

Injury ends Yianni's high school career

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Yianni Diakomihalis, a two-time cadet freestyle world champion, hoped to return to high school wrestling after he suffered an elbow injury, even though his plans for college have been set for some time.

The Hilton senior found out he is unable to work toward a rare fifth state championship, however, after he was told during a medical check-up for his right elbow last week that he would need to undergo surgery in his left elbow.

"They told me I had a similar situation going on, just not as bad," Diakomihalis said. "I could begin drilling in six weeks (after surgery) and I'd be 100 percent in eight."

Section V class championships are the first weekend of February, followed by state qualifiers Feb. 10-11 at The College at Brockport.

"I kind of had to make a decision," Diakomihalis said. "I could try to wrestle through it, but if it gets worse, then I would miss the junior world trials and

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Hilton's Yianni Diakomihalis, left, in action against Fox Lane's Matthew Grippi, has won four state titles.

ADRIAN KRAUS

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states.

"I kind of had to pick the better of two poisons. I've kind of come to peace with it."

Diakomihalis is among eight wrestlers who have won four state championships. His streak as a winner of 210 consecutive matches is a state record. The four-time *Democrat and Chronicle* All-Greater Rochester Division I Wrestler of the Year has a 243-3 record in high school-sanctioned matches.

"It's pretty depressing," two-time state champion and Alexander senior Dane Heberlein said. "It's always fun to watch him. Every time you watch him or drill with him it's a different feel. He's really good."

"I think he's wrestled so much, that he knows more positions than a lot of coaches. Every time I wrestle him and I think I got him, he pulls something else out his bag, and I'm taken down — again."

The mix of Diakomihalis' demeanor and achievements seemed to make him the wrestler who would be



Hilton senior Yianni Diakomihalis is unable to work toward a rare fifth state high school wrestling championship because he needs elbow surgery.

pictured if Section V wrestling had a flag. It is common for Diakomihalis to delay media interviews after a victory for him, in order to go matside and root on a Hilton teammate or even a wrestler from another school.

"It's kind of devastating, and it not even 'my' kid," Rush-Henrietta coach Mickey Marlowe said. "One thing about our sport is that coaches and kids compete. As the season winds down, we begin to root for other guys."

"We want him to do well. I personally don't know him all that well, but I think you'd be hard-pressed to find someone in wrestling who doesn't root for him."

Parker Kropman, a Penfield graduate midway through his freshman season at Binghamton University, was a wrestler who would take on Diakomihalis during the postseason in Section V, instead of avoiding

the future Cornell University team member.

"I actually heard about this after practice today, I thought it was pretty crazy," Kropman said. "I just feel bad, because he's a good kid and he works so hard. He goes to every practice, every tournament, does what he needs to do to get better."

"I'm not too sad, because I know it the end of his high school career, but he's already on to bigger and better things. He's won FloWrestling national titles, he's made world teams. He'll go after more world titles. I know that he'll be back and he'll be better than ever like always."

The news of Diakomihalis' status spread quickly.

"It's a huge game-changer across the state," Marlowe said. "A lot of wrestlers who wanted to avoid him at 145, they are going to pile into that weight class."

There is a chance that Diakomihalis will be at the state championships, but it will be cheer on teammates and or other friends at Section V schools.

"As big as it would have been to win five state titles, I hope I can keep moving forward and do more," Diakomihalis said.

"I don't want this to become a long-term issue, where it's affecting my college wrestling."

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