

2006 Season Review...

Wrestling

Flores wins at Ashland

Derek Flores won the 103-pound classification as Ross finished sixth at the Ashland Bookmaster Tournament over the weekend.

The Little Giants had 42 points. Toledo St. John's won the match with 63.5 points.

Jaime Mendoza finished second at 112, and Zac Brunner at 125 and Jorge Perez at 215 finished third.

Wrestling

High School

Ashland Bookmaster Tournament

Team Standings

1. Toledo St. John.....	63.5
2. Ashland	53
3. Northwestern	52
4. Massillon Washington	52
5. Lorain Southview.....	45
6. Fremont Ross.....	42
7. Shelby	39.5
8. Galion.....	29
9. Marion Franklin	39
10. Newark.....	32.5

Ross results

First place

103: Derek Flores.

Second place

112: Jaime Mendoza.

Third place

125: Zac Brunner; 215: Jorge Perez.

Fourth place

130: Yohe Rojas.

Fifth place

119: Devon Mezinger; 160: Josh Howey; 171: Brad Biehler.

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

Flores, Mendoza win at Rogers

By RYAN AUTULLO

News-Messenger correspondent

TOLEDO — Despite competing in successive weight classes, Fremont Ross wrestlers Derek Flores and Jaime Mendoza rarely square off in the practice room.

Instead, they find alternative means of competition.

"When we run laps it's either I'm done first or he's done first," said Mendoza, a senior. "It's always that constant competition between us."

On Saturday, though, the duo certainly didn't have any qualms sharing the top spot. There was plenty of room for No. 1 and No. 1-A.

Flores and Mendoza won the 103-pound and 112-pound classes at the 33rd Annual Holiday Wrestling Tournament at Toledo Rogers and the Little Giants finished third overall.

Ross, which had 11 of its 13 wrestlers place in the top six, earned 188 points, well ahead of fourth place Rossford's 119.5. Lakewood St. Edward's "B" team won the team title with 288 points, followed by Toledo St. Francis with 204.

At last weekend's Ashland Bookmaster Tournament, the Little Giants finished sixth — placing just four wrestlers — much to coach Mike Mezinger's disapproval.

"Everyone's really done a nice job this week," said Mezinger, now in his second year at the helm. "We looked a heck of a lot better this week than we looked last week."

Zach Brunner (125), Matt Vasser (140) and Robert Zucker (275) captured third place for the Little Giants, while Mezinger's son, Devon, was fourth at 119.

Ross's Jorge Perez was pinned at the 2:40 mark by Bowling Green's Adam McGiffin in the 215-pound championship bout.

Josh Howey and Brad Biehler were fifth at 160 and 171, respectively, and Yohe Rojas (130) and Kyle Whitright

(189) each took sixth.

Flores, who won at Ashland, used a five-point move in the second period to break a 2-2 tie in an 11-3 rout over Aaron Cook of St. Francis.

"I gave up a reversal with about 10 seconds left (in the first period), so I was kind of mad about that," said Flores, a sophomore. "After those five points I felt a lot better."

Flores added a pair of takedowns in the final period to pick up a major decision.

Coach Mezinger noticed a flaw in Flores' neutral stance following the semifinal round and ordered him to watch the video of his match. Flores addressed the imperfection and the end result was him extending his record to a perfect 8-0.

"He's a tough kid," Mendoza said of his primary competition in practice conditioning drills. "He's really good."

Mezinger describes Flores as being very coachable and relentless despite never wrestling until the seventh grade.

"He's just aggressive, he goes after people," Mezinger said about Flores. "I just like his attitude, he's not scared of anyone."

The center mat remained successful for Ross as Mendoza followed Flores with a 7-4 victory over Swanton's Jacob Pezzin, a state qualifier in Division III last year. Mendoza escaped early in the third period to take a 5-4 lead and followed shortly after with a decisive takedown and cruised the remainder of the way.

"I started off kind of light and then I started seeing I could set up that ankle with the single leg," Mendoza said. "I started working that and kept on taking him down."

Mendoza failed to qualify for the district tournament last year despite being the third seed at sectionals. This year, his only loss is a 16-14 setback in the finals at Ashland.

"Jaime's really picking it up," Mezinger said. "He's at the same weight class from last year, and he's really working hard."

Wrestling

High School

Rogers Invitational

Team Standings

1. St. Edward.....	288
2. St. Francis	204
3. Fremont Ross	188
4. Rossford	119.5
5. Bowling Green	115.5
6. Firestone	111
7. Marion Harding	83
8. Swanton	79
9. Bath	66
10. Scott	48.5
11. Bowsher	44
12. Rogers	34.5
13. Central Catholic	26
14. Woodward	26
16. Collinwood	0

Ross Results

Championship Finals

103 — Derek Flores (R) def. Aaron Cook (SF) 11-3

112 — Jamie Mendoza (R) def. Jacob Pezzin (Sw) 7-4

215 — Adam McGiffin (BG) p. Jorge Perez (R) 2:40

Consolation Finals

119 — Andre Wright (Fir) def. Devon Mezinger (R) 4-0

125 — Zach Brunner (R) def. Justin Staton (Bow) 11-3

135 — Matt Vasser (R) p. Keith Johnson (Fir) :51

275 — Robert Zucker (R) p. Mike Green (SE) 2:07

Fifth Place

130 — Ken Averiat (Fir) def. Yohe Rojas (R) 3-1 OT

160 — Josh Howey (R) def. Mike Adams (Fir) 5-3

171 — Brad Biehler (R) p. Donavan Christian (MH) 1:43

189 — Travis Brewer (Rsfrd) p. Kyle Whitright (R) 4:09

WRESTLING

Ross sweeps tri-meet

Ross defeated Genoa, 39-33, and Ashland, 43-29, to sweep a tri-meet at the Purple Pit. Derek Flores (103), Jaime Mendoza (112), Devon Mezinger (119), Zach Brunner (125), Matt Ott (145), Jorge Perez (215) and Robert Zucker (275) all won two matches for the Little Giants.

