

# **Congrats Coach Spataro and the Dixie Wrestling Team. 9 Straight City Championships!**

## **Dixie Hollins maintains dominance in city wrestling meet**

**Dixie Hollins picked up the New Year where it left off the last one, emerging as one of top teams in Pinellas County. The Rebels are the top team in the city of St. Petersburg, winning their ninth straight title at the 21st annual City Wrestling Tournament on Saturday.**

The Rebels led the whole way, finishing with 286.5 points to runner up and host Northeast's 162. St. Petersburg was third at 142. The Rebels took home most of the hardware as 126-pounder Drew Harrington won Most Outstanding Wrestler and 113-pounder Liam Ward won his second straight Gregorian Award, given to the wrestler with the most pins in the least amount of time.

Through the championship semifinals, the Vikings were in seventh place and 50 points behind St. Petersburg. The Vikings scored six wins in the third-place finals with Isiah Wilson (106), Anthony Walker (126), Christian Starnes (132), Shaquan Johnson (152), Deondrick Williams (160), Brendan Grabowski (170) and then a pair of wins in the finals with Connor McNally (120) and Rafael Perez (145). Both wrestlers scored second-period pins.

"(McNally) we expected to win; he's been solid but Perez was a surprise," Vikings coach Robert Wilson said. "That was a big win for Perez. He lost to (Chris Harris of Gibbs) twice last year and that (win) sealed it (second place) for us."

The Rebels were dominant as they moved 12 wrestlers into the finals and took nine individual titles. Ward pinned all three of his opponents in less than one minute each and won his second straight city title.

"You have to have that mentality (to score quick pins) that you're just going to eat your opponent up, get after it and go," Ward said.

Harrington had a tremendous weekend as he faced East Lake's Josh McGinnis in a dual on Friday night and came back from being down 9-5 to win the match 15-12. The next day, Harrington blew through the 126-pound bracket at Northeast and drew a very tough Darquell Pierre of Boca Ciega in the final.

Pierre scored the first takedown and got Harrington on his back to stack a 5-1, first-period lead on him. But Harrington came storming back in the second period, taking the lead and eventually getting a pin before time ran out in the second. Harrington made it his second straight city title.

"I hit an outside single, he sprawled out, then I hooked a western and drove him over," Harrington said. "It feels good, a great confidence booster (knocking off McGinnis and Pierre in two days)."

Clifton Thomas blasted through the 220-pound bracket with a second-period pin of Chris Keith of Gibbs to extend his unblemished record to 20-0 and capture his third straight city title. Thomas was up at 220, making room for Bogie transfer Stephon Sharpe at 195.

Sharpe won the 195 class with a second-period pin of Bryce DeAngelo of St. Petersburg. Sharpe and DeAngelo put together the most exciting first period of the tournament, going body-to-body and reversing each other out of two near falls. It was 13-5 Sharpe after just the first period. Coleman Bryant (132), Zack Addis (138), Dareis Montgomery (152), Brandon Nevitt (182) and Jesse Smith (285) all won titles, with Addis and Nevitt making it two in a row.

Northside Christian's Kamen Wilmington won the other highlight match of the day at 160 as he battled Dalton Busch of Dixie. Both wrestlers played conservative through two periods, Wilmington taking a 1-0 lead into the third but both wrestlers exploded in the third with Wilmington scoring the deciding takedown with 33 seconds left to win it 5-3. It marked Wilmington's second city title and bumped his record up to 18-1.

"I think I was able to focus some of my frustration (in the third period), start putting together some moves and scoring some points," Wilmington said.

Bogie's lone city champion was Sadrick Daniel at 170 and Gibbs won at 106 with Danya Jones.

To put the icing on the Dixie Hollins cake, the only four-time city champion, Jacob Lawhead (class of 2008, was acknowledged at the award ceremony.