

Catholic captures Louisiana Classic



Adam Lau / 10023441a

Advocate staff photo by ADAM LAU St. Michael's Stephen Scardina lifts Brusly's Jacob Haydel off the mat in the 285-lb. weight class final during the Louisiana Classics high school wrestling tournament at Exerfit in Baton Rouge on Saturday, Jan. 14, 2011. 1/14/12 MAGS OUT / INTERNET OUT/ONLINE OUT/NO SALES/TV OUT/FOREIGN OUT/ LOUISIANA BUSINESS INC./GREATER BATON ROUGE BUSINESS REPORT/225/10/12/IN REGISTER/LBI CUSTOM PUBLICATIONS OUT/

By FRED ALDRICH

Special to The Advocate

Ask any high school wrestler, and he'll tell you the Louisiana Classic, which many still call the Lee High Invitational, is the premier tournament of their season.

Ask Catholic High coach Tommy Prochaska, and he'll tell you that serving as tournament director and coaching his team is a tough dual assignment.

"I think I watched five (of my team's) matches in two days. It's difficult, but it's fun at the same time.

It's kind of a rush — exhilarating," Prochaska said

Prochaska and his Bears had an exhilarating finish, edging Brother Martin, of New Orleans, for the championship, 212.5 to 204.5, despite having only one individual champion, Zack Louis, who won the 132-pound weight class.

The 39th renewal of the tournament saw 45 teams compete on Friday and Saturday at Exerfit on Bluebonnet.

"We competed. I've got real quality assistant coaches, and they got the team ready for the past two weeks while I did tournament stuff," Prochaska said. "Really tough competition. It might go down as one of the tightest races in the past 15 or 20 years for the team title."

Two other local wrestlers claimed championships in their weight divisions.

Cody Hill won his first Classic title, in the 120-pound weight class and it was also the first for Live Oak High School and its five-year-old program.

St. Michael the Archangel's Stephen Scardina stayed undefeated for the season with a 5-3 decision over Jacob Haydel of Brusly.

"It's awesome," said Hill, a sophomore who moved from New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. "I'd say the finals (a 7-4 decision over Ty

Graham of Hoover, Ala.) was my toughest match. I just had to stay tough, ride him out and take him down.”

Scardina, a returning champion from last year at 285, said he made this tournament a top priority for the season.

“It’s been on my mind all year,” Scardina said. “It’s what I’ve been training for. It’s the best guy (Haydel) I’ve wrestled, and we’ve missed each other at tournaments. We knew we were going to meet here and we both were excited about it. This one was sweet. It meant a lot for me to do well in front of my teammates and parents.”

Hill improved his record to 46-2 for the year, with both losses coming to Jacob Dale of Comeaux. Dale defeated defending champion Matt Calcote of Archbishop Rummel to win the 113-pound title.

Two wrestlers from St. Paul’s-Covington picked up their first Classic championships and kept their season’s records unblemished.

Connor Campo (45-0) topped Landon Becnel of Catholic High 15-9 at 126. Chris Arms (44-0) decisioned Kyle Delaune of Brother Martin 9-3 at 170.

“This one and state are the biggest tournaments of the year,” Campo said. “I tried to wrestle low and fight on my knees a lot. It was the third time I had wrestled him (Becnel), and I figured they’d scouted me.”

Louis also appreciated his second title more.

“This one was definitely sweeter because I knew the team needed points. It was really close with Brother Martin going into the finals,” he said.

Louis needed an overtime takedown to edge Brusly’s Austin Schermer 3-1.

In the other overtime match of the day, Tyrek Malveaux of Comeaux defeated Jackson Poe of Hoover, Ala., 9-7.

Other local wrestlers who advanced to the finals were Catholic's Brandon Lockett (152), who lost 9-1 to Nick Michael of Holy Cross and Dutchtown's Zack Hill (220), who lost to Dortanyia McIntyre of John Ehret 6-3.

Brusly (ninth with 93.5 points), St. Michael (11th with 70.5 points), East Ascension (12th with 68.5), Dutchtown (13th with 65) and Redemptorist (15th with 56.5) were other top-15 finishers.

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