

Prairie pins Mason City for regional title

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 12 February 2014 22:53 -

There won't be any votes before the Prairie Hawks meet Linn-Mar in the opening round of the Class 3A state dual meet wrestling tournament in Des Moines next Wednesday.

If Coach Blake Williams tells his guys to back off and wait for the individual state tournament that starts next Thursday, that's what they'll do. And if he decides to use his top lineup against Linn-Mar and aim for the title, they'll do that as well.

Prairie collected seven pins and squashed No.14 Mason City, 55-17, in the regional finals Wednesday night at Prairie to earn another trip to the state dual meet tournament next week.

The fourth-ranked Hawks (20-3) will face No.5 Linn-Mar (22-6) in the quarterfinals Wednesday at 9 a.m. at Wells Fargo Arena.

Many teams, including Prairie and Linn-Mar, have rested their top people in the state duals in previous years and waited for the more prestigious individual tournament, citing injuries and possible fatigue to gloss over the duals.

"We'll see," said Prairie 195-pounder Jesse Hynek, who pinned his opponent from Mason City in 53 seconds. "I don't know what Coach wants us to do. But he always likes to have us wrestle."

All eight of the top-ranked dual meet teams won regional titles Wednesday night and advanced to Des Moines. The opening round will pit No.1 Bettendorf against No.8 Pleasant Valley, No.4 Prairie against No.5 Linn-Mar, No.2 Waverly-Shell Rock against No.7 Jefferson, and No.3 Southeast Polk against No.6 Iowa City West.

Southeast Polk showed last year that a team can win both tournaments, given the right circumstances. In an ideal world, the Prairie Hawks would like to do the same thing.

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"It would be nice," said Trey Blaha, who had a quick 55-second pin at 152 pounds Wednesday. "I'm not going to force anything with Coach. I'm not going to tell him that I don't want to wrestle. I'm just going to leave it up to him and I know he'll do what's best for the team."

Speculation about the state dual meet tournament is a little premature at this point. The Class 3A district meets will be held Saturday around the state, with the top two finishers in each weight class advancing to the individual state tournament.

Teams cannot make final decisions about the state dual meet tournament until they know how many of their wrestlers have qualified for the individual tournament. The dual meet tournament has to take a beat seat for the time being.

"We're not even thinking about that now," said Williams. "If you're thinking about that, that's silly because we want to focus on Saturday. Then we can turn our attention to that."

Prairie will compete in a Class 3A district meet Saturday at Newton, where the main competition could come from Iowa City West.

Like all competitors, the Hawks want to succeed at the highest levels whenever possible. That includes the state duals, providing it does not hurt their chances at the individual tournament.

"It would be nice to be the top team up there (at state duals), which I know we could if we wrestle all our guys," said 138-pound junior Josh Wenger. "I guess it comes down to what happens Saturday."

The Hawks won their second straight Mississippi Valley Conference title earlier this month and looked strong Wednesday against Mason City.

"It's all about trying to peak at the right time. And I think we're starting to do that," said Williams. "We accomplished a goal (winning the regional title) and now we turn our attention to Saturday

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and the 14 individuals.

"That's going to be our focus. We're going to try and get as many guys down to state as possible and get them on that awards stand."

Prairie finished third in the individual state tournament last year and reached the semifinals of the state dual meet tournament before backing off.

"I think our team is strong and ready to go," said Hynek. "We're ready to rock. I think we're going to upset some people this year at the state meet, individually and as a team. Nobody really sees us coming."

Wenger likes his team's chances in Des Moines.

"It seems like everything is falling into place," he said. "I'm sure we can do a lot of damage. We could see eight guys place again. It wouldn't surprise me at all. It could be really great."

Prairie got pins Wednesday from Marcus England (106), Dylan Kleinschmidt (113), Sam Uthoff (120), Blaha (152), Skyler St.John (160), Jarod Cadena (182) and Hynek (195). St.John was trailing 3-2 in the final seconds of his match when he suddenly got a takedown for a 4-3 lead and flattened his guy.

St.John's victory gave Prairie a 39-17 lead and clinched the meet. The Hawks won 10 of 14 bouts all told.

The state dual meet tournament is a one-day affair with the quarterfinals at 9 a.m., the semifinals at 1 p.m. and the finals at 6:30 p.m.

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PRAIRIE 55, MASON CITY 17

- 220 - Jonah Manson (CRP) dec. Christian O'Banion, 9-5.
- 285 - Tom Schiffer (MC) pinned Corey Meyer, 0:50.
- 106 - Marcus England (CRP) pinned Cayden Koeerber, 0:57.
- 113 - Dylan Kleinschmidt (CRP) pinned John Kraft, 2:38.
- 120 - Sam Uthoff (CRP) pinned Quinn Slaven, 1:30.
- 126 - Kaz Onoo (MC) tech fall Zack Fiser, 15-0 (2:43)
- 132 - Mac Spotts (MC) dec. Seth Wennermark, 8-2.
- 138 - Josh Wenger (CRP) won by forfeit.
- 145 - Jacob Carlson (MC) dec. Taylor Mehmen, 9-3.
- 152 - Trey Blaha (CRP) pinned Isaac Bartel, 0:55.
- 160 - Skyler St.John (CRP) pinned Andy Bartel, 5:42.
- 170 - Nick Hogan (CRP) major dec. Billy O'Neill, 9-0.
- 182 - Jarod Cadena (CRP) pinned Hunter Miller, 1:41.
- 195 - Jesse Hynek (CRP) pinned Blake DeVary, 0:53.