



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Elmont Captures Nassau Basketball Title as Senator Martins Wins Wager

JACK M. MARTINS March 7, 2011

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Basketball games are terrific battles that pit athletic talent and desire to the test. In one of the greatest come-from-behind victories that had fans chanting, cheering and watching in amazement, the Elmont Memorial High School Spartans brought home the Nassau County Class AA Championship this past Saturday.

Students, community members, Sewanhaka Central High School District Superintendent Warren Meierdiercks, Elmont School Superintendent Al Harper, Board of Education Member Dave Fowler, Elmont Memorial High School Principal John Capozzi and State Senator Jack M. Martins were all in attendance at the Hofstra University David S. Mach Center to cheer on the Spartans.

The game began at 1 p.m. as Elmont faced a tough test in the Baldwin Bruins. The low scoring game increased the drama surrounding the game. The opening minutes of the contest saw the greatest spurt of action with Elmont scoring nine unanswered points. From that point on, the battle became more intense and tougher with each passing quarter.

Elmont's Greg Sanat hit a pair of free throws to give Elmont a 30-29 lead with 43.4 seconds left. The Spartans held on for a 32-29 was in a hard fought win.

It was a very challenging, physical battle between two outstanding teams with rising stars playing a full court man to man pressure game that kept fans on the edge of their seats. "I haven't seen anything like this in quite some time," said Ian Feurtado a graduate of Elmont Memorial High School. "They are playing real hard out there."

Elmont head coach Geoge Holub had the Spartans' defense in top form, holding Baldwin to only 29 points. Elmont guard Dillon Williams found it difficult to penetrate Baldwin's defense .

The final seconds were truly intense where the Elmont Spartan pressure man to man defense shut down Baldwin. The turning point signaling Baldwin's defeat came when Williams made a critical steal that shut down the Bruins for good and handed Elmont the victory.

Robert Chambers led Elmont with 10 points. Anthony Elechi's 7 points, Senat's 8 points and Tyler Dechalus' 3 points were critical to the success of the game.

The game was also the scene for a behind the scenes friendly wager in the New York State Senate where Senator Jack M. Martins, whose district includes Elmont Memorial High School, bet Senator Chuck Fuschillo, who represents Baldwin, that the Elmont Spartans would beat the Bruins. Fuschillo accepted the bet. State Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos, who represents both communities, rooted for both "outstanding teams."

The bet also caught the attention of students, community members and newspapers due to the nature of the stakes. If Elmont won the championship, Senator Fuschillo would have to come to Elmont Memorial High School and eat in the student cafeteria with Martins, Skelos and the team. If Baldwin won, Martins would have had to travel to Baldwin High School.

Last week, Martins predicted Elmont's victory. "The Bruins are going down. Elmont is ready for this game. I've spoken to a couple of the players and they say they're hyped," he said.

One of the players that Martins looked forward to watching in action was Williams Elmont's starting point guard. The Elmont senior was the recipient of Senator Martins' "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award for Character and Leadership." The honor was given at the Black History Month Awards at the Elmont Public Library in February.

Principal Capozzi also got into the act last Friday announcing that, "Senator Martins clearly has bet on the right team. We will have the cafeteria prepared for Senator Skelos and Fuschillo."

As the buzzer rang, the crowd broke into cheers and the team cleared the bench in celebration. Awards were handed out to the players and the school was presented with the plaque trophy. The Spartan team then invited Senator Martins to the court to take a photo

during the presentation. Williams said, "Senator Martins was there for us and stood by the team. We appreciated him being there, coming to our game and standing with us. Now, there is a bet to be paid by the other Senators."

"This was a real hard fought battle for the Spartans," said Senator Martins. "This contest was very physical and the full court pressure was intense. I was very proud of Greg Senat, Dillon Williams, Anthony Elechi, Robert Chambers and the entire squad. They made their school proud, Elmont proud and their families burst with pride by their style, sportsmanship and desire on the court. It was an honor to stand with them on this historic day for Elmont."

In the meantime, preparations are being made for the Senatorial visit. Details of the luncheon are being developed this week. "We will have the cafeteria waiting. We may even put Senator Fuschillo in the junior high school cafeteria," said Capozzi jokingly.

Senator Skelos said, "I'm so proud of both of the teams. It was a great game. I congratulate Elmont on the win. I can't wait to visit with the team."

Senator Martins said, "this was a great victory for the Spartans and the 7th Senatorial District. I really look forward to having lunch with my fellow Senators in the cafeteria at Elmont. We will be there get our trays, wait in line and congratulate and eat with champions at Elmont Memorial High School."

Elmont advances to the Long Island Class AA title game, which will take place on Sunday at Stony Brook University against Half Hollow Hills West.