Where toughness is at a premium

By Ray Parrillo
Inquirer Staff Writer

They start in mid-August, hurling themselves against blocking sleds, revving themselves up for high-speed collisions, working feverishly to build a shield of muscle to cut down the possibility of injury.

Then football seasons end, and just when they reach a point where they can climb out of bed without wincing, they're back into a torture chamber of another kind. The physical demands on their bodies grow.

That's the way it is for football players who wrestle or, if you prefer, wrestlers who play football.

Joe Tornetta, wrestling coach at Great Valley, played football and wrestled while attending Phoenixville High and West Chester University. Asked which sport is more demanding, Tornetta didn't hedge.

"Wrestling, by far," he answered. "Physically and mentally, it's more taxing. In wrestling, pure aggression doesn't always do it. There's much more skill involved. There aren't many sports that tax your brain like wrestling."

At Neshaminy, coach Nick Stefanowski had two senior linebackers come out for the wrestling team for the first time this season. Remember, these are linebackers, guys who live in the maelstrom of football's violence.

"They told me wrestling is so much harder, that the conditioning is much tougher," Stefanowski said. "All I can go by is what the kids tell me. But think about it. In football, you run a play for 7, 8 seconds, and then you get a 30-second break. In wrestling, you don't get a break every 7 seconds."

Of course, these gentlemen might get an argument from their football peers. But there's little disputing that no two-sport athlete must live the kind of spartan life of those who play football and wrestle.

Perhaps the two finest local examples of excellence in both sports are Great Valley's Charlie Haines and Neshaminy's Earl Brown.

Haines, an Inquirer All-District 1 linebacker and one of the top two-way players in the Ches-Mont League, is also the top-ranked 185-pound wrestler in Southeastern Pennsylvania. He finished fifth in the state meet last year, and his only loss in 14 bouts this season came against a northern New Jersey wrestler during a holiday tourney.

"An 11-9 decision," Haines said. "He was good, and I was still banged up from football season.

"Football is tougher on your body, but, overall, wrestling is more demanding," he added. "Our wrestling practices go from 2:50 to 5:30, and there's no standing around. It's much tougher on the cardiovascular system than football.

"Then you have meets on Wednesday night and again on Saturday. I know a couple of guys who played football and came out for the wrestling team. But the next year they didn't wrestle. Some just didn't like it. Some just couldn't hack it. I've been wrestling since sixth grade, so the adjustment [from football to wrestling] is not that tough for me. The hard part is dropping weight."

You won't find kids like Haines hanging around McDonald's during wrestling season, which may be the ultimate sacrifice for a teenager. He finished the football season at 205 pounds, and has spent much of his time since then making U-turns around the refrigerator to get down to 185.

"I just cut out the junk food and eat a lot of tuna," Haines said with a sigh.

Brown may be the area's finest wrestler this season, and he is probably this region's top choice to bring back a state title. Last year, he went 23-2, won the region championship and finished fourth in the state meet after losing a 7-6 decision to eventual champ Tom Allen of Erie Tech.

Brown is riding along undefeated (18-0) in the 155-pound class. In the winter, he stalks opponents. In the fall, he is an elusive target for those who stalk him. Brown, a running back, gained close to 1,000 yards and was named to the all-Suburban League National first team.

"The thing I like about wrestling is that if you mess up, you can't blame anyone else," Brown said. "And when you go 6 minutes on the mat, that's an awfully long time. I weighed about 165 during football season, but I can lose 10 pounds in two days, no problem. Both sports are tough, but there's an awful lot of conditioning in wrestling. An awful lot."

Neshaminy football coach Dick Bedesem believes the 5-foot-10 Brown can play Division 1 football despite his size. Stefanowski, marveling at Brown's natural ability on the mats, believes Earl can succeed in a major-college wrestling program as well.

"He has tremendous balance," Stefanowski said. "But the amazing thing is how Earl remains at such a cool level. He never gets rattled. He can go into the last period behind, but there's no question in his mind he'll pull it out.

"He's unaffected by a lot of things that bother the typical high school kid. Also, Earl is strictly an in-sport athlete. You won't see him play football when it's not football season, and you won't see him wrestle when it's not wrestling season. For instance, he didn't go to the spring football agility drills last year. But guess who won the 40-yard dash?"

