

Dragons power up to win Boulder Valley Invite

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt



Dragon wrestlers made a name for themselves Saturday, Jan. 10 when they won the Boulder Valley Invite in Niwot. It was a big notch for a small-school team.

The championship trophy spoke well for the only 2A team in the tournament. The competition included five 3A schools, and 10 others that were 4A or 5A.

“It was our best tourney all year,” said coach Duane Stroh, adding it was a break-out tournament for a number of Dragons.

Five Dragons were in championship matches, with Mark Edmonds and Chad Stroh winning at 103 and 125 lbs., respectively.

Second-place finishes were earned by Brian Strong (119 lbs.), Skyler Dittmer (130) and Luke Garrett (160), while fourths were achieved by Seth Baker (135) and Broc Pelle (140).

Holyoke scored 165 to win the tourney, followed closely by Fairview 160, Boulder 151, Frederick 147.5, Smoky Hill 141.5, Platte Valley 117.5 and Eaton 113.5.

This week, the Dragons travel to the Chase County Invitational in Imperial, Neb. Saturday, Jan. 17.

Individual results from the team win at Niwot follow:

103 lbs.—Mark Edmonds placed first in an outstanding day of wrestling.

He pinned Jared Airola of Nederland in 2:28, pinned Bryce Shafer of Smoky Hill in 2:29, won a 5-1 decision over Babalu Jones of Boulder and edged Chris Chavez of Fairview 5-4 in the finals.

Coach Stroh said Edmonds’ win over the Fairview wrestler is probably why the Dragons won the tournament over Fairview.

119 lbs.—Brian Strong had what coach Stroh called “probably the best tournament of his life,” capturing second place.

He pinned Miles Higginbotham of Horizon in 4:59, pinned Casey Crescentini of Erie in 2:27 and pinned Kaleb Arnold of Platte Valley in 5:59 before losing 3-10 to Caleb Downs of Frederick in the finals.

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A controversial call in the championship made the point spread wide. Coach Stroh said it was a closer match than what the score indicated.

125 lbs.—Chad Stroh was just on fire, winning by a tech fall and three pins to place first.

He tech falled Cody Jones of Smoky Hill 17-2, pinned Dylan Fabrizio of Eaton in 2:26, pinned Alex Gonzalez of Silver Creek in 1:10 and pinned Clay Flot of Platte Valley in 2:43 in the finals. Flot is ranked #1 in 3A.

130 lbs.—Skyler Dittmer had a break-out tournament to place second. He pinned his first three opponents before falling in the finals.

Dittmer pinned Jake Hoeft of Erie in :40, pinned Alejandro Lucero of Holy Family in 2:54, pinned Atticus Van Lier of Fairview in 3:28 and was tech falled 2-19 by Jake Eitzen of Estes Park. Eitzen is a returning state champ.

135 lbs.—Seth Baker had a break-out tourney, placing fourth.

He was pinned in 3:56 by Dakota Fabrizio of Eaton to start the tourney. Coach Stroh indicated it's a match Baker probably could have won, but he just got caught.

Moving on with fierce determination, Baker marked four straight wins to qualify for the third-fourth place match. Because he was matched out (had already wrestled five times that day), he had to forfeit the third-place match. Stroh complimented Baker's mental toughness in coming back after a loss to win four straight.

Baker pinned Rafael Roces of Smoky Hill in 1:45, won an 11-1 major decision over Logan Stephens of Erie, decisioned Shaun Clyncke of Holy Family 11-6 and won a 9-7 decision over Logan Stetson of Estes Park.

135 lbs.—Parker Redfern also wrestled in this bracket, earning one win for the day, against two losses.

He was pinned in 5:03 by Caleb Bowman of Fairview, pinned Colt Robinson of Silver Creek in 1:38 and lost a 4-10 decision to Dakota Fabrizio of Eaton.

140 lbs.—Broc Pelle had another great day, according to coach Stroh. He was 4-1 on the day, and also matched out, so he had to forfeit his third-fourth place match to take fourth.

He kicked off the tourney with a pin in 3:14 over Justin Nemmers of Silver Creek, then lost a 5-9 decision to Jordan Smith of Platte Valley who ended up taking second overall. Stroh said Pelle was beating Smith and looking good, but got turned to lose the four-point match.

He came back with three straight wins, with a 2:29 pin over Matt Morvay of Golden, a 10-2 decision over Luke Stager of Niwot and a 6-1 decision over Clayton Bunker of Erie.

145 lbs.—Brandon Price had another break-out tourney, and went 2-2 for the day.

Paired up with the #2 seed in the tourney, Price was wrestling well when he got caught and was pinned in 1:23 by Stephen Aaron of Monarch.

On the bottom side of the bracket, Price won two matches by pins, sticking Dakota Greene of Golden in :56 and Wade Oster of Platte Valley in 4:32.

In the match to see if he would get to go for third or fourth, Price just made a mistake and was pinned in 4:05 by Kaz Smith of Fairview.

"He's doing lots of good things," said coach Stroh of Price's wrestling.

160 lbs.—Luke Garrett wrestled well all week, on his way to second place at Niwot. He won by a tech fall and two pins before falling in the finals.

He tech falled King Medlin of Holy Family 20-3, pinned Justin Hatchell of Eaton in :40 and pinned Keegan Garrison of Niwot in 5:58.

Coach Stroh said Garrett just couldn't get his game going in the finals. His opponent kept getting a nose bleed, which stopped the match. Shaun Miller of Smoky Hill went on to win 10-3

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to take the championship.

171 lbs.—Mitch Wittman won his first match ever at Niwot, and coach Stroh was very pleased.

He was pinned by Mike Crane of Smoky Hill in 1:07, then stuck C.J. Fear of Lyons in 1:40. He looked good, but just got caught in his next match, losing by a pin to Travis Campbell of Boulder in :40.

189 lbs.—Casey Sage lost two matches Saturday, but coach Stroh said they saw signs of what Sage will do in the future and were encouraged.

He was pinned in :38 by Aaron Olson of Platte Valley and was pinned in 2:28 by Reese Rife of Horizon.