

PIRATES FINISH THIRD AT SWISS BEAR; GAWRONSKI NAMED OUTSTANDING WRESTLER



Left to Right: Isaac Gawronski receives his gold medal and bracket. Isaac Gawronski received the Swiss Bear Classic's Outstanding Wrestler Award. Theo Yager receives his gold medal and bracket.

The Swansboro High School Wrestling Team continued its winning ways this weekend, finishing third in a tough 16-team field at the Swiss Bear Classic tournament in New Bern. Despite entering only 12 wrestlers (i.e., open at two weights), the Pirates found themselves in first place after the opening round. They remained in the top two and had a chance at the title until the closing minutes of the competition. Final team scores saw only a five-point difference between first place Havelock (132.5), second place Croatan (130.0), and third place Swansboro (127.5).

The Pirates crowned two champions: Senior Isaac Gawronski (126), who was also named the tournament's Outstanding Wrestler and Junior Theo Yager (152). Gawronski received a bye in the first round, pinned his next two opponents and beat the #6-ranked 4A wrestler from D.H. Conley 6-4 in the finals. Gawronski is currently ranked #3 in Class 3A. Yager, currently ranked #5, also opened the tournament with a bye before pinning his quarterfinals opponent, winning 11-2 in the semi-finals, and defeating the #9-ranked 2A wrestler from Southwest Onslow 6-5 in the finals.

Other placewinners included Junior Klint Rhude (145) who finished second, Senior Jace Wilkens who placed third, and Senior Gio Rodriguez (138) who finished fourth. Rhude defeated his first round, quarterfinals, and semifinals opponents 15-0, 14-5, and 9-7, before ultimately falling in the finals to returning State Qualifier Cody Raymond of Croatan. Wilkens started the tournament with a bye and a quarterfinals pin before falling to returning State Qualifier Chase Salters of White Oak in the semifinals. Wilkens rebounded with two more pins to finish third. Rodriguez went 3-2 on the day opening the tournament with a first round pin before falling to returning State Qualifier Kenneth Hasman of Dixon in the quarterfinals. Rodriguez roared back with a pin in the second round of consolations and a thrilling 11-9 overtime win in the consolation semifinals, before losing 8-4 to Havelock in the third place match.

Other notable performers included Freshman Seamus Sullivan (106), Sophomores Chase Petty (170) and Sean Kelly (182), Junior Aiden Russell (132), and Senior Zander Riley (220) who all went 2-2 on the day.

While there was no team score maintained for the Swiss Bear Junior Varsity (JV) invitational, there was plenty to celebrate. Five Pirates placed in the tournament. They included Sophomore Ayden Goodman (132), Junior Estevan [Cruz] Sanchez (138), and Freshman Dathan Malubag (182) who were crowned champions. Freshman James Yesunas (132) and Marcus Mason (170) finished second and third respectively.

Photos from top to bottom: Aiden Russell works to break down his SWO opponent. Gio Rodriguez looks for Nearfall against White Oak. Jace Wilkens works for the fall over Dixon. Estevan Sanchez secures the pin. Sean Kelly rides his opponent. Isaac Gawronski looks for a turn against DH Conley.