

Beichners Are First Section 6 Father-Son State Qualifiers

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By Craig Harvey

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Jim and Jake Beichner will forever be linked together as father and son.

Following Jake's MVP performance at the Section 6 Large School state wrestling qualifier last Friday, the two will also forever be linked on the mats.

Jake's first-place performance at Niagara County Community College made the Beichners the first-ever father-son tandem to win a state qualifier and be named MVP. It also marks the sixth time in Section 6 history when a father and son each recorded 100-plus wins in their respective careers.

The older Beichner accomplished the feat during his high school career at Cassadaga Valley 30 years ago. The younger Beichner is a senior at Williamsville East.

Maybe the most interesting fact is they both wrestled at 145 pounds.

The similarities don't stop there. Jim's opponent in the finals was a wrestler who had beaten him earlier in the season. Jake's opponent also won with a 12-3 decision earlier in the season. Jake won the championship match 17-10.

The most similar resemblance of the mirror accomplishments may not be within the stats or something any wrestling historian will remember. Instead, it will be the celebration.

"Memories I had was my brother was in my corner and I remember giving him a big hug in the corner after I won," said Jim, who is now the head wrestling coach at the University at Buffalo said. "That's one of my childhood memories. When Jake won, he hugged his coaches and teammates and then hugged me and it was a great moment. I will always remember that. He had a special weekend and I am very proud of him."

With all the near-identical circumstances, it's only natural for Jim to reflect on his career.

"I remember having a great coach and support from my family and friends," Beichner said. "Cliff Blom was the best coach I have ever known and he is the reason I ended up going to college. Terry Norris and Cliff Blom pushed me along."

As is the case with most children of a coach, Jake was always around the sport growing up through his father. However, he was never drawn to the sport, which helps make the accomplishment so gratifying for Jim.

"It took a long time for Jake to fall in love with the sport," Jim said. "I didn't push it on him. He wasn't the typical coach's kid. He was a late bloomer and started late in life. His mom and I never pushed the issue. When he wanted to (wrestle), it was his choice."

Jim also looks at the differences from his wrestling days to his son's present success.

"He is a better technician than I was," Jim admits. "I had more natural talent. I was pretty good from the start. Jake wasn't extremely gifted right away. It was easy for me. I credit him way more than me because it was easier for me. I am glad he stuck with it. We had a different experience."

But the results have been the same.