When wrestling season ends in March, Haines, Brown and others like them will have endured a seven-month regimen that could bring even the heartiest of souls to their knees. They'll be deserving of more than just a good meal.

Neshaminy's Earl Brown (left), also a star football running back, practices with Jeff Koellner

Special to The Inquirer / REBECCA BARGER

Brown is a top regional choice for a state title

Neshaminy wrestlers clinch conference title

Earl Brown, who was 18-0 and top-ranked by The Inquirer at 155 pounds, jumped up to the 188-pound level and recorded a superior decision to lift Neshaminy past Abington yesterday, 27-20. The win clinched the Suburban One League National Conference title for Neshaminy.

Brown, who weighed in at 156 ... East, 34-14. Randy Douglas (167) and Larry Thomas (185) added falls for the Patriots.

Tim Gerber (112), Mike Hunt (138) and Chuck Brehm (167) posted first-period falls to highlight five Owen J. Roberts falls as the Wildcats downed Phoenixville, 47-12.

Doug Harkins pushed his record to

Boys' basketball

Terry Murphy, Holy Ghost's senior guard, tossed in 19 points, including the 1,000th of his career, as the Firebirds downed Springfield (M), 65-52, last night in a Bicentennial League game.

Upper Merion 20 14 17 21 — 72
Plymouth-Whitemarsh 18 13 16 12 — 59

UM — Rich Kelley 14, Brian McCree 10, Pat Gaskins 6, George McNally 9, Joe Tachman 11, Jim Karasko 17, Michael Rhodes 1, Buckley 4.

PW — Rob Inniari 5, Mickey Persine 14, Howard Jones 13, Mark Pettine 2, Kevin Davenport 4, Lenny Moore 8, Les Duckett 4, Frank 3, Murphy 3, Swift 3.

Ches-Mont

Pottsgrove 58, Great Valley 36

Bicentennial

Holy Ghost 65, Springfield (M) 52

Springfield (M) 12 14 11 15 — 52
Holy Ghost 16 23 18 8 — 65

S — Johnson 1, Hadley 10, Dabney 8, Middleton 4, McGarrity 5, Ventura 1, Grandy 2, Drye 3, Abramson 6, Scott 8.

HG — Petrucco 12, McLaughlin 3, McGarry 10, Murphy 19, Connor 7, Plasyk 5, Mooney 2, Flandra 1, Hunter 4.

pounds, moved up to face Bill Strange and scored a 15-2 decision to give the Redskins (6-0 league) an insurmountable 27-17 advantage.

Abington led by 17-13 entering the 145-pound bout, but Bill Magdelinskasi, Brian Fults and Brown grabbed victories to erase the deficit. Neshaminy's Thor Young, fifth-ranked at 132, raised his record to 17-1 with a major decision at 126 pounds. The meet featured only one fall, with Neshaminy's Fred Pollack pinning Dave Shin at the 112-pound level.

Abington's John Ripley, No. 1 at 132, recorded a 12-0 triumph to highlight the Ghosts' effort.

In other Suburban One National matches, Chris Loring scored a pin with 18 seconds left in the first period to cap eighth-ranked Methacton's 33-14 win over William Tennent. Loring, ranked fifth among heavyweights, and Anthony Guarisco (105) grabbed the only Warrior falls.

Central. Ed Rodgers (112) and Blaine Hibberd (126) scored opening-minute falls as Conestoga won the first six matches en route to a 43-16 triumph over Upper Darby. Owen Hibberd, top-ranked at 98, notched a second-period pin to raise his record to 17-0.

Catholic. Matt Rispo's second-period pin at 115 pounds highlighted five North Catholic falls as the Falcons ripped St. Joseph's, 44-12. Rispo raised his record to 15-0-1, while Kevin Mallon (122), Bob Mendys (135), Mike Hunter (158) and Jim Kilchrist (heavyweight) added falls for the Falcons.

John Fasti (21-1 and ranked second at 132) and brother Mike registered pins to lead Archbishop Wood past La Salle, 34-23.

