

[Wrestling: Franklin Tech captures first-ever Western Mass. Division 3 championship \(PHOTOS\)](#)

Staff Report

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WILLIAMSTOWN — After a stellar regular season capped off by a Suburban League North title, expectations were high for the Franklin Tech wrestling team heading into Saturday’s Western Mass. Division 3 sectional championship at Mount Greylock Regional School.

The Eagles exceeded those expectations.

First-place finishes from Carsten Couture (120 pounds) and Landon Purington (132), coupled with second place finishes from Collin Eddy (190), Jackson Morey (215) and Dillon Laffond (285) enabled Franklin Tech to finish the day with 188 points, giving it a first place team finish and edging out Monument Mountain, which settled for second with 185 points.

It was the first sectional title in program history for the Eagles.

“I don’t remember the last time a Franklin County school has won Western Mass. but it’s been a long time,” Franklin Tech coach Mike Aiken — who was named the Div. 3 West Coach of the Year at the conclusion of the tournament — said. “I’m super proud of the kids. They worked their butts off this summer, especially the kids who placed today. They earned it. It’s all them.

“The heartbreaking part is sometimes kids don’t get what they want but they were competing and were seconds away from winning,” Aiken added, “but they get to wrestle next week.”

Couture was the first winner of the day for the Eagles, earning a pair of pins to cruise to the finals at 120. There, he secured a first-period pin against Southwick’s Jayden Perrier to take home the title.

As the top seed going into the day, Couture was confident he could get the job done, though that didn’t take away the emotion of bringing home a sectional title.

“It felt great getting the win,” Couture said. “It’s the best feeling in the world. I went out with the mindset that I’m going to beat everybody.”

While Couture’s title match was won with ease, it didn’t come as easy for Purington at 132.

Taking on Duggan’s Bryce Hall, Purington continued to shoot throughout the match but was unable to secure a takedown, and at the end of three rounds, the match was scoreless.

It appeared Hall was going to secure the points in overtime, but on a takedown attempt, Purington reversed position to secure the takedown himself, capturing the title at 132.

“It was a long match,” Purington said. “I was just shooting a lot trying to get some points. It was a wicked low-scoring match. I’ve never wrestled him before so I didn’t know what was going to happen.

“I thought he was going to get me there in overtime,” Purington added. “I just turned out of it. This feels pretty good. Now I’m hoping to place at states.”

Eddy and Laffond each won their opening two matches before falling in the title title; Eddy to Mount Greylock’s Jayquan Vazquez via pinfall in the first period and Laffond to Monument’s Sam St. Peter by an 11-9 decision, with St. Peter securing points late to earn the title.

Morey went 3-0 to make the final before falling to Mount Greylock’s Logan O’Connell via pin in the second period.

The five Eagles that made championship matches will be joined by teammates Maxon Brunette (126) and Travis Eastman (165), who both finished third in their weight classes, at the MIAA Div. 3 state meet next week in Foxborough. The top four placers in each weight class earned an automatic spot at states.

Paul Giard (113) and Connor Herzig (144) placed sixth on the day for Franklin Tech.

Mohawk Trail’s Logan Moore has been dreaming about hoisting a sectional championship since his freshman year, when he fell just short with a second place finish.

Now a senior, Moore achieved his goal on Saturday. The top seed at 157 pounds, he secured a pair of pins to reach the finals where he squared off against Mount Everett’s Ian Lanoue.

Moore held a 5-3 lead late and in the final seconds shot for a takedown and got it, securing the title at 157.

“I was confident but nervous,” Moore said. “Everyone is after you. It was a close last match. I knew he was going to try to shoot but I knew I could also shoot and I would win if I took him down. I was defending him and with 14 seconds left I took him down. I’ve wanted this since my ninth grade year when I placed second. This feels amazing.”

Moore’s closest match came against Hampden Charter’s Jedhial Vazquez Agosto in the semifinals, with Moore digging out a pin in the final minute of the third round to make it to the finals.

“This felt really good,” Moore said. “I was pretty nervous going into it. Once I won my semifinal match I knew I was in good standing for it.”

Mohawk Trail’s Derik Pazmino earned a fifth place finish at 132 while Wade Purington placed sixth at 120.

A pair of brothers on the Frontier wrestling team clinched their spots at states on Saturday.

Konnor James walked away with a third place finish at 157 while his older brother Kaden James earned a third place finish at 215.

It was Morey who took Kaden James out of the running at 215, as Morey was able to secure a first period pin in the semifinal round.

“I was hoping for first,” Kaden James said. “I wrestled a Mount Greylock kid at a quad meet and it was close but [Morey] came out of nowhere. He’s a strong kid. I give props to him, he did a great job. I got a few takedowns on him but his upper body is just so strong and kept me down.”

Kaden James went on to beat Springfield International’s Judah Taylor and Hampden Charter’s Nelson Torres to earn third place.

“I’ll take third,” Kaden James said. “Onto states. I can’t wait to get out there. Anything can happen once you make it.”

Konnor James fell to Lanoue in the semis at 157 but stormed back to beat Duggan’s Caesar Soto and Vazquez Agosto to earn third and clinch a spot at states.

Jonathan Olvera (175) and Max Hunter (285) earned fifth place finishes for Frontier.

Central Mass. Div. 3 championship

The Athol and Mahar wrestling teams traveled to Wayland High School to compete in the Div. 3 Central sectional championship on Saturday.

Mahar’s Abduli Gilmore earned a second place finish at 106 pounds while Athol’s Timothy Gerry (215) and Nicholas Leblanc (285) also wrestled to second place finishes.

Athol took 11th as a team while Mahar placed 12th. Wayland was the overall winner.

Gilmore earned a trio of pins to reach the finals, but fell to Ashland’s Logan Costello by a 15-6 decision in the championship match.

Josh Mazza took fifth at 144, Elias Roberts placed sixth at 138 while Orion Whitehouse earned sixth at 126 for Mahar.

Gerry got his day started with a pair of wins before edging out Ludlow’s Tristin Stephens, 9-7, in the semifinals at 215. Gerry fell to Wayland’s Nathan Tobe via pin in the championship match.

Leblanc won by technical fall and pin before walking away with a 9-2 decision against South Hadley’s Roberto Melendez to make it to the championship match. He was unable to knock off Wayland’s Nathan Hartunian there however, as Hartunian earned a 7-2 decision.

Athol’s Adam Rodriguez earned a spot at states following a fourth place finish at 120 while Brady O’Connell (144) and Anthony Lopez-Hippler (165) placed sixth for the Bears.

Source: <https://www.recorder.com/Sectional-Wrestling-Franklin-Tech-walks-away-with-first-place-team-finish-at-D3-West-while-Carsten-Couture-Landon-Purinton-and-Logan-Moore-earn-first-place-finishes-59461040>

