

Call it prophetic, but **Rock Hill wrestling** coach Cain Beard told his senior Devon Faile yesterday his finest hour was yet to come. He was right.

That hour was fulfilled Wednesday evening as Faile helped **Rock Hill** earn its 17th state championship with a 28-23 win over **Summerville** at White Knoll High School for the Class AAAA title.

The match-up was drenched in irony for the Green Wave. The last time **Rock Hill** won a state **wrestling** title was in 2009. The last time **Summerville** won a state **wrestling** title was in 2008 – against **Rock Hill**. Since then, the Bearcats have lost in the state finals in 2010 and 2013. **Summerville** hadn't been back until Wednesday night.

The evening came down to two of the smallest people in the gym as the 106-pounders wrestled to decide the dual. With **Rock Hill** ahead 25-23, **Summerville** needed a win of some sort to clinch victory. The Bearcats just needed to hold own.

Faile and **Summerville's** James Sass, ranked No. 1 in the state at 106-pounds, went scoreless through the first period.

Faile scored first after being given a point for a technical violation from Sass in the second period.

Sass got a point in the third for an escape to tie the match at 1-1 with about a minute left. Faile got a headlock takedown in the closing seconds to get a takedown and a 3-1 win, giving **Rock Hill** another state title.

Faile said he knew if he went for it in the final minute, something good would happen.

"(Sass) is a heck of a wrestler," Faile said. "I knew I had to do something quick."

Earlier this year, **Rock Hill**, ranked No. 1, had beaten No. 2 **Summerville** soundly 50-16. Things were a lot closer this time around.

"I told the kids this wasn't the same team we had wrestled earlier," Beard said. "For it to come down to those two kids. It's another story book ending for this program. Devon will go down in history for this program."

Beard took some unique strategy into the match, bumping up his kids to wrestle at higher weight classes than they normally do.

"We had to win seven matches," Beard said. "We got the even draw, so we got to see every time who they would send out first."

It looked as if **Rock Hill** would run away with the title as it went up 15-0 before **Summerville** won a match.

The dual started at 113 pounds with the Bearcats' Jay McNeal and **Summerville's** Ngai Murray. McNeal quickly jumped ahead 4-0 after the first period. Murray came back in the second and score with a takedown and then tied the match in the third period at four.

McNeal clinched the win with about 20 seconds left in the third with a takedown to give the Bearcats their first lead of the night.

Rock Hill's Logan Sexton got the pin at 120 to put the Bearcats up 9-0 about 1:15 into the first period.

At 126 pounds, **Summerville's** Austin Delancey went up 4-0 early, but the Bearcats' Kendrick Mackey came back with a take down before the end of the first period to keep pace. Mackey tied the match at four with a takedown in the second period.

Delancey and Mackey took each other down in the second, but Delancey got back points to take a 9-6 lead heading into the third period. Mackey battled back and caught Delancey in a pinning predicament to rally for an 11-10 win.

At 132 pounds, the Bearcats' Noah Mead came out the aggressor against the Green Wave's Tyler Fachko.

Mead got the first point of the match in the second period after a warning to Fachko. Mead continued to dominate adding a takedown and back points in the period before going on to the win.

Summerville put up a close fight at 138 pounds as twice Robert English got **Rock Hill's** Babe Rigby in a pinning predicament, but Rigby was able to wiggle out.

However, those near falls were enough for **Summerville** to finally get on the board with the decision.

Summerville came back with a battle between Daniel Smith and **Rock Hill's** Christian Moore. Smith went up 7-1 after the first period at the two clashed at 145 pounds. Smith was dominant in his match, easily getting the win as the momentum swung heavy in **Summerville's** favor.

The Green Wave's John Van Slooten showed more of a technical side to **wrestling** at 152 pounds against **Rock Hill's** Kris Hughes. Van Slooten scored two takedowns in the first two periods and then basically muscled Hughes around the rest of the match to the win.

That gave **Summerville** its third straight win and put it firmly back in the match at 15-11.

Rock Hill bounced back at 160 pounds with Cody Childers as he went up 4-1 after the first period. **Summerville's** Chadwick Wood tied things at 4-all near the end of the second period. Childers got two escapes in the match, which helped make the difference.

Summerville got a decision at 170 pounds and a pin at 182 pounds as Anthony Collins beat Juan Watkins in the second period to give the Green Wave a 20-18 lead, its first in the dual.

At 195 pounds, the Bearcats' Stephen Chesney and **Summerville's** Corey Alumbaugh teetered back-and-forth for control, as neither seemed to get a firm grasp. Alumbaugh finally got control in the third and a 7-5 win.

The Bearcats got a much-needed win at 220 pounds as Cameron Bell manhandled **Summerville's** Eric Henderson for a 12-3 major decision to make it 23-22, still in the Green Wave's favor.

At heavyweight, the Bearcats' Travis Strait got a takedown in the third period with about 15 seconds left to give **Rock Hill** a 4-2 lead in the match. That held for the win as the Bearcats would regain a 25-23 lead.

Rock Hill 28, Summerville 23

Draw: 113

113: Jay McNeal (RH) dec. Ngai Murray (S) 6-4; 120: Logan Sexton (RH) pinned Justin Connelly (S); 126: Kendrick Mackey (RH) dec. Austin Delancey (S) 11-10; 132: Noah Mead (RH) dec. Tyler Fachko (S) 7-0; 138: Robert English (S) dec. Babe Rigby (RH) 9-3; 145: Daniel Smith (S) tech. fall Christian Moore (RH) 17-2; 152: John Van Slooten (S) dec. Kris Hughes (RH) 7-4; 160: Cody Childers (RH) dec. Chadwick Wood (S) 6-5; 170: Jamal Lucas (S) dec. Ben Demarest (RH) 7-2; 182: Anthony Collins (S) pinned Juan Watkins (RH); 195: Corey Alumbaugh (S) dec. Stephen Chesney (RH) 7-5; 220: Cameron Bell (RH) major dec. Eric Henderson (S) 12-3; Hwt: Travis Strait (RH) dec. Julian Gibbs (S) 4-2; 106: Devon Faile (RH) dec. James Sass (S) 3-1.

Records: **Rock Hill** 43-2, **Summerville** 33-2.