

Uthoff wrestling up a storm for Hawks

Written by Jim Ecker

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Cedar Rapids Prairie wrestling coach Kane Thompson has known Sam Uthoff for years, ever since he taught Uthoff at Prairie Heights Elementary School in the College Community district.

Thompson liked the kid's spunk even then.

"I knew how active he was and how much of a go-getter he was, from the time he was in first grade," Thompson said Thursday night.

He likes Uthoff even more now as a high school senior at Prairie, where he's the top-ranked wrestler in Class 3A at 132 pounds.

Uthoff raised his record to a sparkling 27-0 Thursday with a pin in 1 minute, 38 seconds as Prairie topped Linn-Mar, 45-22, in a Mississippi Valley Conference meet at Prairie.

When Thompson was the coach at Alburnett High School, he followed Uthoff's success at Prairie as a freshman, sophomore and junior. Now he's gotten a first-hand look at Uthoff as the new head coach of the Hawks.

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He's not only Uthoff's coach, he's also one of Uthoff's wrestling partners in the practice room.

"My first impression when he and I competed against each other was, 'This kid never stops trying to score,'" Thompson said. "That's his mentality:

'I'm going to score, then I'm going to score again. And if he scores on me that's OK, because I'm going to score back.'

"His whole mind-set is, 'What's my next score going to be?' That's just how he is."

Thompson wrestled at 133 pounds in college and claimed he could make weight again "in a couple of weeks" if he had to. That makes him a little heavier than Uthoff when they compete against each other.



"I've gotten my fair share of lumps that he's given me," said Thompson, smiling. "I give them back."

Uthoff placed seventh at the state tournament as a freshman at 106 pounds, finished sixth at 120 pounds as a sophomore and placed third at 126 pounds last year as a junior. He'd like to climb all the way to the top of the podium this year.

"Yup. That's the goal," he said. "I know I've put in the work, and I still have work to put in."

"I take it one match at a time," he said. "It's great to be undefeated and ranked No. 1 and all, but it's just the goals at the end of the season

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(that really matter).

"If I pick up a loss or something, it's going to make me better. It's going to help me push forward into the postseason."

Uthoff credited his work with the Cedar Hawk Wrestling Club at Coe College last spring and summer for helping him become a better wrestler this season. Mark Ironside, a two-time NCAA champion at Iowa, and Coe coach John Oostendorp, who was a Big Ten champion for the Hawks, run the Cedar Hawk Club and have worked with Uthoff.

Uthoff said he's become a better wrestler on his feet as a result of the freestyle and Greco-Roman experience at Coe.

Prairie captured nine of the 14 matches Thursday night and received pins from Preston LaGrange (182), Taylor Mehmen (195), Ted Zangerle (106), Trenten Wennermark (126) and Uthoff (132). Derek Horak (170), Conrad Braswell (113) and Jacob Tedrow (120) won tight decisions for the Hawks and Tyler Pasker (220) won by forfeit.

Linn-Mar got pins from Shea Hartzler (160) and Jacob Wenger (152). Alex Streicher (138) scored a major decision, while Isaiah Gorman (285) and Johnny Clymer (145) won regular decisions.

Uthoff likes the way the Hawks are shaping up.

"I think we have a lot of great guys on the team," he said. "I'm feeling good about the team going into postseason."

PRAIRIE 45, LINN-MAR 22

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160 - Shea Hartzler (LM) pinned Morgan Hood, 3:30
170 - Derek Horak (P) dec. AJ Geers, 7-6
182 - Preston LaGrange (P) pinned Logan Hagmeier, 5:23
195 - Taylor Mehmen (P) pinned Brayden Schultz, 4:50
220 - Tyler Pasker (P) won by forfeit
285 - Isaiah Gorman (LM) dec. Alex Heisdorffer, 4-2
106 - Ted Zangerle (P) pinned Cole Kraklio, 4:40
113 - Conrad Braswell (P) dec. Jack Nauman, 5-3
120 - Jacob Tedrow (P) dec. Zach Youngwirth, 4-3
126 - Trenten Wennermark (P) pinned Charlie Petersen, 4:26
132 - Sam Uthoff (P) pinned Logan Dulin, 1:38
138 - Alex Streicher (LM) major dec. Chase St. John, 9-1
145 - Johnny Clymer (LM) dec. Rhett Ruzicka, 12-6
152 - Jacob Wempen (LM) pinned Mike Jasa, 1:50