A strong, aggressive, fearless wrestler, senior Broc Pelle finished his high school wrestling career in the 170-lb. championship match at the Pepsi Center in Denver Saturday, Feb. 18.

He never gave up and worked hard to the end, but finished as runner-up in a 3-5 decision to returning state champ Brent Harris of Norwood.

“He had a great season,” said coach Jack Garrison. “Broc is a heck of a guy and a really good wrestler. We’ll miss him a bunch,” added the coach.

Neither Pelle nor Harris scored in the first period of Saturday night’s championship, but Pelle fell behind 1-4 heading into the third and final period.

Broc Pelle works to turn Rocky Ford’s Bo Soden in the 170-lb. semifinal bout at the Pepsi Center Friday
night. Pelle earned a second-period pin in 3:07.—Enterprise photo

He had a great tilt for two back points to make it a one-point match, but locked his hands to give up a point with 17 seconds on the clock.

“I had him spin out front and try to get a quarter Nelson,” said coach Garrison. Time was running out and they made the best call they could, he added.

While it was disappointing, Pelle said afterwards it was still a great experience. Being in the state tournament and ultimately the state championship was a great way to end his high school wrestling.

He improved each year, winning one match on the state mats at 140 lbs. as a freshman and finishing fourth at 171 lbs. as a junior after taking his sophomore year off.

Pelle will leave in June to serve in the U.S. Marines, starting training in San Diego, Calif.

Pelle starts with quick pin

Leaving no doubt that he meant business, the regional 170-lb. champ from Holyoke kicked off the 2012 state tournament with a 15-second pin over Jesse Evans of Kiowa.

Pelle's quarterfinal foe was a strong, highly-ranked contender, Justin Hardy of Meeker, who finished the tourney in third place.

Family and fans cheer for Broc Pelle after his quarterfinal win Friday morning on the state wrestling mats.—Enterprise photo

Pelle did a phenomenal job, according to coach Garrison, who said he beat Hardy on his feet. He wrestled a controlled, smart match and never trailed.

In the first minute of the match, Pelle had a takedown and Hardy escaped for a 2-1 first period.

Pelle started the second period in the down position, where he got an escape and then a takedown to lead 5-1. Neither wrestler scored in the third period, as Pelle advanced to the semis and a sure medal.

Not satisfied with just any medal, Pelle made it clear he wasn't finished yet as he pinned Bo Soden of Rocky Ford in 3:07 to claim a berth in the title match. He held a 4-0 lead before his second-period pin over Soden.

"You don't make a mistake on Broc. He'll capitalize on it. He wrestles aggressively, and I love his style," said coach Garrison.

He added it was a great way to get into the finals. "He's the kind of guy I like to coach. He's tough," added Garrison.

Broc Pelle is in control of Meeker's Justin Hardy as he works his way to a 5-2 quarterfinal win.—Enterprise photo

Dragons score 54

As a team, the Dragons scored 54 points for 13th place in the state tourney.

Top 20 teams included Paonia 179, Baca County 115.5, Rocky Ford, 109.5, Fowler 99, Burlington 84.5, Yuma 73, Akron 70, Hayden 68, Dove Creek 66.5, Norwood 65, Holly 57.5, Del Norte 56.5, Holyoke 54, Ignacio 48, Swink 48, Merino 38, Wray 37, Wiggins 34.5, Crowley County 31, Fleming 31.

(State tourney results for Jesus Hermosillo, Dylan Kotch on page 11)

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