

## **Prairie matmen claim 2nd MVC title in row**

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 01 February 2014 21:44 -

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WATERLOO - The Cedar Rapids Prairie wrestling team has developed a wonderful new habit at the Mississippi Valley Conference meet the last two years.

They keep winning it.

The Hawks withstood a spirited challenge from the Jefferson J-Hawks Saturday and claimed their second straight title at the MVC Super Meet in Waterloo.

Prairie snapped an 18-year drought when it won the conference title last year, grabbing its first crown since back-to-back titles in 1994 and 1995. Now these Hawks have won back-to-back championships as well.

"It all just seems like it's falling into place for us right now. It's great," said Josh Wenger, who captured the 138-pound title with a major decision in the finals. "It really does feel great. It's so much fun being a part of something like this."

Prairie crowned three individual champions and rolled up 219 points. Jefferson sent six grapplers into the finals and made a strong run for the title, but had to settle for second place with 193 points.

The J-Hawks could not catch seventh-ranked Prairie, but they finished ahead of No.8 Iowa City West and No.4 Linn-Mar in the standings with two individual champions.

"It's a helluva lot better than we've done in the past few years," said sophomore Brenden Baker, who won the 106-pound title with an impressive day in Waterloo. "It's a good step up, but we always want to be first. We just have to keep going hard and keep working."

Metro wrestlers won nine of the 14 weight classes to dominate the competition against the other

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MVC schools from Waterloo/Cedar Falls, Dubuque and Iowa City.

Prairie's champs were Trey Blaha (152), Skyler St. John (160) and Wenger (138). Jefferson won two titles with Josh Allen (182) and Baker (106), with Allen beating a pair of ranked wrestlers along the way.

Linn-Mar had two champions with Alijah Jeffery (120) and Matt Wempen (132). The Xavier Saints also came home with two titles with Nick Drahozal (145) and Sean Ickes (170) climbing to the top of the victory stand.

Prairie Coach Blake Williams, in his 11th year as head coach, saw his club score points from top to bottom en route to the crown.

"We probably had our biggest graduating senior class last year. And I don't think a lot of people thought we could do this again this year. I know the guys in our room did," he said.

"With so many newcomers in the lineup, I'm just proud of them. They earned it. There's no doubt about it."

Prairie clinched the title when Blaha and St. John, wrestling back-to-back at 152 and 160, dominated their counterparts from Jefferson in head-to-head contests. Blaha beat Kelly May, 14-3, and St. John rolled by Luke Sedlacek, 25-10, with a takedown clinic.

Wenger also starred in the finals at 138, defeating Daniel Kelly of Cedar Falls 17-8.

"You could tell they wrestled with such confidence," said Williams. "All three of them dominated those final matches. That was nice to see."

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"They wanted to be champions and they were hungry to get bonus points, too. It's nice to see that they're not just satisfied with winning."

Prairie took top honors at the meet, but Jefferson was not far behind. The J-Hawks defeated Linn-Mar and Iowa City West in MVC dual meets this year and topped them again Saturday.

"I'm excited for that," said Jefferson Coach Dick Briggs, who got points from numerous wrestlers. "That's what I've been preaching all year long. When all of us contribute we're a pretty fair unit.

"And I can't tell you how excited I am for Josh Allen. He just had a whale of a day."

Allen, ranked eighth at 182 pounds, defeated third-ranked Kyler Matthews of Waterloo West in the quarterfinals and defeated sixth-ranked Brandon Haas of Dubuque Hempstead in the semifinals before beating Riley Hasken of Dubuque Wahlert in the finals.

Linn-Mar wrestled Saturday without top-ranked Ross Lembeck (152) and seventh-ranked Toby Northrup (145), who have battled injuries this year. Lembeck had arthroscopic surgery in January and hopes to return to the lineup in time for the regional dual meet Feb. 11.

The Xavier Saints finished sixth out of 14 teams. Heavyweight Cole Turner, currently sidelined due to an academic issue, plans to start wrestling again this coming week.

### TEAM STANDINGS

1. Prairie 219, 2. Jefferson 193, 3. Iowa City West 189, 4. Linn-Mar 155, 5. Cedar Falls 133, 6. Xavier 121.5, 7. Wahlert 114, 8. Hempstead 100, 9. Waterloo West 65, 10. Kennedy 61, 11. Dubuque Senior 51, 12. Washington 39, 13. Iowa City High 38, 14. Waterloo East 27.5

### CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHES

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106 - Brenden Baker (CRJ) major dec. Marcus England (CRP), 9-0.  
113 - Chase Lynn (DS) dec. Tanner Rohweder (ICW), 4-2.  
120 - Alijah Jeffery (LM) pinned Sam Uthoff (CRP), 1:56.  
126 - Chris Walters (ICW) dec. Damon Griffin (LM), 6-5.  
132 - Matt Wempen (LM) dec. Clint Lembeck (CRX), 11-6.  
138 - Josh Wenger (CRP) major dec. Daniel Kelly (CF), 17-8.  
145 - Nick Drahozal (CRX) dec. Tavian Rashed (CRJ), 4-0.  
152 - Trey Blaha (CRP) major dec. Kelly May (CRJ), 14-3.  
160 - Skyler St.John (CRP) tech fall Luke Sedlacek (CRJ), 25-10.  
170 - Sean Ickes (CRX) dec. Weslee Haynes (DW), 3-1 (ot)  
182 - Josh Allen (CRJ) dec. Riley Hasken (DW), 3-2.  
195 - Marcus Harrington (WW) dec. Andrew Holladay (LM), 9-4.  
220 - Gannon Gremmel (DH) dec. Micah Kelsay (ICW), 11-4.  
285 - Aydan Wynos (ICW) dec. Dalton Kuehl (CRJ), 7-0.

### THIRD PLACE MATCHES

106 - Tristan Birt (DW) dec. Jeff Vipond (CRX), 12-6.  
113 - Nolan Hromidko (CRK) dec. Noah Ajram (LM), 5-0.  
120 - Josh Gerke (CRX) pinned Kyle Briggs (CRJ), 3:00.  
126 - Logen Rodriguez (CRK) pinned Zack Fiser (CRP), 3:53.  
132 - Jakeb Bakken (ICW) dec. Seth Wennermark (LM), 3-2.  
138 - Trey Schuler (CRW) dec. Jacob Duccini (DH), 5-0.  
145 - Taylor Mehmen (CRP) dec. Nic Jarvis (ICH), 5-2.  
152 - Dax Dills (CRW) pinned Nathan Kelsay (ICW), 0:59.  
160 - Shea Hartzler (LM) dec. Andrew Turner (DW), 7-2.  
170 - Nick Hogan (CRP) dec. Jackson Voigt (ICW), 7-4.  
182 - Donovan Doyle (ICW) pinned Brandon Haas (DH), 0:42.  
195 - Jesse Hynek (CRP) pinned Dan Thoma (DS), 3:12.  
220 - Devon Davis (CF) dec. Sam Nowak (LM), 3-1.  
285 - Jonah Manson (CRP) dec. Ryan Seaman (DW), 7-6.