

Wrestlers third at Akron Invite

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

With only six Dragons wrestling for points at the Akron Invitational Saturday, Dec. 6, HHS finished third in team standings, bringing home a nice plaque.

Coach Duane Stroh was pleased with the strong finish for a team of small numbers.

The Dragons had three champions in the season opener, including freshman Mark Edmonds at 103 lbs., junior Chad Stroh at 130 and junior Luke Garrett at 171.

Additionally, sophomore Brian Strong earned HHS points for his second-place finish at 125 lbs., and freshman Broc Pelle placed second at 140.

Sophomore Skyler Dittmer placed fourth at 135 lbs., but was not Holyoke's point-counting wrestler in that weight bracket.

Casey Sage won an exhibition match Saturday, and Parker Redfern and Seth Baker also competed in the tourney.

Wiggins won the Akron Invite with 228.5 points, followed by Stratton 128, Holyoke 121.5, Eads 82.5, Denver Lutheran 78, Akron 75, Simla 70, Highland 64, Northridge JV 35, Valley JV 20 and Nederland 7.

This week, Holyoke is hosting a tournament Saturday, Dec. 13, starting at 9 a.m.

Individual results

Individual match results from the Akron Invite follow:

103 lbs.—Mark Edmonds placed first. He pinned Nico Ybarra of Northridge in 3:39, pinned Marc Maestras of Highland in 1:33 and tech-falled Cody Fry of Eads, 17-0.

Coach Stroh noted Edmonds had an outstanding day. He focused on relaxed wrestling and dominated every opponent. His championship match was against an Eads wrestler who Strong met in first-round state tournament action last year. Stroh was very excited for Edmonds to fare so well in his first tournament as a high school wrestler.

125 lbs.—Brian Strong placed second. He pinned Victor Sepeda of Northridge in :42, pinned Will Bundy of Nederland in :55, won a 6-5 decision over Riko Gallegos of Highland and lost a 6-14 decision to Buddy Watson of Wiggins in the championship.

"This was the best wrestling Brian has ever done in his life," said coach Stroh, saying he was excited to see the sophomore wrestle as he did. He earned a nice one-point victory in the semifinals.

In the finals, against a tough Wiggins opponent, Strong stayed in good position, refusing to get pinned. Strong scored the last points of the match, coming out the back door to score a reversal.

130 lbs.—Chad Stroh placed first with four pins. He pinned Alex Dorr of Wiggins in 2:47, Dalton Smith of Highland in 1:41, Michael Esgival of Northridge in 3:20 and Jason Erker of Wiggins in 2:45.

Stroh had an excellent day, in constant pursuit of a pinning combination, which he found in all four of his matches. He wrestled very aggressively and looked great all day, said coach Stroh. "Chad handled every opponent very nicely," he added.

130 lbs.—Parker Redfern decisioned Justin Bull of Akron 12-2, was pinned by Jason Erker of Wiggins in 2:46 and was pinned by Alex Dorr of Wiggins in 1:46.

Coach Stroh noted Redfern tried to make it to the 125-lb. bracket, but got run down and wrestled at 130. While he looked good in his first match, his energy level was low. Then he had bad luck of the draw, next wrestling the kid who ended up second and then the kid who placed third.

135 lbs.—Seth Baker lost a 7-9 overtime decision to Nathan Schroeder of Wiggins, pinned Kyle Michaelis of Akron in 2:27, pinned Dakota Difranceso of Highland in 1:39 and lost a 2-5

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decision to Dalton Marini of Wiggins.

Baker lost an overtime match to start Saturday's tournament. Coach Stroh noted he did a good job, but losing that close one put him in the bottom side of the bracket. His first loss was to the Wiggins wrestler who finished second and his second loss was to the Wiggins team member who placed third.

135 lbs.—Skyler Dittmer placed fourth. He pinned Kyle Michaelis of Akron in 3:21, lost a 7-10 decision to Bryan Hamacher of Simla, pinned Mike Hernandez of Denver Lutheran in 2:32, pinned Tyler Roberts of Denver Lutheran in 4:10 and lost a 5-10 decision to Dalton Marini of Wiggins.

While Dittmer's points didn't count towards Holyoke's total, he wrestled well. He lost 7-10 to a state-ranked wrestler from Simla in a great match. "He came real close to beating him in the third period," said coach Stroh. Dittmer's last bout found him losing by five to Wiggins' point-counting wrestler.

140 lbs.—Broc Pelle placed second. He pinned Ken Ivie of Wiggins in 2:33, pinned Paul Sauter of Wiggins in 1:26 and lost a 6-13 decision to Hayden Uhlandof Eads in the championship.

Pelle had a great day at Akron, according to coach Stroh. In his first matches, he double-legged his opponents. He met a tough kid from Eads in the finals, who took Pelle down in a fireman's carry and quickly scored five points. But Pelle kept coming back, showing lots of heart, said Stroh. Pelle was the last one to score in the match and was still focused on a win.

171 lbs.—Luke Garrett placed first. He pinned Brock Burchard of Akron in 1:26, pinned Josh Cooper of Stratton in 4:29 and pinned Cameron Chainhalt of Denver Lutheran in 1:05.

"Luke didn't do his best wrestling at Akron, but won all his matches on blood and guts," said coach Stroh. He was struggling on the mats. "It's nice when you can struggle and still be the champion," said the coach. Garrett came from behind, but ended up winning all three of his matches with pins.

189 lbs.—Casey Sage pinned an Akron opponent in :52 in an exhibition match.

Coach Stroh noted this is the first match Sage has ever won. He was excited about wrestling and had to wait all day with great anticipation. He went after his man and won by a pin in less than a minute.