Wrestling

High School

Ross 39, Genoa 33

103: Derek Flores (R) fall Jay Traver 3:11.

112: Jaime Mendoza (R) fall Tom Destazio 2:37.

119: Devon Mezinger (R) fall Vince Core 1:24.

125: Zach Brunner (R) fall Troy Espinoza 3:50.

130: Alec Volegphi (G) d. Yohe Rojas 10-6.

135: Doug Wagner (G) injury default.

140: Randy Adams (G) d. Jacob Rook 10-5.

Woodmore — Grant Weirich 21 pts,
Jake Zollinger 11 pts.

Gibsonburg — Sneider 8 pts.

Record: Woodmore 7-4.

145: Matt Ott (R) fall Mike Burdye.

152: Trent Hathoway (G) forfeit.

160: Kurt Wolff (G) fall Josh Howey 1:25.

171: Nick Purdue (G) fall Brad Biehler.

189: Alex Perry (G) d. Kyle Whitright 7-3.

215: Jorge Perez (R) d. Brian Shiniver 14-7.

275: Robert Zucker (R) forfeit.

Ross 43, Ashland 29

103: Flores (R) d. Darin Shafer 12-4.

112: Mendoza (R) fall Mike Stentz 1:03.

119: Mezinger (R) d. Brandon Landrom 8-6 (OT).

125: Brunner (R) fall Anthony Hitchcock 1:29.

130: Aarin Shambaugh (A) d. Rojas 6-5.

135: Brett Bursley (A) fall Vassar 2:47.

140: Adam Shambaugh (A) d. Rook 13-8.

145: Matt Ott (R) fall Frank Mateo 1:54.

152: Dustin Shafer (A) forfeit.

160: Brent Weisenstein (A) d. Josh Howey 19-4.

171: Kurt Hess (A) fall Brad Biehler 5:10.

189: Kyle Whitright (R) forfeit.

215: Jorge Perez (R) fall Jacob Bassnet 2:54.

275: Robert Zucker (R) fall Josh Kemper 1:52.

Mezinger helps Ross to fifth place

By RYAN AUTULLO

News-Messenger correspondent

TIFFIN — Devon Mezinger should distance himself from the results of last year's state wrestling tournament.

Ignorance has proven bliss for the Fremont Ross sophomore.

Mezinger beat Sandusky Perkins' Michael Baxter, 7-6, in a 119-pound quarterfinal match Wednesday at Tiffin Columbian's Wendy's Classic.

It wasn't until after the match that Mezinger was informed that his opponent is a returning state qualifier.

"I can't believe I did it," Mezinger said. "I bet if I would have known he was a state qualifier, I wouldn't have wrestled that good at all."

Ross sits in fifth place with 61.5 points, just a half point behind Elida. Whitmer leads the two-day, 20-team tournament with 92.5 points. Wrestling will resume at 10 a.m. today with finals tentatively scheduled for 5:30 p.m.

Mezinger earned an escape with about 30 seconds remaining to defeat Baxter, who nearly earned near-fall points on more than one occasion during the third period. Mezinger opened the match with a five-point throw before Baxter stormed back to even the score at 6-6.

"He has to use that as a big stepping stone to get him through the semis," said Devon's father Mike, the Ross wrestling coach.

Mezinger, who pinned Newark's David Carrow in the opening round, will wrestle Lexington's Andrew McQuillen (10-1), a No. 3 seed, in the semifinal.

Ross fifth after first day of Tiffin invite

Continued From B1

Mezinger will be joined by teammates Jaime Mendoza (112), Jorge Perez (215) and Robert Zucker (275), who each won twice to advance in the championship rounds.

Remaining in the consolation bracket for the Little Giants are Marcus Measimer (103), Zach Brunner (125), Yohe Rojas (130), Jacob Rook (140), Josh Howey (160) and Brad Biehler (171), all whom won one match. Earlier this week, Measimer topped teammate Derek Flores, who remains unbeaten on the season, for the team's varsity spot at 103.

Though the Little Giants' outlook appears optimistic heading into the second day of competition, the same cannot be said for another area team.

Margaretta finished in 19th place with just 13 points. Warren Fleetwood (112), Sean Avila (125) and Kevin Bye (275) will wrestle today in the consolation bracket for the Polar Bears.

"It's been ugly, plain and simple, ugly," said Margaretta coach Keith Taylor. "We're not finishing stuff, we're not shooting, we're not attacking."

Mendoza (12-1) earned a reversal in the second period to defeat Fleetwood, 2-1, in a battle of one-loss wrestlers. Mendoza, the third seed, dominated the third period from the top position, not allowing Fleetwood (10-2) a chance of escaping. He will face Perkins' Spencer Campbell (14-2) in the semifinal.

"I'm pretty sure I could have put him to his back, but I just kept riding him out," Mendoza said of Fleetwood. "Today I didn't feel 100 percent like I usually do."

Zucker, however, felt and looked 100 percent in a pair of dominating wins via fall. Zucker, who stands 6-foot, 7-inches and weighs 272 pounds, pinned Maumee's Don Brierly in 1:33 in round one and followed by decking Columbian's Doug Donna in 2:53 to advance to the semifinal.

"He had two nice matches today," Coach Mezinger said of Zucker. "We keep on working with him. He's strong, he's got the leverage, he's got the weight."

