

Groves takes regional title while denying Farmington

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WRESTLING

The Falcons were certain to win their first regional championship in the team wrestling tournament Wednesday.

The question was, which Falcons? It quickly became apparent it would be host Birmingham Groves moving on to the next round as it built a big lead en route to a 42-15 victory over Farmington in a battle between teams with the same nickname.

Groves made its sixth appearance in a regional, but this year's team has achieved what no other has.

"This has been an obstacle for our program, getting to the state finals," coach Andrew Wilson said, relaying the contents of a letter signed by members of the 1995 and '96 Groves teams.

"Those were probably the two best teams I've ever had. They said we had a great opportunity to do something they never did. The one thing missing for them was a trip to Battle Creek.

"My big speech today was 'You're really not wrestling for yourselves but all those who came before us, and you can set

a goal for those who come after us.'"

"The last two weeks it has really propelled the team."

"We're going to give it a run," Wilson said. "Warren Lincoln is awful good. We'll go up there and give it all we've got."

Groves, which defeated Auburn Hills Avondale in a semifinal, 42-33, established big leads early in both matches.

"The only reason the first was won so remotely close was the result of Groves voiding four of the last five weights after taking a 42-6 lead.

"We've been very fortunate that our lower weights are outstanding," Wilson said. "From 130 to 190, we have some really nice kids."

(Ian) Brodie is a regional qualifier. At 62, 60 and 71, we're very respectable. Eighty-nine and 215 are regional qualifiers, too."

With a solid, balanced lineup,

the Falcons take an aggressive stance and attack opponents where they're strongest.

"Our lineup has such dynamic kids in it (other teams) have to get away from those kids," Wilson said, adding his team has the hunter versus the hunted attitude."

In the final match with Farmington (7-12), Groves spotted the other Falcons a 3-0 lead, then scored the next 62 points.

Mike Menoch, Brandon Kakos, Brodie and Vijay Paul, who clinched victory at 162, had pins. Phil O'Neil won by technical fall and Kent Harding by decision. Groves picked up 24 points on voids, too.

Farmington coach Al Beyar withheld regional qualifiers Aaron Turk, Mike Murland, and Brett Brown from the match since Groves was headed for an obvious win.

"With our better kids going Saturday, we didn't want to risk any injuries," he said. "(Groves) can cover all the weight classes, and they're pretty deep.

"If we didn't win a couple lower matches, by the time we got to Mike (Murland at 160), it was too late. We can't make up the difference."

Farmington has won team district titles five of the last six years, but the Falcons have yet to win a regional championship.

"Winning the first match and getting into the regional final is an accomplishment for this young team," Beyar said, adding the Falcons haven't done that since 1998.

"We normally have 24 (wrestlers) and we only had 15 today. We'll make that correction next year, so they plan vacations for some time other than winter break and don't leave town."

Falcons overcome Eagles

In a semifinal match Wednesday, Blake Belsky pinned Fernaldo's Matt Webb in the heavyweight bout to give Farmington a 42-35 victory.

The Falcons had a 36-29 lead with two weights left. Beyar chose to void the 215 match and move Belsky from his usual position to heavyweight.

"That was a chess match," Beyar said. "We won the flip of the coin, so (the Eagles) had to put their 215-pounder out first — exactly what we wanted."

"That gave us an opportunity to match up in our favor. We needed them to commit or not

commit their kid at 215."

The Falcons were behind early, trailing 22-6 after giving up two pins, a void and a decision through 130. But consecutive voids and a pin by Cam Murland at 145 put Farmington on top, 24-22.

Fernaldo won the next two bouts, including an 8-6, overtime win by Spencer Dockery over Farmington's Mike Murland, to regain the lead, 29-24.

Murland, who had beaten Dockery in the individual district final, appeared to have scored the first takedown in overtime, but the referee didn't award him the points.

"I thought he won it, but they didn't see it," Beyar said. "We believe he won the match; that's the most important thing."

Despite that setback, the Falcons took the lead once more when Brett Brown, who was ahead on points, 9-2, won by injury default at 171, and a Fernaldo void at 189 made it 36-29.

BIRMINGHAM GROVES 42 FARMINGTON 33

Feb. 21 at Birmingham Groves (regional championship match)
103: Lance Dawson (F) dec. Sean Hey, 8-3;
112: Mike Menoch (G) pinned Andrew Sannicchi, 2:26;
119: Brandon Kakos (G) pin. Alex Colan, 0-49;
128: Phil O'Neil (G) technical fall

over Rob Eastaday, 15-0;
130: Sam Wilson (G) won by void;
138: Matt Harding (G) dec. Mike Kish, 5-2;
140: John Pierce (G) won by void;
146: Ian Brodie (G) pin. Cam Murland, 0:48;
152: Vijay Paul (G) pin. Charlie Raymond, 3:47;
160: Brad Hay (G) won by void;
171: Brandon Gladstone (G) pin. Matt Nichols, 1:01;
189: Luke Barlock (G) won by void;
215: Blake Belsky (F) won by void;
Mike Boylan (F) won by void.

FARMINGTON 42 FERNALDO 38

(regional semifinal match)
103: Lance Dawson (Farm) won by void;
112: Ryan Squire (Farm) pinned Andrew Bernicchi, 0:27;
119: J.P. Morgan (Farm) pin. Alex Colan, 0:44;
128: Charles Schimmell (Farm) won by void;
130: Tim Heard (Farm) dec. Rob Eastaday, 16-8;
138: Aaron Turk (Farm) won by void;
140: Mike Kish (Farm) won by void;
146: Cam Murland (Farm) pin. Justin Lewis, 2:48;
152: Dion Ferris (Farm) dec. Charlie Raymond, 13-4;
160: Spencer Dockery (Farm) dec. Mike Murland, 8-6 in overtime;
171: Brett Brown (Farm) pin. Justin Deaton over Darren Goolsby;
189: Matt Nichols (Farm) won by void;
215: Steve Barry (Farm) won by void;
218: Blake Belsky (Farm) pin. Matt Webb, 0:12.

