

Linn-Mar, Prairie scramble at state duals

Written by Jim Ecker

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DES MOINES - There must be a better way.

That's what the coaches and athletes were saying Wednesday at the 2012 state dual meet wrestling tournament at the Wells Fargo Arena in downtown Des Moines.

There must be a better way. A better time. A better format.

The state duals are supposed to be a showcase for the top teams in Iowa. In a way they are, but not the way they were intended and not the way they're supposed to be.

The Linn-Mar Lions, who are ranked sixth in the state, completely tanked their match against West Des Moines Valley in the quarterfinals and nobody could blame them. Linn-Mar Coach Doug Streicher did not use any of his top guys, preferring to save them for the individual state tournament that begins Thursday.

West Des Moines Valley used six of its 10 individual state qualifiers and squashed the Lions, 57-12, because Streicher rested all nine of his state qualifiers.

Coaches had to pick their poison this week. They could wrestle their top people in the dual meet tournament on Wednesday and possibly weaken their chances in the individual state tournament, or they could save their top guys for the individual state tournament and risk getting walloped in the dual meet event.

Streicher, a successful coach, preferred to keep his guns loaded for the individual state tournament that will be held here Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Linn-Mar has several wrestlers who are capable of competing for individual state titles and the Lions could make a run for the team championship if things fall into place.

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"We won't know until Saturday night whether it works or not," Streicher said after keeping Matt Wempen, Alijah Jeffery, Damon Griffin, Trevor Berry, Joel Northrup, Ross Lembeck, Mitch Wantock, Mark Atwater and A.J. Garcia on the bench.

"The closer it got to match time, the more I wanted to put guys out there, but I had to stick to what I thought was right for the kids," he said. "Obviously the competitive spirit in you wants to go out on the mat and you want to win every match you can. But we stuck with what we thought was right for our kids for tomorrow.

"Saturday night we'll know and we'll see if it turned out the way I thought it would. It is what it is. We made our decision and we'll live with it."

Cedar Rapids Prairie Coach Blake Williams, another successful coach, hedged his bets on Wednesday, using five of his top wrestlers in the quarterfinals against Iowa City West, but resting four others. The match was tied, 29-29, after 12 bouts, but Iowa City West put two of its studs on the mat for the last two bouts and won 40-29.

Iowa City West Coach Mark Reiland used eight of his nine state qualifiers against Prairie, then used only three of them in the semifinals against Bettendorf and lost.

Prairie used five of its nine state qualifiers in the consolation semifinals against Ankeny and lost that meet, 44-28. Ankeny used all six of its state qualifiers against the Hawks.

Zach Witte, a defending state champion, wrestled in the first two meets for Prairie, but he was the only one of Prairie's state qualifiers to face Iowa City West and Ankeny. It was a case of mix-and-match, using a few state qualifiers, a few varsity wrestlers who did not qualify for the individual state tournament and a few junior varsity grapplers to fill out the lineup.

"It's just unfortunate," said Williams. "It puts coaches in a tough spot. We've gone back and forth all week about what would be the best way to do it."

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"You've got to look at the kids that are going to be fighting their butt off the next three days. We kind of put that first and foremost in that meet (against Iowa City West). We shouldn't be in this situation."

For Prairie, it boiled down to giving their state qualifiers at least one match Wednesday to get some exercise, but not too much to detract from the rest of the week. Witte originally said he planned to wrestle only once, then took the mat again.

"I'm going to do whatever my coach tells me to," said Witte, who won his bouts against Iowa City West and Ankeny. "I wanted to have one match at least to get back in the rhythm. It's different wrestling in here than other places, so I wanted to wrestle at least once."

The state dual tournament was held in Cedar Rapids last year, a week after the individual state tournament was held in Des Moines. The IHSAA changed things this year, partially because the U.S. Cellular Center in Cedar Rapids is being remodeled and not available, and partially because they wanted to bring both state tournaments to Des Moines and hold them consecutively for four straight days.

"I don't know if that was a good decision," said Witte, who will wrestle at the University of Northern Iowa next year. "I wish it (the state duals) would have been after state or a week before the state tournament. That way we could actually wrestle a full team.

"I wish we could have wrestled varsity-varsity completely," he said. "It would have been a different dual meet."

Iowa City West's Reiland indicated before the meet that he'd use his top wrestlers in the dual meet tournament, so Williams was not surprised when eight of them took the mat against his team.

