

Vikings capture county title

By JIM TOTH
STAFF WRITER

It's still a couple of months away, but state meet competition will have to go a long way to top the excitement generated by area wrestling teams this week-end on the mats of Troy High.

With individual fame, as well as team supremacy riding high over the two-day tourney, some 224 wrestlers managed to lift suspense to a feverish pitch for the prestigious affair. With team supremacy about to take center stage, Walled Lake Central senior Derek Vos stepped into the limelight by scoring a nail-biting 4-3 decision over Scott Labrie in the finals at 171.

Up next was the Vikings over their first Oakland County meet championship in school history. "This was really exciting," boomed Central coach Carl McBride after watching his Vikings overcome the runner-up Colts by a margin of 185.5 to 181.5. "I don't ever remember such a close finish here. Sure, last year we finished second, but we were 101 points behind (champion) Clarkston."

The time around, in one of the most closely contested tournaments, the Wolves settled for a third-place showing with 176 points. Novi placed fourth with 168 and Walled Lake Western, Rochester and Holly tied for fifth with 143 points.

"I knew it would be tough with teams like Novi, Troy and Clarkston, but without Rochester

WRESTLING

Adams, it opened it up for everybody," McBride said. "Troy came from nowhere to make a charge. The Colts, who two weeks earlier settled for a runner-up finish at the annual Eccentric tournament, moved into title contention with a perfect three-for-three performance in the finals."

Senior Adam Adams led the finals charge with an 8-2 decision over Pontiac Central's David Flores at 275 and concluded when Brian Kretschmer stuck Russ Thompson of Walled Lake Western in the title tilt at 152. In between, 135-pounder Scott Lemay registered a 6-0 decision over Brian Thomas of Lake Orion.

"There was a lot of talk about other teams, but we showed them Troy belongs with the other big guys," beamed first-year Troy coach Sam Amine. "My goal this time of year is to prepare the guys for Battle Creek and what happens in February. I think we turned some heads over how well we wrestled."

Amine praised the efforts of his three champions, saying Adams "was very impressive," Lemay "shocked everyone" and Kretschmer enjoyed "one of the best finals."

"I think we should have done better as a team," said Kretschmer, who ran his season

mark to 9-0 with his stick of Thompson. "We lost some points early, but in the finals we just got together, said a prayer and got everyone going."

With Kretschmer's heroics already down on the scoresheet, Vos knew that either he or teammate Jerrale Parks (180) needed a win for the Vikings to reign as champions. Vos took matters into his own hands when he staved off Labrie.

"I have nine seniors on this team and I knew for us to compete with these teams we had to have senior leadership," McBride said. "We got that from our three captains (Vos, Dan Aubry, Randy Morgan). They pushed everyone else to do their jobs. They kept everyone motivated."

They weren't the only ones motivated. Several area wrestlers indicated the importance of this meet toward the rest of the season.

weight class. "If you can win and place here, people start looking at you to get seeded the rest of the year."

Oakland County is one of the biggest before districts," echoed 112-pound champion Darryl Dawe of Troy Athletics. "It puts you in position for the rest of the year. Even practices intensified four times as much this week as we went strictly conditioning. It made a difference for me at the end."

Other Eccentric-area champions included A.J. Grant and Ryan Mick of Clarkston, Richard Kuzma of Rochester and Kirt Rushlow of Auburn Hills Avondale. Grant (103) gained a technical fall (22-7) over Ryan Parks of Central, while Mick (130) slipped past Jacob Chapman of Hazel Park, 1-0. Kuzma (189) claimed a 5-4 triumph over Parks and Rushlow (215), the meet's MVP for the upper weight classes, needed 2:30 to stick Novi's Jon Talbot.

Taka Watanabe (140) of Novi, gained the MVP for the lower weight classes on the strength of his 16-3 slamming of Athens' Kevin Bastianelli.

Getting back to Rochester Adams, coach Pat Milkovich's Highlanders were prevented from competing in the tourney because of too many wrestling dates in one week. The Highlanders, champions of the Eccentric tourney, were expected to contend for the top spot.

Johnson resigns as S'craft soccer coach

By C.J. RISAK
STAFF WRITER

There is one thing that must be understood about Nikki Johnson, the Schoolcraft College women's soccer coach for the past three seasons. She'd rather play than stay.

In other words, Johnson — a standout as a player at Livonia Churchill, Schoolcraft and Siena Heights — liked coaching. But in trying to compare it to playing...

"No, not at all," was her answer. "I coached for three years, and I enjoyed it," she said. "But it's time to move on. I'll still play the game, but I probably won't coach anymore."

There was never any doubting Johnson's ability as a player. Going up against the best teams in the NJCAA, she compiled a three-year record of 27-23-4, including a trip to the NJCAA Tournament in 1995.

