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By Dennis Garcia  
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With five seconds left in last week's state championship finals match, Trinity High School's David Makupson said he looked at the clock and realized he was about to earn the ultimate achievement in prep wrestling.

After the final seconds ticked off, Makupson, standing with his hand held high, celebrated a state championship. And who could blame him if he's still celebrating.



*Trinity senior and State Champion David Makupson in the 2022 NCHSAA Wrestling State Championship Tournament. Photo provided.*

"I remember looking at the clock the last 5 seconds and counting down and then celebrating," said Makupson, who captured the state title in the 2-A 138-pound division. "My hand was raised and I was seeing all the Trinity parents there supporting me. After everyone congratulated me and I went back to school and everyone was talking about it, that's when it hit me."

At the state championships held in Greensboro, Makupson captured three major decisions and one fall. He earned MDs of 11-0 (first round), 13-1 (semifinals) and 10-0 (championship match) to cap an

incredible season, a season in which he finished 54-1.

The state tournament was certainly familiar grounds for Makupson. He has been among the state's elite all four years, finishing 2-2 his freshman season before capturing fourth place as a sophomore and as a junior. This one, Makupson said, was going to be different.

"There has been a lot of pressure on me the whole year," Makupson said about being the top-ranked wrestler in the state entering his senior season. "There was a lot of pressure, but my dad said it's what you do under that pressure that really counts. This was my last chance and being fourth two times really fueled my fire."

Trinity coach Brandon Coggins said it wasn't a matter of if Makupson was going to celebrate a state championship, but when.

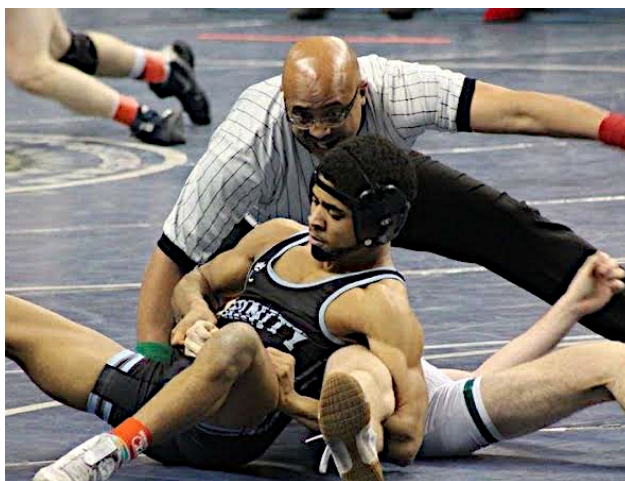
"He wrestled about 50 matches in the offseason to get to that point," Coggins said of Makupson's summer before the school year began. "He's a good kid and he works hard."

When you take fourth place twice, it gives you more determination. He had an incredible year."

Makupson, a four-year varsity letter winner and four-year all-league wrestler has also lettered in football (three times while earning all-league status three times), track (three times), cross country (once) and swimming (once), said he started wrestling at age 5 and always had the goal of winning a state championship. That goal really took center stage after his cousin captured a state wrestling championship for Thomasville in 2016.

While at Trinity, Makupson finished his career 178-14. Despite all the hard work that led to his success his first three years, he worked even harder his final season.

After earning easy wins in his first two rounds of the state championships, he reached the semifinals, the spot where he fell the last two seasons. That wasn't going to be the case this time.



*Trinity senior David Makupson in action. Photo provided.*



*David Makupson in the 2022 wrestling championships. Photo provided.*

"I truly believe in my training and all the work that went into this," he said. "The last few years I had doubts in the back of my mind and that held me back. I believed in what I had done and what I had to do and knew I had to leave it all out there and control the match."

Makupson, a longtime member of the School of Hard Knocks wrestling club in High Point, said he plans on wrestling in college, although he's still unsure where that will be. He said he is still deciding among a number of schools, including Queens, Mt. Olive, Averett, Schreiner University in Texas and Muhlenberg College in

Pennsylvania.

And he'll take with him a ton of memories from his wrestling days at THS.

"Just the blood, sweat and tears we left in the room," Makupson said of what he will remember most. "Everyone battling. Us getting in fights and then us all laughing together. It was great."

And very successful.