Zucker, who improved to 8-2, will face top-seeded Shane VanVoorhise of Elida in a rematch of last year's bout won in decisive fashion by VanVoorhise.

"To be faster than him," Zucker said of his game plan. "He's quite fast, I just have to hit my moves."

Moments before Zucker stuck Donna, Perez pinned Otsego's Justin Southwick in 2:54. Perez, who is now 11-2, won by fall over Toledo Central Catholic's Andre Cash in the first round. He'll face Jeremy Wright of Whitmer in the semifinal.

"If we can get three or four of them to the finals I'll be really happy," Coach Mezinger said. "Some of the other losers, we have to come back and get third."

Wendy's Classic

at Tiffin

Team Scores

1. Sandusky Perkins	224.5
2. Whitmer	203
3. Ben Logan	172.5
4. Elida	147
5. Lexington	118
6. Fremont Ross	109
7. Tiffin Columbian	105
8. Western Reserve	97.5
9. Canal Winchester	93
10. Fostoria	84
11. Otsego	69.5
12. Maumee	65.5
13. St. Francis DeSales	58
14. Franklin Heights	57.5
15. Lancaster	48.5
16. Newark	43
17. Upper Sandusky	42
18. Toledo Central Catholic	41
19. Margaretta	23
20. Port Clinton	2

Championship finals

103 — Anthony Munafò (SP) fall Pete Schlegel (Maumee) 2:41

112 — Spencer Campbell (SP) dec Aaron Gramza (W)

119 — Seth Morton (CW) fall Andrew McQuillen (Lex) 3:49

125 — J.R. McDole (TC) DQ Donnie Zapadka (W)

130 — Kenny Gottke (FH) dec Rick Pusateri (SP) 7-6

135 — Hunter Pool (BL) dec Corey Funk (W) 10-9

140 — Evan Roth (W) tech, fall Josh Ross (CW) 16-1

145 — Eric Reer (WR) dec Quincy Coleman (BL) 7-6

152 — Damen Abitua (W) dec Sli Bostleman (O) 8-4

160 — Tyler Galloway (SP) dec Zach DeLong (Lex) 6-2

171 — Chris Estep (WR) dec Cody VanBuskirk (BL) 6-4

189 — Tyler Blakely (BL) dec Matt Fisher (SP) 3-1

215 — Jorge Perez (FR) dec Bob Harder (SP) 4-3

275 — Shane VanVoorhise (E) fall Trever Davis (US) 2:38

Consolation finals

103 — Jason Hunlock (E) dec Marcus Measimer (FR) 7-5

112 — Jaime Mendoza (FR) dec Heath Allen (BL) 6-4

119 — Michael Baxter (SP) fall Devon Mezinger (FR) 2:20

Fifth/Sixth place finals

112 — Chance Markoff (F) forfeit Warren Fleetwood (Margaretta)

275 — Robert Zucker (FR) fall Jake Southwick (O) 1:50

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

Clyde sweeps Ross, Sandusky

Little Giants coach says meet was step back from last week

By VINCE GUERRIERI
Sports Editor

CLYDE — Fliers wrestling coach Matt Merrill got to beat his alma mater of Fremont Ross and Sandusky, a school where he used to coach wrestling.

Not a bad day, all in all. "This was great for me," Merrill said.

Of course, he had to give some credit to his wrestlers.

"I think we wrestled great," he said. "They came out and they scored all the extra points they could."

Clyde beat the Little Giants 59-24 and Sandusky 48-21. Ross was unable to come away with a win. After being announced as beating Sandusky 37-36, they were found to have lost, 36-31.

Little Giants coach Mike Mezinger could only shake his head.

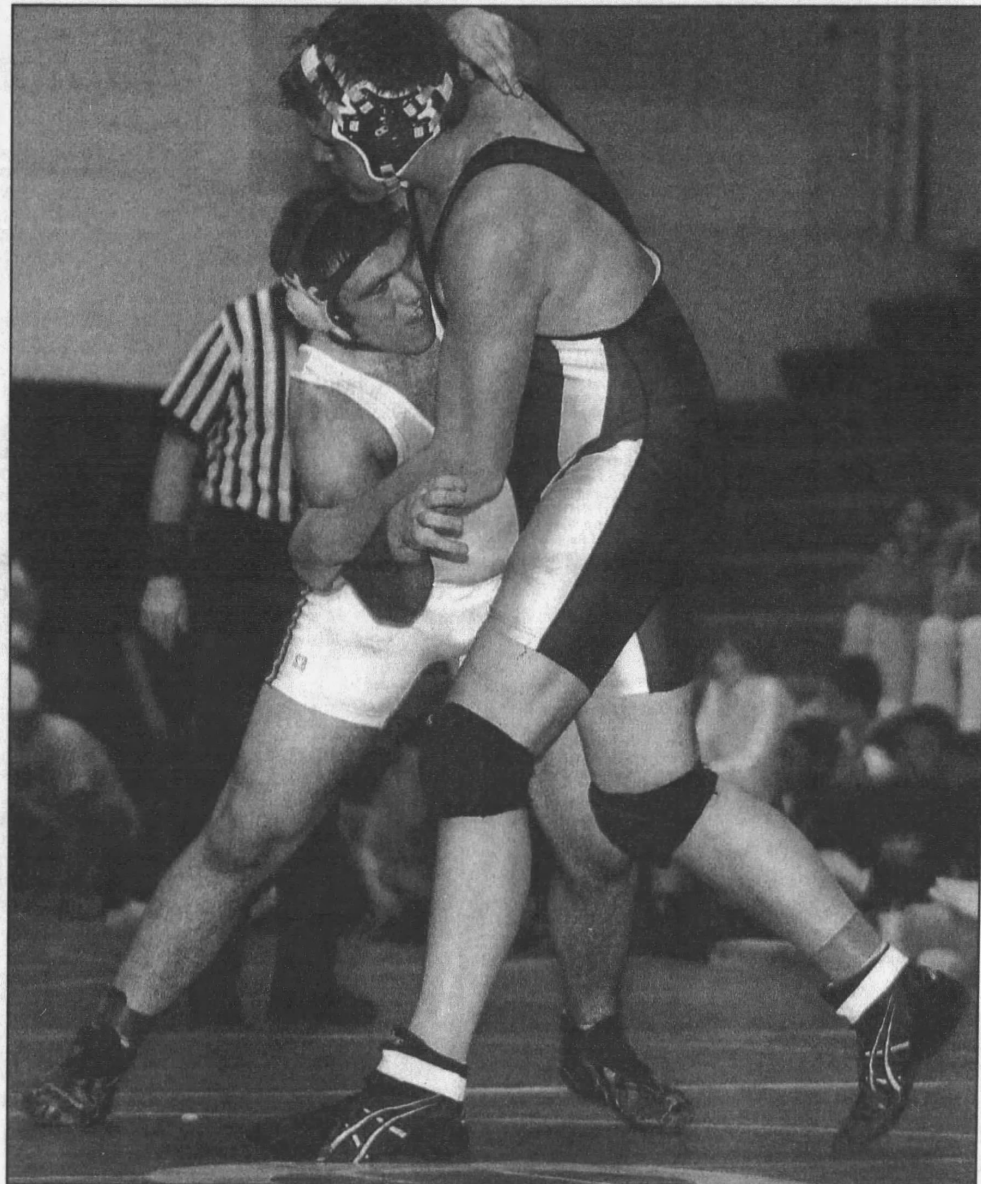
"Every time I think we're coming around the corner, they step back," he said.