Ches-Mont. Kirk Nolan, No. 3 at 119, notched a fall in 1 minute to highlight eight Great Valley pins as the fourth-ranked Patriots clobbered St. Pius X, 60-4. John Foust (fourth-ranked at 105), Ken Brown (126), Frank Rafferty (145) and Bucky Schmitt (185) also scored opening-period falls.

Dave Lucerne (112) and Steve Ross (132) registered second-period falls as third-ranked Downingtown throttled Boyertown, 34-16.

Mike Kornoski chalked up an opening-minute pin in the first bout to help Pottstown down West Chester 18-0 with a first-minute pin to help West Chester Henderson clip Pottsgrove, 38-24.

Bux-Mont. Mark Malecki scored a pin with 19 seconds left in the opening period of his 185-pound bout to clinch Central Bucks West's 30-27 triumph over Souderton. Malecki's win gave the Bucks an insurmountable 30-21 lead entering the final bout. Paul Terpeluk (No. 2 at 155) boosted his record to 13-1 with a fall in 13 seconds.

Paul Moyer (105) and Jamie Ritter (No. 1 at 112) picked up first-period pins as second-ranked Quakertown crushed Hatboro-Horsham, 48-8. Quakertown, which suffered its first defeat of the season Thursday against North Penn, won the first eight matches.

Nonleague. Seventh-ranked Pennsbury won nine of the first 10 matches to dominate Haverford High, 46-12. Dave Waln's pin in 50 seconds (at 158 pounds) and Jeff Steele's 15-0 superior decision (135) stood out in the Falcons' attack.

Mike Kanter recorded opening-period falls and six other wrestlers notched two victories each as Cheltenham throttled Bishop Kenrick, 47-15, and Norristown, 45-20. Brian Thompson (13-3 at 112) and Jim Cope (138) had two pins each. In the other match, Steve Pellin's second-period fall at 155 ensured Bishop Kenrick's 32-19 victory over Norristown.

Dave Hoefner, fourth-ranked at 115, collected a 19-0 superior decision in the midst of a six-match winning roll as 10th-rated Springfield (D) flattened Academy Park, 46-20. The Cougars sped to a 35-0 lead after the first six bouts. Chris Henry's superior decision at 148 was one of the few Academy Park highlights.

Tom Remillard, No. 2 at 145, chalked up a second-period fall as Harriton captured nine of the first 11 matches — five by pins — pushing the Rams past Lower Merion, 45-16.

Lane Pendleton, top-ranked at 183, elevated his record to 25-0 with a second-period pin as Academy of the New Church dumped George School, 42-21.

Bensalem posted triumphs in seven of the first eight matches and held on to defeat Upper Merion, 30-23. Mike Ryer (119) took a 12-0 decision in the middle of the streak to power the Owls

Murphy, averaging more than 24 points a game this season, teamed with Dave Petrucco (12 points) and Mark McGarry (10) to give Holy Ghost a 20-point lead after three quarters.

Nonleague. Rick Williams scored 23 points, including 13 in a third-quarter spurt, but Germantown Academy fell to Worcester Academy (Mass.), 58-54, at the Palestra yesterday.

Williams' third-period outburst fueled a 23-10 rally that brought the Patriots to within two entering the final quarter, but Germantown Academy could not offset Worcester's Grant Evans (22 points) and Mike Paladino (18).

Suburban One American

U. Merion 72, Ply.-Whitemarsh 59

Pottsgrove	14	15	17	12	—	58
Great Valley	4	11	13	6	—	34

PG — Jim Peiffer 26, Eric Carpenter 2, Mark Chrisman 5, Andre Kidd 15, Rossinger 9, Albright 1.
GV — Rob Getchis 6, Ric Hester 9, Doug Dunne 6, John Harding 4, Ron Sandell 7, Karl Alexy 2.

Coatesville 94, Phoenixville 57

Coatesville	21	24	23	26	—	94
Phoenixville	7	18	19	13	—	57

C — Marty Eagleston 16, Jody McMillan 14, Dave Domsohn 8, Andy Hoggard 18, Andre Shelton 7, Andre London 10, Gaffney 11, Myers 3, Griffin 3, Craig 3, Merrick 2.
P — Jim Higgens 12, Paul Oplesby 7, Wallace Brewer 1, Hunt Lyon 21, Dale 3, Lacy 10, Wright 3.

