

## **Wrestlers prepare for Lexington, Neb. Invite**

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

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HHS wrestlers prepare this week for one of Coach Duane Stroh's favorite tournaments in Lexington, Neb.

Two varsity tournaments in one feature A and B competition. "This just fits our team so well," said Stroh, noting the strong kids compete in the A action, while the less experienced wrestlers are bracketed into the B tournament.

Last week was definitely the team's best week of practice, and Stroh said Monday he hopes this week will be good, as well.

He was encouraged at the Jan. 16 Poudre Valley tournament in Fort Collins, where four Dragons wrestled well. Stroh said he hopes by the time regionals roll around, the whole team will look excellent.

Chad Stroh had an excellent day Saturday, winning the 135-lb. championship. "He's starting to pick up momentum and is looking real good," said coach Stroh.

At 152 lbs., Cade Garrison finished second in what coach Stroh called an outstanding tournament for the senior wrestler.

Luke Garrett had a great day at 171 lbs., narrowly losing his last match by one point to take fourth.

Also placing for the Dragons was Frank Diaz at 103 lbs., who took sixth.

Mark Edmonds, who was injured in Jan. 9 competition, did not see action at Poudre Valley. Early this week, coach Stroh said Edmonds' participation at Lexington is still questionable.

Nine teams competed at Poudre Valley, and the Dragons had a slightly better than average weekend in the tournament, said Stroh.

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Competition for HHS wrestlers gets tougher in each tourney leading up to the Big Show which is set for Feb. 18-20 at the Pepsi Center in Denver.

### **Individual results**

103 lbs.—Frank Diaz placed sixth. He pinned Brennan McCool of Wiggins in 3:36, was pinned by Keegan Gavaldon of Fort Collins in :36, was pinned by Matt O'Donnell of Poudre Valley in 3:31 and was pinned in 4:09 by Chris Aranott of Fort Collins.

Coach Stroh noted Diaz improves every week. He was ahead 8-0 in his final match, but got caught and pinned for a heartbreaking loss.

125 lbs.—Francisco Diaz showed marked improvement. He just wasn't finishing his moves, said Stroh.

Diaz lost a 3-11 decision to Ronnie Toplyn of Poudre Valley and was pinned in 3:50 by Hunter Bell of Bennett.

135 lbs.—Chad Stroh wrestled real well to win the championship. His final match wasn't his greatest, but in other bouts during the day, he scored 10-12 points, then ended it with a pinning combination, said coach Stroh.

Chad pinned Anthony Meyers of Doherty in :36, pinned Zach Champlain of Frederick in 2:30 and won an 8-5 decision over Adam Barela of Fort Collins.

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140 lbs.—Brian Strong showed marked improvement on his moves, said Stroh. “He’s learning new things, and I’m excited for him and his potential,” said the coach.

Strong lost a 4-13 decision to Devin Dunnun of Fort Collins and lost a 0-10 decision to Eric McKenzie of Poudre Valley.

145 lbs.—Ben Martinez was pinned in 3:30 by Aaron Jesser of Fort Collins and was pinned in 3:05 by Caleb Copeland of Bennett.

Coach Stroh praised Martinez for his hard work and great attitude. He is a small 145-lb. wrestler and will have a chance to wrestle at 135 lbs. in the B tourney in Lexington this weekend.

152 lbs.—Cade Garrison placed second in an outstanding tournament. He tech-falled Lane Venzke of Wiggins 18-3, decisioned Aaron Erker of Wiggins 11-7 and was pinned in 3:28 by Cyrus Massoudi of Fort Collins.

In league tourney action Jan. 7, Erker pinned Garrison in the third period, so the semifinal win Saturday was a great one. He controlled the whole match. Stroh said he looked real good, real clean and is getting better and healthier every week. Garrison led in his final match before he got caught on the bottom.

171 lbs.—Luke Garrett placed fourth in a great day at Poudre Valley. Coach Stroh said Garrett had the toughest bracket of the tournament. His first match was a tough one, which he lost 8-13 to Clay Roth of Poudre Valley.

He battled with highly-ranked Cole Knutson of Wiggins, wrestling extremely well for a 7-4 win. Garrett suffered a heartbreaking 7-8 loss to Gordy Pisciotta of Regis in his quest for third place. Coach Stroh said Garrett was down by three or four points and came from behind in the third period, but still trailed by one at the end.

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Garrett is getting momentum and confidence and is looking really good and solid, said Stroh.

189 lbs.—Casey Sage struggled a little, and just couldn't get his mojo going on his feet, said coach Stroh. He showed marked improvement while on the bottom, and will work on gaining confidence on his feet and on top, added the coach.

Sage was pinned in :52 by Noah Hartman of Doherty and was pinned in 4:16 by Mike Whitley of Regis.