A week after Jorge Perez won the 215-pound title and Ross placed sixth in the Wendy's Classic in Tiffin, the team looked sluggish, Mezinger said.

"At Tiffin, they were moving," he said. "They were hustling, and tonight, they didn't."

"I've got to get it into their heads that they can wrestle with anyone."

One grappler who didn't need to be told that was heavyweight Robert Zucker, who put a scare into Matt Guhn. Zucker took the first two falls, and at one point led, 4-2, before Guhn came back to tie and then go ahead by a point as the second period ended. Guhn picked up Zucker and dropped him, finally pinning him with a minute left in the match.



News-Messenger/Charlie Longton

CLYDE'S MATT GUHN wrestles Fremont Ross's Robert Zucker during Wednesday's match at Clyde. Zucker started strong, but Guhn ultimately pinned Zucker.

"He sure didn't back down from Guhn," Mezinger said of Zucker.

Mezinger said Zucker had a similar performance in Tiffin last week against Shane VanVoorhise of Elida.

Mezinger also praised Marcus Measimer, who won both of his 103-pound matches by pin. The junior said he set up shots better, and performed better since getting over the flu.

"I felt better out on the

mat than usual," he said.

For Merrill, the match was a wash. Robbie Michaels and Brent Aona returned, but Nene Garcia remains out. Garcia injured her shoulder last week in a match at Lorain Southview.

She usually wrestles 119, but Cody Andrews, who usually wrestles 112, bumped up a class. Andrews was pinned in both matches, by Devon

See CLYDE, B4

Clyde beats Ross, Sandusky in wrestling meet

Continued From B1

Mezinger of Ross and Sandusky's Cortez McLaughlin. Clyde forfeited the 112 class against both teams.

For Aona and Michaels, it was an anticipated moment.

"It felt good to be on the mat," Aona said.

Aona said it was a good time to start back with the team, and

felt it was easier to get into the swing of things in a double dual meet at home instead of the Fliers' next match, at the Ohio Duals in Hilliard this weekend.

Michaels, who punched a wall and broke his hand, said it hurt watching his teammates wrestle and not being able to join them.

"I've got to step it up," he said.

Michaels said he tried to stay in shape even though he wasn't

wrestling.

"I've been running during practice and on the bike," he said. "It kept me in better shape."

Merrill said endurance is a problem for his team.

"Some of their conditioning looked horrible," he said, adding that some wrestlers who should be in better shape appeared winded. *

Sandusky wrestling coach Dave Colatruglio said his team's conditioning was pretty good, but they needed to work on their technique.

"Opportunities presented themselves and we didn't take advantage of them," he said.

Colatruglio said five starters were out due to injuries, and heavyweight Burton Purcell got a shoulder injury and was taken

to the hospital after the meet as a precautionary measure. He said with that many injuries, it's difficult to determine the team's talent and skill level.

"It's hard to get a gauge on further down the year when it's conference time," he said.