Bux-Mont

Hatboro-Horsham 68, North Penn 63

North Penn	12	14	13	23	—	63
Hatboro-Horsham	20	13	18	17	—	68

NP — Bill Coddington 21, Rich Albright 8, Steve Melchior 11, Bill Brice 13, Todd Horwood 2, Rick Beeler 8.
HH — Ed Fogell 22, Barry Vaughn 24, Chris English 5, Tim Lyons 13, Brown 4, Smith 2, Lutes 1.

Upper Perkiomen 71, C.B. East 58

Upper Perkiomen	12	13	20	26	—	71
Central Bucks East	9	18	10	21	—	58

UP — Carl Cassenstine 22, Tom Cichocki 11, Matt Duke 12, Tom Pyfers 11, Rich Kressler 4, Mike Swanson 7, Craig Trefinger 2.
CBE — Kevin Davis 17, Chuck Smith 3, Kevin Rach 16, Bruce Demkavage 14, Darren Crissler 8.

Nonleague

Worcester Ac. 58, Germ. Ac. 54

Worcester Ac.	14	20	10	14	—	58
Germantown Academy	11	8	23	12	—	54

WA — Mark Waszkelewicz 2, Tom Schwelitz 7, Mike Paladino 18, Grant Evans 22, Tom Hierpe 3, Jim Blackburn 4, Kevin Crutchfield 2.
GA — Otis Ellis 8, Rick Williams 23, Chris Miller 11, Marvin Walters 4, Rodney Morrison 2, Matt Guinan 6.

Lawrenceville 75, Hill School 56

Hill School	14	7	17	18	—	56
Lawrenceville	16	24	12	23	—	75

HS — Dave Groff 12, Amos Walsh 15, Chris Guthrie 12, D.J. Evans 9, Scott Wiseman 1, Scott Harrison 5, Joel Dunham 2.
L — Toby Shorter 10, Jeff Blohm 13, Pat Turpey 14, Pat Jordan 5, Mike Laoocs 14, Keith Celevita 2, Cris Lauricella 14, Andy Sloan 1.

Bishop Egan 73, Bensalem 69

Bensalem	11	16	17	25	—	69
Bishop Egan	19	17	18	19	—	73

B — Meiers 11, Burnes 4, Sullivan 16, Broderick 20, Downey 2, Bell 6, Dawkins 12.
E — Jakel 14, Stack 7, Henry Johannson 17, Carl Guignard 11, Brian Flynn 15, Campbell 9.

Ac. New Church 53, George Sch. 51

Academy New Church	10	7	17	13	6	—	53
George School	15	11	13	8	4	—	51

ANC — Casey Kearns 16, Darryl Halterman 2, Greg Bochneak 11, Sean Stevens 6, Steve Childs 3, Dean Davis 7, Ed Henderson 4.
GS — Rich Ray 18, Ali Salim 6, Mark Briscoe 19, Sam Vinnick 4, Phil Hardy 4.

William Penn's Moore takes 400, anchors relay win at girls' meet

William Penn High's Shawn Moore won the 400-meter run and anchored the victorious 880 relay team — both for meet records — to highlight the Delaware Valley Girls' Track Coaches Association meet yesterday at Lehigh University.

Moore's 400-meter time of 57.7 seconds bettered Chester's Alphena Aikens' 59.9 clocking last year.

The Lions' 880 relay team of Debbie Roberts, Missy Milligan, Debbie Bonner and Moore registered a time of 1 minutes, 44.3 seconds, which ranks among the 15 all-time best scholastic indoor performances in the country.

The results

Distance medley — 1, Sun Valley (Annette Chedeville, Jackie Lynch, Kris Amey, Cathy Everal), 12:40.9. 2, Wm. Penn, 12:57.4. 3, West Phila., 13:07.3.

60-yard hurdles — 1, Debbie Bonner, Wm. Penn, 8.2. 2, Janine Nyce, Upper Perkiomen, 8.8. 3, Lisa Hunter, Penncrest, 8.9.

