more from ER," Walczyk said.

Usually, they get it. The tradition helps.

"They're always scared of the brown and white," Walczyk said of his opponents. "They fear the uniform. I take advantage of it."

East Rochester had four champions — Mark Rosati (91), Mike Kuhn (126), Romeo Battazzi (132) and Joe Walczyk (138) — but Irondequoit walked away with the team title.