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Wrestling

High School

Clyde 59, Fremont Ross 24

At Clyde

103 — Marcus Measimer (FR) p. Craig Gerber, 3:58

112 — Jaime Mendoza (FR), win by forfeit

119 — Devon Mezinger (FR) p. Cody Andrews, 1:11

125 — Zach Brunner (FR), win by forfeit

130 — Danny Michaels (C) p. Yohe Rojas, 4:37

135 — Joel Meyer (C) p. Matt Vassar, 0:52

140 — Brent Aona (C) def. Jacob Rook, 19-3

145 — Robbie Michaels (C) p. Matt Ott, 2:40

152 — Thomas Schwartz (C), win by forfeit

160 — Aric Thurn (C), win by forfeit

171 — Brad Dencer (C) p. Brad Biehler, 2:14

189 — Bubba Andrews (C) p. Kyle Whitright, 2:38

215 — Eric Schwartz (C) p. Jorge Perez, 2:16

275 — Matt Guhn (C) p. Robert Zucker, 5:00

Sandusky 36, Fremont Ross 31

103 — Measimer (FR) p. Towner, 2:22

112 — Damieon Tiller (S) def. Mendoza, 12-2

119 — McLaughlin (S) def. Mezinger, 4-3

124 — Brunner (FR) def. Blancherd, 17-5

130 — Tion Swain (S) def. Rojas, 13-8

135 — Brock Weissen (S) p. Vassar, 4:48

140 — Rook (FR) p. Adam Calderon, 1:58

145 — Ott (FR) p. Bryse Warren, 1:31

152 — Nic Peters (S), win by forfeit

160 — Darren Warner (S), win by forfeit

171 — Hassan Moore (S) def. Biehler, 5-2

189 — Josh Moore (S) p. Whitright, 4:18

215 — Anthony Watson (S) def. Jorge Perez, 7-3

275 — Zucker, win by default

Seniors close out home career in style

By RYAN AUTULLO

News-Messenger correspondent

Beginning sluggishly at their own Mal Mackey Invitational, the Fremont Ross wrestlers were given a little pep talk from coach Mike Mezinger before the final round Saturday afternoon.

But a speech wasn't necessary for the five Little Giant seniors, who were motivated simply from thoughts of wrestling in their final matches ever at the Purple Pit.

Each senior placed in the top three of his respective weight class and Ross had a stellar final round, finishing fourth overall with 136 points — seven behind third-place Nordonia. Lorain Southview cruised to the team title, earning 168 points compared to 144.5 from second-place Sylvania Northview.

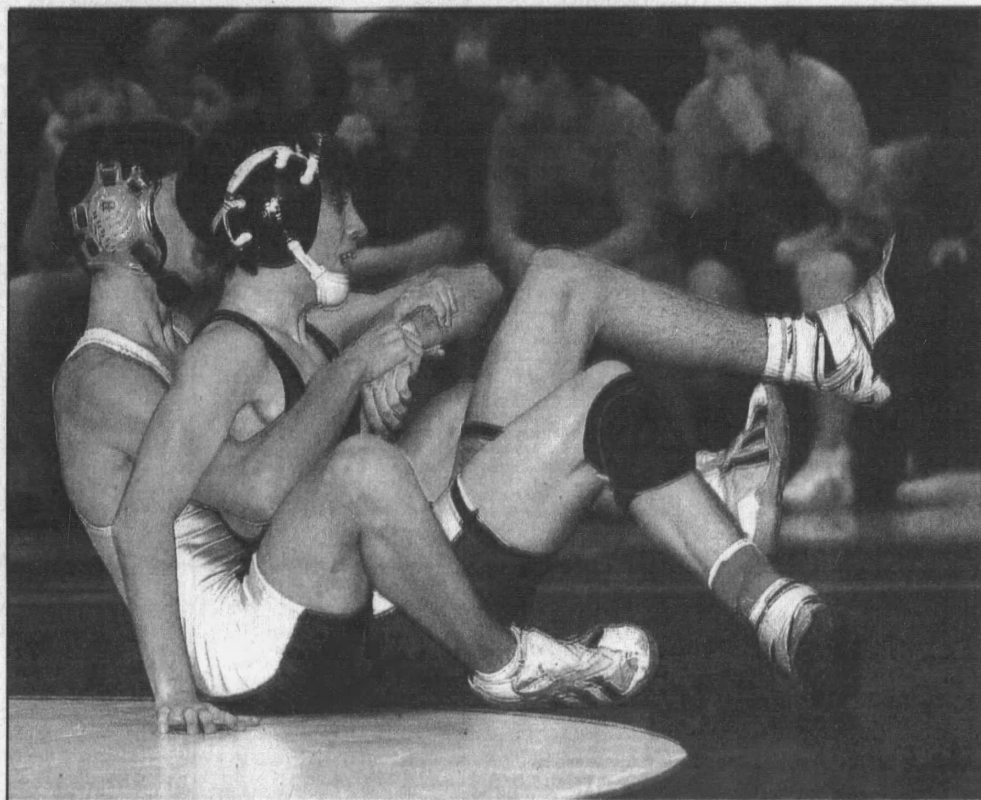
"Coach wanted all the seniors to end on a good note at the Fremont tournament," said 215-pound senior Jorge Perez.

Perez and senior heavy-weight Robert Zucker were the Little Giants' lone champions, though their classmates also performed very well. Jaime Mendoza finished second at 112 and Zach Brunner and Josh Howey were third at 125 and 160, respectively.

"It's a lot tougher tournament this year than the past two years," Mezinger said. "I can't complain."

Perez hit a beautiful throw to pin Northview's Mat Urban at the 1:25 mark to win his third consecutive Mal Mackey crown. It was also Perez's third pin of the tournament as he wrestled a total of just 5:07.

"That was nice," Mezinger said of Perez'



News-Messenger/Charlie Longton

MARCUS MEASIMER of Ross wrestles during Saturday's Mal Mackey Invitational at Ross. Measimer finished third.

throw. "That was sweet."

Perez won the Wendy's Invitational at Tiffin Columbian two weeks ago but struggled in Wednesday's tri-meet with Clyde and Sandusky, losing both matches.

"It feels really good because I guess I had a lot to prove today since I'm a senior," he said.

Zucker followed Perez's success on center mat, dominating top seed Eric

White of Southview, 4-0. The title caps off an impressive week for Zucker, who scored a pair of takedowns and led Clyde state champion Matt Guhn before losing by pin.