BIRMINGHAM GROVES 43 AUBURN HILLS AVONDALE 33

(regional semifinal match)
103: Sean Hey (G) won by void;
112: Mike Menoch (G) technical fall over Cole Dominick, 16-3;
119: Gilbert Morgan (G) won by void;
128: Brandon Kakos (G) pin. Adam Abbott, 3:05;
146: Ian Brodie (G) dec. Henry Leung, 3-2;
152: Vijay Paul (G) dec. Jason Swindell, 18-5;
160: Angelo Vettese (A) won by void;
171: Ryan Chapman (A) dec. Brandon Gladstone, 5-0;
189: Matt Wozniak (A) won by void;
215: Jeremy Coster (A) won by void;
218: Chris Woodley (A) won by void.

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of the other guy, and Mike will still be wrestling to pin, to pin the guy.

"That's a nice thing to have, that never-give-up attitude."

Nordli's trio won't be low seeds again. Along with Murland, they'll be at the top of their brackets in the regional tournament Saturday at Groves.

"It was nice to see all of them step up," Stuef said. "They hadn't done that in tournaments consistently. It puts them in a good position for next Saturday, the best position they can be."

"They'll meet the fourth seed and won't have to meet the other top seed until the finals. That gives us a good chance to get someone through to state, maybe all three of them."

Canvasser (26-11) and Bajrami (12-4) pinned every one of their district opponents. Bajrami had four straight pins at 112. Canvasser three at 103.

Canvasser was feeling his oats," Stuef said. "It's probably his last chance ever to wrestle. He really wanted to have that championship bracket (poster). He said he was going to frame it. He said he had never been first at anything."

In his final bout, Bajrami was losing to Pontiac Northern's Teddy Gillespie, but he made a comeback and pinned his opponent late in the second period.

"Ramis needed a five-point

move," Stuef said. "He took him down, put him on his back and pinned him all at once. It was an exciting finish."

"Ramis hit his patented move (a single-leg move in which he simultaneously grabs the opponent's head and drives him backward). I didn't think he could hit that on that kid, but he did it."

Loipnitz (33-11) included a good takedown move in his game, and it helped him win four straight bouts at 125 pounds — the first by technical fall, the last three by decision.

"Harry looked good on his feet," Stuef said, adding the takedown "was something we harped on him about all year because he's great on the mats."

"He lost several matches because of not having a takedown," Stuef said, adding he really turned that around.

Also qualifying for the regional were Farmington seniors Aaron Turk (18-10) and Brett Brown (22-17), who were fourth at 136 and 171, respectively.

"Harry looked good on his feet," Stuef said. "Brown had some opportunities open to him and didn't start to take advantage of them until the third period."

"If they meet again, I think Brett will come out on top. He knows what mistakes he made and how to correct them."

DISTRICT TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Don Canvasser, 103, N. Farmington; 2. pinned Evan Sherburn, Birmingham Seaholm, 0:59; 3. pinned Sean Hey, Birmingham Groves, 4:52; 3. pinned Kameron Arnold, Pontiac Northern, 5:06.
Ramis Bajrami, 112, N. Farmington; 1. pinned Jonathan Haggan, Oak Park, 2:29; 2. pinned Richard Stafford, Hill Park, 2:18; 3. pinned Mike Menoch, Birmingham Groves, 3:00; 4. pinned Teddy Gillespie, Pontiac Northern, 3:54.
Harry Loipnitz, 125, N. Farmington; 1. technical fall over Steve Anderson, Royal Oak Dondore, 16:1; 2. decision Charles Schimmell, 6-4; 3. dec. Shintaro Taniguchi,

Bloomfield Hills Andover, 6-5; 4. dec. Ronnie Favor, Oak Park, 6-0.

Aaron Turk, 136, Farmington; defeated Jesse Cousins, Oak Park, to qualify for the regional, 10-3; lost to Tim Balla, Royal Oak Dondore, in the consolation final, 5-2.

Mike Murland, 160, Farmington; 1. pinned Greg Bockart, Bloomfield Hills Lusher, 1:00; 2. pinned Brandon Gladstone, Birmingham Groves, 4:50; 3. dec. Spencer Dockery, Fernaldo, 7-4.

Brett Brown, 171, Farmington; defeated Calvin O'Hellis, Pontiac Northern, to qualify for the regional, 3-1; lost to Matt Wozniak, Auburn Hills Avondale, in the consolation final, 7-4.

CC qualifies 7 for regional

In Division 1 at Novi, Catholic Central advanced seven wrestlers to the regional Saturday at Northville.

Ryan Rogowski and Mike Warner, both regional qualifiers last year, won district titles. Rogowski (171) beat Northville's Josh Pettiford, 12-7, and Warner took the 140 crown with an 8-2 win over Plymouth Canton's Greg Musser.

CC also had a pair of runners-up with Nate Rodriguez (135) losing to Dave Edwards of South Lyon, 10-5, and Northville's Chad Neumann beating CC's Jay Abshire, 5-3.

The Shamrocks also had a third from Matt Markowicz (189) as he pinned Livonia Churchill's Alex Murray in 3-0. Chris Petersen (140) advanced for the second straight year with a fourth place. Chris Cracchiolo also took fourth at 162.

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