

SUMMERVILLE - All season long, the pep talk in the **Summerville** locker room centered on returning Green Wave **wrestling** to its accustomed place - competing for a state title.

That was achieved Wednesday night when **Summerville** decked Dutch Fork, 41-22, to win the Class AAAA Lower State championship and earn a spot in Saturday's state title match.

Summerville (17-2) returns to the finals for the first time since 1995, and the Green Wave's opponent there is a familiar one - four-time defending state champ **Rock Hill** (20-0), a 34-24 winner over Irmo Wednesday.

"Irmo or **Rock Hill**, it doesn't really matter now," Green Wave coach Kenny Walker said before learning his team's opponent. "When you get to this level, you're always one move from going 10 toes up." Wednesday faced older brother B.D. LaPrad, the coach at Dutch Fork.

Walker expected a tough match with Dutch Fork, which placed five wrestlers in the top four, including two state champions, at the individual state meet last weekend, compared with four top-four wrestlers and one state champ for **Summerville**.

But wins by Brent LaPrad at 125 pounds and Jeff Healy at 130 set off a string of six straight **Summerville** victories that included pins by Braxton Harrison at 135 and Quinn Tolbert at 145.

After Erik Jones won at 152, **Summerville** had a 29-6 lead. Ryan Kerrigan's pin at 189 pounds clinched the match for the Green Wave at 35-16.

Brent LaPrad, a freshman and Steve's son, scored four points in the final minute, including a two-point takedown with 14 seconds left, for a 4-1 victory over Chuck Dimarco in a match that was 0-0 after two periods.

And Healy, a junior, scored a four-point victory with a 10-2 decision over Dutch Fork's Steve Valponi, who won the state championship at 130 last week, and defeated Healy at Lower State.

"That was big time," Walker said of Healy's win. "I hope all our kids were watching that one, because it shows that you can beat any one if you get out there and get after it like Jeff did."

Said Healy, "When I lost to him at Lower State, he really rode my legs. I tried to keep him off my legs, and I guess that helped."

Other winners for **Summerville** included Chris Wills at 103 (a four-point win), state champ Geoff Roberts at 140 and heavyweight Reuben Daniels, who got the Green Wave's fourth and final pin to end the match.

Summerville wrestled **Rock Hill** in the Battery Creek Duals earlier this season, losing 44-34 in a match Walker said "could have gone either way."

Since 1980, **Summerville** and **Rock Hill** have won all 18 Class AAAA state titles, with **Rock Hill** taking 13 and the Green Wave five.

From 1985 to 1995, **Summerville** and **Rock Hill** were the top two teams in the state each year.

Last year, **Rock Hill** beat Dutch Fork in the finals, 54-13.