"The score didn't actually [reflect Zucker's dominance]," Mezinger said. "He controlled that entire match. 'Really he's only a throw here or a throw there, and he could have three or four more wins

and a tournament championship."

Mezinger's son Devon finished second at 119 in a round-robin format in which he won three matches after losing in the first round to the eventual champion. Ross' Marcus Measimer (103) and Brad Biehler (160) each took third after losing in the semifinals, and Jacob Rook (140) finished fourth in a round-robin.

Brunner secured a take-down with just one second remaining to top Northview's Ryan Milner, 5-4, in the consolation finals. He nearly advanced to the championship, falling 8-5 in the semifinals to Nordonia's Justin Chesney despite leading 4-0.

"It was important to win my final match — especially my final one at home,"

See ROSS, B2

Ross finishes fourth at Mackey

Continued From B1

Brunner said. [The seniors] have been wrestling together for a while and it's pretty good to see them succeed.

And his classmate, Howey, certainly succeeded, picking up a tech fall and two major decisions, including a 12-3 rout over Anthony Wayne's Mark Phillips for third place.

"I feel pretty good about it," Howey

said. "It's my last year wrestling here at Fremont, so I had to do whatever I had to do."

And now Mezinger will do whatever he can to keep the Little Giants on the upward movement. Following a pair of losses Wednesday, Mezinger believed his team showed signs of regression.

"Well, I think we just took a couple more steps forward," he said. "Now I just can't let them take another step back next week."

Wrestling

High School

Mal Mackey Invitational

Team Scores

1. Lorain Southview	168
2. Sylvania Northview	144.5
3. Nordon	143
4. Fremont Ross	136
5. Anthony Wayne	104.5
6. Tinora	56
7. Northwood	44
8. Lima Senior	9

Championship finals

103 - Thomas Cruz (LS) dec Shawn Smutak (Nordon) 11-7

112 - David Gyofai (LS) dec Jaime Mendoza (FR) 13-9

119 - Frankie Mercado (LS) four wins, Devon Mezinger (FR) three wins, Alex Walch (SN) two wins, Kyle Whittaker (Nordon) one win

125 - Justin Chesney (Nordon) dec Chris Deskins (LS) 5-4

130 - Jake Grigson (Northwood) dec Alex Box (SN) 8-6

135 - Matt Gupko (Nordon) dec Shaun Munson (AW) 3-0

140 - DeAnte' Russ (Nordon) three wins, Dana Benner (AW) two wins, Brett William (LS) three wins, Jacob Rook (FR) zero wins

145 - Wes Myers (AW) dec Darren Rhodes (Nordon) 3-2

152 - Travis Zipfel (SN) four wins, Michael Robinson (LS) three wins, Rich Gumsell (AW) two wins, Robert Buck (T) one win

160 - Matt Findley (LS) dec Ross Benner (SN) 14-9

171 - Dan Trusnik (Nordon) dec Shaun Mack (T) 9-3

189 - Brad Ehle (SN) dec PJ McKibben (Northwood) 7-5

215 - Jorge Perez (FR) fall Mat Urban 1:25

275 - Robert Zucker (FR) dec Eric White 4-0

Consolation finals

103 - Marcus Measimer (FR) dec Jacob Varner (Tinora) 4-2

112 - Luis Briceno (AW) fall Paul Funk (Nordon) 4:56

125 - Zach Brunner (FR) dec Ryan Miller (SN) 5-4

130 - Colin Rafuse (Nordon) dec Bobby Cruz (LS) 7-0

135 - Joe Boettner (SN) maj. dec Victor Langenderfer (NW) 13-4

145 - Corey Herendeen (T) dec Justin Bailey (SN) 9-5

160 - Josh Howey (FR) maj. dec Mark Phillips (AW) 12-3

171 - Brad Biehler (FR) fall Joe Goellnitz (SN) 4:06

189 - Adam Warnecke (AW) maj. dec Thomas Findley (LS) 15-3

215 - Canaan Watson (LS) fall Justin Hughes (T) 1:36

275 - David Roudybush (Nordon) dec Aaron Torres (Lima) 6-2

Norwalk 37, Ross 34

103: Derek Flores (R) d. Justin Teeters 17-0.

112: Jaime Mendoza (R) d. Andrew Alexander 15-3.

119: Devon Mezinger (R) d. Sam Montana 12-4.

125: Zach Brunner (R) p. James Pfeiffer 3:25.

130: Ted Brown (N) p. Yohe Rojas 4:33.

135: Trent Ringle (N) p. Matt Vassar 1:25.

140: T.J. Putnam (N) p. Jacob Rook :39.

145: Chas Long (N) p. Matt Ott 2:57.

152: Jake Vislay (N) forfeit.

160: Chris Johnson (N) d. Josh Howey 13-2.

171: Josh Cook (N) d. Brad Biehler 9-4.

189: Kyle Whitwright (R) p. Jared Torrence 1:56.

215: Jorge Perez (R) d. Drew Williams 8-2.

HWT: Robert Zucker (R) p. Jeremy Striker :57.

JV winners: Ross — Marcus Measimer (103), Zach Huether (130).

Ross 64, Port Clinton 9

103: Derek Flores (R) forfeit.

112: Jaime Mendoza (R) forfeit.

119: Devon Mezinger (R) forfeit.

125: Zach Brunner (R) p. Jordan Bowman :37.

130: Yohe Rojas (R) d. Matt Snyder 20-7.

135: Zane Roehen (PC) d. Matt Vassar 18-16 (OT).

140: Jacob Dukeshire (PC) p. Jacob Rook 1:45.

145: Matt Ott (R) p. Sean Riley :36.

160: Josh Howey (R) forfeit.