Which is what Johnson, who made consecutive trips to the NJCAA Tournament as a player with SC, calls her coaching highlight.

Just making it to nationals last year, then losing to Monroe after being ahead of them by a goal with two minutes left," she said, recalling both the good and the bad in her three-year tenure.

Johnson was Nick O'Shea's assistant, but when O'Shea took the women's coaching position at Oakland University, Johnson stepped in for him at SC.

Her SC team was 11-7-2 her first season, then went 10-8-2 mark this past season.

She sees no relief in regards to SC's troubles. "It's really, really tough to recruit girls to Schoolcraft," she said. "It's really frustrating."

"And now, with Eastern Michigan, Western Michigan, Michigan, Michigan State, Toledo, Oakland and U-D all having teams, it's just going to get that much tougher."

"If someone could solve that problem — recruiting — it would be great."

Johnson won't be the one to attempt it, however. "There's something I've got to do," she explained, "like pursue a full-time career in another field."

"(Coaching) is just not what I want to do for the rest of my life."

SC athletic director Ed Kavanagh said the coaching position has not been officially posted. But several people have expressed interest in the job, like former SC standout Tim McCarley and men's assistant coach Derek Willford.

OAKLAND COUNTY WRESTLING STATS

37TH ANNUAL OAKLAND COUNTY WRESTLING TOURNAMENT (Dec. 20 and 21 at Troy High)

INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

275 pounds: 1. Adam Adams (Troy) defeated David Flores (P. Central), 8-2; 2. Dave Adams (Holly) pinned Josh Holtsch (WLC), 1:27; 3. Joe Yankauskas (Lathrup) pinned David McDougall (Kettering), 2:13.

150: 1. A.J. Grant (Clarkston) technical fall over Ryan Parks (WLC), 2:23; 2. Marcus Randolph (Oak Park) technical fall over Shawn Baker (Athens), 16-0; 3. Dan Jiggs (Novi) dec. Jim Echbrecht (Lake Orion), 5-3.

132: 1. Daryl Dawe (Athens) dec. Kevin Neundorff (Lakeland), 5-3; 2. Neil Durbin (Hinsdale) dec. Steve Simon (Grove), 3-1; 3. Scott Richmond (North Farmington) technical fall over Quang Dinh (Troy), 17-2.

120: 1. Steve Atwell (WLC) dec. Ryan Tyler (St. Mary's), 6-3; 2. Mario Bastianelli (Athens) dec. Matt Rose (Rochester), 3-0; 3. Jason Anell (Milford) major decision over Angelo Vito (Kimbol), 10-1.

112: 1. Mike Kramer (Rochester) dec. Ed

Wenzel (Dandora), 5-0; 2. Andre Espino (Foley) dec. Richie Hicks (Holly), 13-10; 3. Dave Ziemann (Clarkston) default over Brett Murphy (West Bloomfield).

100: 1. Ryan Mick (Clarkston) dec. Jacob Chapman (Hazel Park), 1-0; 2. Leroy Christoff (Novi) major decision over Bruce Courmyer (Madison), 14-0; 3. Ed Campbell (Moti) dec. Ryan Wiggerson (Troy), 4-0.

88: 1. Scott Lemay (Troy) dec. Brian Thomas (Lake Orion), 6-0; 2. Jason Tienback (Clarkston) dec. Brad Hults (Rochester), 5-3; 3. Aaron Huper (Hazel Park) dec. Chris Davidson (Oxford), 4-0.

72: 1. Taka Watanabe (Novi) major decision over Kevin Bastianelli (Athens), 16-3; 2. Jon Saylor (Avondale) dec. Charles Jaeger (Farmington), 8-3; 3. Randy Morgan (WLC) dec. Eddie Dewar (Northmi), 4-0.

60: 1. Justin Torres (Holly) major decision over David Wilson (Hazel Park), 11-1; 2. Jay Fakhouri (Troy) major decision over Bob Boyce (Kimbol), 10-1; 3. Andy Auen (Clarkston) default over Justin Lambert (Milford).

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finals. Briggs said current timing devices do not take into account the differences in the size of an athlete.

False starts are electronically determined at international meets, such as the Olympics, by a system that takes measures an amount of forward force.

Different athletes come out of the blocks at different angles with different force, Briggs said. "We're trying to get Omega (the official Olympic timer) to look at this," Briggs said.

And he has plenty of prestigious company in his bid to improve starting technology.

Gail Devers, the 100-meter Olympic sprint champion in 1995 and 1992, and Canada's Donovan Bailey, will join Johnson and some other world-class track athletes early next year in South Carolina where Briggs will experiment with the new blocks.

"There is always politics involved," Briggs said, "but I think the athletes are seeing the benefit."

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