

PIRATES FINISH FIFTH AT BEAST OF THE EAST; SEVEN PLACE



Despite entering only 11 wrestlers (i.e., open at three weights), the Swansboro High School Wrestling Team placed fifth out of 16 teams during one of Eastern North Carolina's toughest tournaments; the Beast of the East. The top five teams included: New Bern, Croatan, Dixon, Havelock, and Swansboro.

Junior Theo Yager was the Team's only champion. Yager looked dominant as the top seeded 152-pound wrestler. Following a first-round bye, Yager pinned White Oak's Noah Nyugen in 0:42 and then Dixon's Ian Murray in 3:40 to advance to the finals, where he easily defeated Washington's Bryan Smith by Technical Fall 15-0.

Senior Isaac Gawronski (126) and Sophomore Ayden Goodman (132) also reached the finals but ultimately finished in second. Gawronski, the tournament's top-seeded 126-pound wrestler received a bye in the first round, pinned Jacksonville's Raheim Rainey in 4:58 and scored a 15-0 Technical Fall over New Bern's Nicholas Lewis in the Semifinals before getting upset by Topsail's Ian Fritz in the finals. Goodman, the three-seed, exceeded expectations by reaching the finals. Following a first round bye, he defeated New Bern's Michael Baysden 5-2 and then won by injury default over the tournament's top seed, two-time State Qualifier Cody Rutherford of Havelock, after he [Goodman] jumped out to a 2-0 lead. Goodman eventually fell to West Craven's Walker Bell, a returning 2A State Qualifier, 9-4 in the finals.

Other placewinners included Senior Gio Rodriguez (138) and Junior Klint Rhude (145) who both finished third and Zander Riley (220) who placed sixth. Rodriguez received a bye in the first round and then beat West Carteret's Breydon Reynolds 8-1 in the quarterfinals before falling to the tournament's eventual champion and two-time State Qualifier, Ethan Blevins of Topsail. Rodriguez rebounded with an 11-2 win over Dixon's Christian Tony in the consolation semifinals and then pinned Havelock's Jaylen Jarmin in the consolation finals for bronze. Junior Klint Rhude's day followed a similar path with a first round bye, a pin over New Bern's Russel Bernthal, and then a semifinal loss to the tournament's eventual champion and returning State Qualifier, Cody Raymond of Croatan. Rhude came back with a 1:26 pin over Havelock's Landon Pearson in the consolation semifinals before beating Bernthal for a second time to claim the bronze. Riley entered the tournament as the two seed and advanced to the semifinals Friday evening, but was forced to withdraw Saturday morning due to a skin condition that resulted in a sixth place finish.

Other notable performers included Freshman Mason Cooper (120) and Sophomore Sean Kelly (182) who both went 3-2 on the day to finish in sixth place. Freshman Seamus Sullivan (106) and Junior Gauge Duplantis (160) both went 1-2.



Top to bottom and then Left to Right: Gio Russell takes his Havelock opponent to his back in route to a fall. Isaac Gawronski scores nearfall points in a 15-0 win over Jacksonville. Gauge Duplantis hits a Duck Under for two points against Havelock. Sean Kelly works to turn his White Oak opponent. Ayden Goodman rides his West Craven opponent. Mason Cooper Cross Faces his opponent. Klint Rhude works for the fall against New Bern. Theo Yager scores nearfall points in route to a 16-1 victory in the finals. Theo Yager stands atop the podium as the 152-pound champion. Theo Yager secures the pin over White Oak.