171: Brad Biehler (R) forfeit.

189: Kyle Whitright (R) forfeit.

215: Jorge Perez (R) forfeit.

HWT: Robert Zucker (R) p. Ben Brady :30.

JV score: Ross 8, Norwalk 3

Three Little Giants take titles at Celina tourney

Derek Flores (103 pounds), Jaime Mendoza (112) and Robert Zucker (275) each won titles as Fremont Ross finished the Celina Invitational in fourth place on Saturday.

Toledo St. John's won.

Devon Mezinger (119) finished second for the Little Giants and Jorge Perez (215) was third.

Wrestling

High School Boys

Celina Invitational

Team Standings

1. Toledo St. John's251
2. Coldwater.....207
3. Versales192
4. Ross.....172
5. Ayersville.....135.5

First place

103: Derek Flores (R) def. Marcus Measimer (R) 7-4.

112: Jaime Mendoza (R) def. Marcus Espinoza (SJ) 12-10 (OT).

275: Robert Zucker (R) p. Adam Grieshop (Cold) 4:45.

Second place

119: Billy Osborne (SJ) d. Devon Mezinger (R) 9-4.

Third place

215: Jorge Perez (R) p. Alex Davis (Vers) 4:50.

Fourth place

171: Nick Harper (SJ) d. Brad Biehler (R) 4-3.

Fifth place

130: Yohe Rohas (R) d. Tyler Mone-smith (PS) 17-11.

Sixth place

125: Connor Smith (SJ) d. Zach Brun-ner (R) 11-2.

Little Giant Zucker develops killer instinct

By MATTHEW HORN
Sports Writer

Robert Zucker of Fremont Ross was coming off back surgery and lacked a little bit of the killer instinct last season.

But that is no longer the case for the heavyweight, relatively fresh off a second knee surgery. Zucker is currently 27-4, with each of his last 17 wins has come via a pin. Little Giant coach Mike Mezinger said Zucker has a legitimate shot of advancing to the state tournament.

Zucker pinned Jeremy Striker of Norwalk in 57 seconds as the Little Giants fell to the Truckers and Ben Brady of Port Clinton in 30 seconds as they topped the Redskins, and also defeated Adam Grieshop of Coldwater with a pin at 4:45 to take the heavyweight title at the Celina Invitational and earn News-Messenger athlete of the week honors.

"He's 6-foot-7, 275 pounds — he's such a big guy that he's intimidating just to look at,"

Mezinger said. "Last year we couldn't get him to get mean. This year I don't know what's gotten into him but he puts his game face on and he's a little meaner. He's getting things done. Last year he didn't wrestle with intensity and fire in his eyes and this year he's doing that. I think that's the key."

"He's being very aggressive. He's throwing these kids. Last year he was a little timid. He didn't have enough confidence in his throwing ability. Confidence builds confidence. He's not a flashy wrestler but he's been overpowering people."

Zucker has 20 wins by pin this season.

"Norwalk's heavyweight is a senior with over 20 wins this season," Mezinger said. "Robert went after him and got a first period pin. Going into the Celina tournament he just went after those boys. He's really improved over the last month and a half. He's just been getting it done. He's been working hard in prac-

tice."

Mezinger said he has noticed a heightened work ethic this year.

"He's not a captain but he's shown a lot of senior leadership," Mezinger said. "He helps with everything we need the captains to do. I put a lot of trust in my captains and he's right there helping them out."

Mezinger has been very impressed with Zucker's resiliency.

"He was out with a back problem his sophomore year," Mezinger said. "He had a back operation and he was never cleared medically until last year before wrestling. That's why he didn't play football those two years. He had his back surgery a couple years ago and hurt his knee at the end of last year and had an operation on his knee right after the season. He's come back from two major surgeries and to not favor his back or knee and go all out is impressive. He's been doing better this year than he has in the past in terms of work ethic."

Mezinger was excited about Zucker's Celina tourney win over Ayersville's Rich Cline, who also goes 6-7.

"He had a couple bigger guys in the tournament," Mezinger said. "That guy was just as big and Robert took it to him. He didn't back down and pinned him in the first period. In the finals Grieshop was a bigger guy with agility. He shot and threw throughout the day seeing some of his matches. That's something Zucker hadn't seen this season — someone as agile as this guy aside from Matt Guhn of Clyde."

"This guy had some nice shots for a heavyweight. Robert went after him and they had a scramble in the first 30 seconds but after that Robert took it to the guy. He's coming on strong toward the end of the season."

Zucker actually had Guhn down in their match earlier in the season before Guhn registered a pin. Zucker also had Shane Van-zoorhise of Elida in trouble for a spell.

"He's had some state placers down," Mezinger said. "Both came back and pinned Robert but he knows he can wrestle with them and that's given him a lot of confidence in the last month and a half and he's wrestling well."

Even with the injury considerations, Mezinger said Zucker's success really hasn't been a surprise.

"I wouldn't say it's a surprise," he said. "I knew he'd have quite a few wins but the fashion he's beating some of these tougher kids by just taking it to them and pinning them has been impressive. It's better than what I expected."

Zucker failed to place at sectionals last season but that has not dampened Mezinger's optimism one bit.

"If he wrestles up to his potential like he's been I think we'll see him down in Columbus," Mezinger said.

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WRESTLER OF THE WEEK: Robert Zucker of Fremont Ross is 27-4 and pinned his last 17 straight opponents.

"Robert is really doing a nice job for us and has really improved over last year," Mezinger said. "The hard work that he has put in has really shown and he's really coming on strong. He's a senior and a leader and he would like to wrestle in college while pursuing an engineering degree. He's just an all-around good kid."

