

## Tie feels like win for Wayland wrestling

By Staff reports

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WAYLAND —

“Harvard beats Yale 29–29”, that was the newspaper headline after Harvard came-from-behind to tie the football game against a heavily favored Yale team on November 23, 1968 and that is the way that Wayland wrestling coach Sean Chase, his coaching staff and his team felt after a dramatic 32–32 tie with a heavily favored Lincoln-Sudbury team Wednesday, Jan. 15.

L-S came into the match with two of the number one ranked wrestlers in the state and a strong supporting cast of veteran wrestlers. Wayland, a strong team made up primarily of underclassman, was going to need some magic to hang with the cross town Warriors.

The meet started at 220, a weight L-S was heavily favored in and the other Warriors got out to a quick 6–0 lead with a pin.

At heavyweight, Wayland sent out first-year starter Jared Thompson against Sam Granaham in a match that was perceived as a tossup by both coaches. Thompson got a first-period takedown and Granaham, choosing bottom, couldn't get out in the second. In the third, Thompson escaped followed by a takedown and, with time winding down, turned Granaham and pinned him with only three seconds remaining to even the score at 6–6.

At 106, sophomore Tommy Cope scored a 9–1 major decision over Andrew Richard, earning four critical team points.

At 113, the coaches' chess match began. L-S has the number one ranked 113-pound wrestler in the state in Mac Hamilton. Fearful of having Hamilton bump up a weight class to face Cole Elias, Chase had Jimmy Cope still out with an injury, weigh in and prepare as if to wrestle.

The move worked and Hamilton stayed at 113, receiving a forfeit from Wayland.

L-S in what this writer considered an unwise move, then forfeited to Elias and the score was at 16–12.

At 126 and 130, L-S won both matches by major decisions but Wayland's junior Javier Lopez and sophomore Mike Connell each had valiant performance's by refusing to be pinned and saving valuable team points.

L-S built on its lead at 138 and 145, but again could not pin with Charlie Tillett losing a close bout 6–5 and Zach Dieffenbach fighting off his back to save team points.

At 152, captain Chris Oyola got his team on track with a 9–2 decision over Mike Georgio and 160-pound captain Ryane Bache made short work of Jack Newhouse, pinning him in the second period and closing the score to 27–25.

The 170-pound bout was the turning point of the match with Wayland sophomore standout Ben Jones squaring off against L-S's Daniel Bengazi. The first period ended with both wrestlers on their feet and a 0–0 score. In the second period, Jones took down and was released by Bengazi, a mistake that would have implications later in the match as at the end of regulation time the score was tied at 1–1. Overtime went the same way as the match tied at 1–1 but Jones had choice in sudden death tie breaker and choose down. With 30 seconds in the final period and the meet on the line Jones quickly scored an escape and earned the win and three critical team points and a 32–27 lead for Wayland.

At 182, Chase made his second move, inserting junior Brad Belinsky into the lineup. Belinsky had been out with an injury and had been rehabbing with the L-S match in mind. Belinsky faced Troy Sallow and jumped out to a quick lead and a near fall for three points, eventually winning by a 9–0 major decision, giving Wayland a five-point lead to set up the climatic final match.

L-S coach Nick Avery must have liked his team's chances as he had the number one ranked 182-pounder in the state in senior co-captain Nico Diesanti, who faced Wayland's talented sophomore Bailey Vespa.

Diesanti scored quickly with a takedown, followed by a Vespa escape and worked aggressively for a pin. A pin which would give his team the win but twice Vespa fought off his back, refusing to be pinned.

With 10 seconds left in the match, Diesanti piled up enough points to end the match with a 17–2 tech fall, which earned five team points and L-S had to settle for a tie with the final score 32–32.

After the match Chase was asked about his team's performance. “Just a gutsy performance up and down the line up,” he said. “Both teams wrestled great and both teams wrestled very tactical. Lots of mat strategy going on; but, yeah, I am spent.”

On Saturday, Wayland traveled to Watertown for a sectional opponent quad meet, soundly defeating Dedham 52–12, Watertown 52–24 and Everet 58–6 to extend its record to 15–0–1

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