60 dash — 1, Debbie Roberts, Wm. Penn, 7.1. 2, tie, Debbie Manning, Norristown, Diana Warner, Penncrest, 7.3.

220 — 1, Angie Henry, Norristown, 26.7. 2, Missy Milligan, Wm. Penn, 26.9. 3, Alphena Aikens, Chester, 27.3.

400-meter run — 1, Shawn Moore, Wm. Penn, 57.7. 2, Michelle Barr, Trenton Central, 59.7. 3, Betty Wilson, Truman, 60.2.

880 — 1, Trish Clayton, Upper Dublin, 2:25.2. 2, Kate Forshell, Penncrest, 2:26.4. 3, Carol Haus, Archbishop Kennedy, 2:28.3.

Two-mile run — 1, Piffy McGuigan, Springfield (D), 11:32.2. 2, Cheryl Amin, Wm. Tennent, 11:32.5. 3, Dee Santos, Marple Newtown, 11:37.0.

Mile relay — 1, Germantown, 4:06.8. (Sherri Nobles, Teara Bester, Martila Turner, Kenya Deal). 2, Wm. Penn, 4:06.6. 3, West Phila. 4:07.2.

880 relay — 1, Wm. Penn, (Debbie Roberts, Missy Milligan, Debbie Bonner, Shawn Moore), 1:44.3. 2, Penncrest, 1:51.6. 3, Chester, 1:52.1.

High jump — 1, Tracy Claussen, Conestoga, 5-4. 2, Sue Gaines, Springfield (D), 5-2. 3, Diane Walchak, Methacton, 5-2.

Shot put — 1, Jill Jones, W.C. East, 33-9. 2, Nicole Shirley, Plymouth-Whitemarsh, 33-2. 3, Kristi Utzler, C.B. West, 31-1½.

Triple jump — 1, Stephanie Guryeh, Wm. Tennent, 36-3¼. 2, Dot Kasbach, Council Rock, 33-8. 3, Nordia Samuels, Wm. Penn, 32-7.

Long jump — 1, Stephanie Guryeh, Wm. Tennent, 17-8½. 2, Teara Bester, Germantown, 17-7. 3, Amy Hughes, Truman, 16-4¾.

Boys' gymnastics

Andre Bethea won three events and the all-round title, and teammate Rob Harris captured two events to lead host Glen Mills to its second consecutive PIAA District 1 boys' gymnastics team title yesterday.

Bethea, a junior who won the boys' District 1 individual crown Monday, captured the pommel horse, still rings and parallel bars competition en route to his second straight all-round crown with a score of 48.05.

The Battling Bulls advance to the state tournament at Shippensburg University on Feb. 23.

The results

Team totals — 1, Glen Mills, 170. 2, Council Rock, 142.95. 3, Neshaminy, 136.6.

All-round — 1, Andre Bethea, Glen Mills, 48.05. 2, Rob Harris, Glen Mills, 44.10. 3, Greg Brooks, Glen Mills, 41.20.

Floor exercise — 1, Rob Harris, Glen Mills, 9.15. 2, Bill Archer, Council Rock, 8.9. 3, Andre Bethea, Glen Mills, 8.85.

Pommel horse — 1, Andre Bethea, Glen Mills, 7.15. 2, Alex Goldman, Neshaminy, 7.05. 3, Mike Hornick, Neshaminy, 5.9.

Still rings — 1, Andre Bethea, Glen Mills, 7.7. 2, Rob Harris, Glen Mills, 7.25. 3, Brett Deeds, Council Rock, 7.2.

Long horse — 1, Rob Harris, Glen Mills, 9.45. 2, Andre Bethea, Glen Mills, 9.3. 3, Bill Archer, Council Rock, 9.25.

Parallel bars — 1, Andre Bethea, Glen Mills, 7.45. 2, Mark Grant, Council Rock, 7.25. 3, Alex Goldman, Neshaminy, 6.95.

Horizontal bar — 1, Alex Goldman, Neshaminy, 8.25. 2, Andre Bethea, Glen Mills, 7.6. 3, Rob Harris, 7.45.