Ross wrestlers look forward to new room

Old room was small, smelly — and had a tendency to flood

By VINCE GUERRIERI
Sports Editor

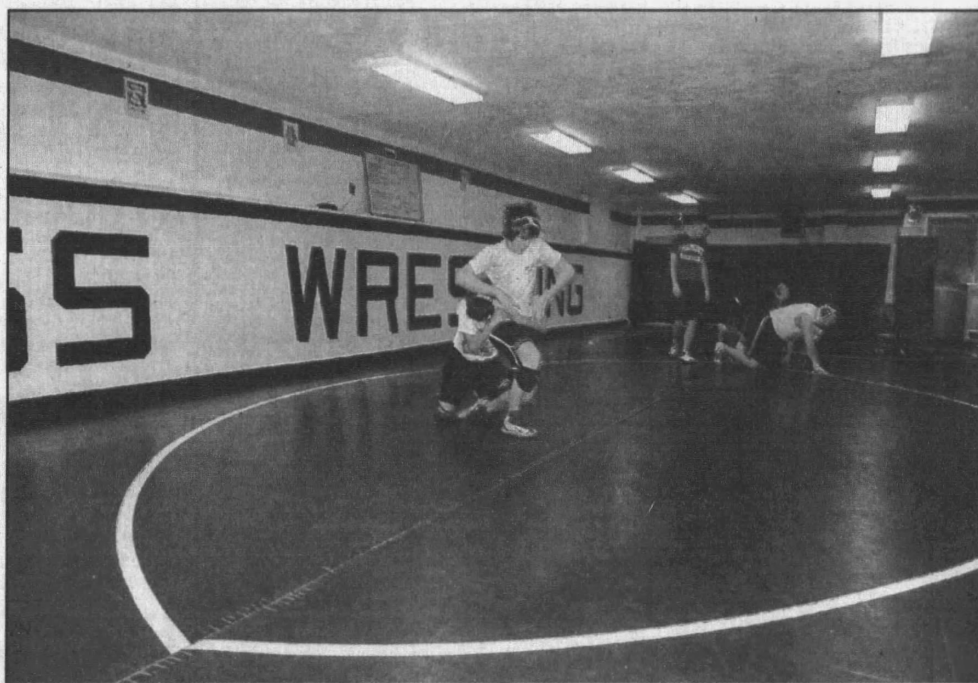
When Mike Mezinger took over as Fremont Ross wrestling coach last season, Al Voggenthaler gave him some advice.

"You haven't been a Fremont Ross wrestling coach until the wrestling room floods on you," the old wrestling coach told Mezinger.

"And last year, it did," Mezinger said.

Flooding is just one of the problems in the wrestling room under the stage in the Purple Pit — Mezinger and Voggenthaler call it the dungeon. It's too small. It's not well-ventilated. It was actually condemned for a couple years, Voggenthaler said. But its days are numbered.

This season will be the last in the dungeon, as the wrestling team will move to a new complex being added on to the school. The complex will also feature a new swimming pool that's leaps and bounds better than the



News-Messenger/Charlie Longton

DEREK FLORES, standing, foreground, and Devon Mezinger practice in the Ross wrestling room. The room, called the "dungeon" and located under the stage in the gym, will be replaced next year by a new wrestling complex.

pool the Little Giants have been using since the Herbert Hoover administration, in the middle school.

Voggenthaler, who's been instrumental in raising money for the project, is sorry he couldn't see it done while he was coach,

but glad to see it.

"I'm up here about four days a week checking on it," Voggenthaler said as he took measurements of the new room for wrestling mats. He sells mats now, and is getting them at cost for the new room — a sav-

ings he estimates at \$5,000. "I'm probably as excited as anybody to see this."

Voggenthaler said he tried to get a new wrestling area built twice, in the 1970s and again in the 1980s.

"It didn't pan out, so we

figure we'd have to go out and get private donations, and that's what happened," he said.

The pool and wrestling complex will cost around \$3.2 million, raised through

See ROSS, B2

Ross wrestlers getting out of 'dungeon'

Continued From B1

the Fremont Area Athletic Foundation, and both will be ready in time for next winter's season.

The wrestling room will be about 5,000 square feet, and will also feature locker rooms, showers and a laundry room as well as a coach's office. Currently, the wrestling team doesn't have its own locker rooms and laundry is hung to dry in a small room off the practice area.

The floods happened fairly regularly during Voggenthaler's tenure as coach, ending only when a couple of sump pumps were installed.

"We oftentimes had more water in the wrestling room than in the pool," Voggenthaler joked. "We lost a lot of practice time."

This week, six wrestlers are practicing in the 1,400-square-foot room in preparation for the district swim meet. But during the regular season, the Ross wrestling team has to practice in shifts.

"We can't even have a full practice with all the kids on the mat," said Mezinger, a 1985 Ross graduate and former wrestling team captain.

At one point, the team also practiced

on the stage, but after the gym got new bleachers — including on the stage — that was done away with.

The room has doors on either end, and the windows have been replaced with a metal screen, which cuts down on injuries. Mezinger said there were more injuries in practice than in competition.

"More than one kid went through the glass over the years," Voggenthaler said.

The screens also allow more air to circulate, which lessens the smell that can emerge when a bunch of sweaty teenage boys practice wrestling.

Devon Mezinger, a sophomore who wrestles at 119 pounds for the Little Giants, said it also gets hot in the room.

"It's small," said Mezinger, the coach's son. "Really small. I think it's too small to practice in here."

But Devon Mezinger is looking forward to next year and the new room.

"I can't wait to wrestle in it," he said.

His father believes it's long overdue.

"It's about time a Division I school has Division I facilities."

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