"We had a pretty good idea they were going to wrestle their big guns," he said. "We just had to do what we thought was best for us and not worry about anything.

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"It's kind of hard to see and know the outcome could have been different," he said.

"Risk-reward is kind of what you're looking at, and I think we did what we needed to do."

Linn-Mar and top-ranked Southeast Polk met in the consolation semifinals Wednesday afternoon and both coaches rested all of their individual state qualifiers. Linn-Mar proved to be the deeper team and grabbed a 45-28 victory.

Linn-Mar lost to Ankeny, 50-16, in the consolation match for fifth place. The Lions finished with a 30-7 record in dual meets this season and placed sixth at state.

Prairie (28-8) won its last six bouts with Southeast Polk and nipped the Rams, 32-31, for seventh place on a major decision by Jamie Day in the final match. Southeast Polk began the state tournament with a 23-0 record and lost all three dual meets in Des Moines.

Linn-Mar and Prairie did not use any of their individual state qualifiers in their consolation meets Wednesday night.

CLASS 3A QUARTERFINALS

WEST DES MOINES VALLEY 57, LINN-MAR 12

138 - Bernie Saggau (WDMV) pinned Beau Oberbroeckling, 3:35.

145 - Dylan Matter (WDMV) pinned Spencer Clabough, 1:54.

152 - Josh Pederson (LM) pinned Walker McCabe, 0:56.

160 - Clint Underwood (WDMV) dec. John Conner, 5-1.

170 - Jacob Bell (WDMV) dec. Dakota Digmann, 8-2.

182 - Mitch Monahan (WDMV) pinned Andrew Holladay, 3:06.

195 - Tarin Phillips (WDMV) pinned Ryley Stancel, 1:01.

220 - Zack Henaman (WDMV) dec. Justin Green, 5-2.

285 - Louis Gutierrez (WDMV) pinned Joe Eppard, 1:56.

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- 106 - Noah Ajram (LM) pinned David Nguyen, 1:34.
- 113 - Clayton Eicher (WDMV) pinned Toby Northrup, 4:16.
- 120 - RaeKwon Lee (WDMV) pinned Grant Bauermeister, 1:38.
- 126 - Robert Simmons (WDMV) dec. Seth Fawcett, 6-3.
- 132 - Mitch Hagar (WDMV) dec. Seth Stecker, 3-1.

IOWA CITY WEST 40, PRAIRIE 29

- 138 - Kegan Wakefield (ICW) dec. Skyler St. John, 3-2.
- 145 - Gradey Gambrall (ICW) major dec. Jamie Day, 19-8.
- 152 - Zach Witte (CRP) major dec. Sam Chalkley, 17-6.
- 160 - Payton Kauzlarich (ICW) major dec. Jonah Manson, 14-6.
- 170 - Justin Koethe (ICW) pinned Steven Wallace, 0:19.
- 182 - Cameron Rathje (CRP) dec. Mike Watkins, 8-7.
- 195 - Austin Gould (CRP) pinned Blake Bohner, 4:51.
- 220 - Andrew Netolicky (CRP) pinned Paul Pelfrey, 0:36.
- 285 - Colin Foerstner (ICW) pinned Tony Kavanagh, 3:45.
- 106 - Zach Fiser (CRP) major dec. Jasmine Bailey, 9-0.
- 113 - Phillip Laux (ICW) pinned Seth Wennermark, 3:34.
- 120 - Chris Walters (CRP) pinned Jakeb Bakken, 4:33.
- 126 - Jack Hathaway (ICW) pinned Jayden Flege, 2:53.
- 132 - Dakota Bauer (ICW) tech fall Zach Becicka, 18-3.

CONSOLATION SEMIFINALS

LINN-MAR 45, SOUTHEAST POLK 28

- 145 - Stephen Jones (SEP) dec. Spencer Clabough, 7-3.
- 152 - Josh Pederson (LM) pinned Mason Kerr, 5:27.
- 160 - John Conner (LM) pinned Adam Christian, 3:51.
- 170 - Luke Wempen (LM) pinned Cody Brown, 5:27.
- 182 - Luke Sargent (SEP) pinned Andrew Holladay, 5:08.
- 195 - Ryley Stancel (LM) pinned Sam Wilkens, 3:55.
- 220 - Sam Nowak (LM) pinned Tait Chapman, 3:28.
- 285 - Justin Green (LM) pinned Josh Jones, 5:57.
- 106 - Noah Ajram (LM) pinned Brett Stevens, 5:33.
- 113 - Toby Northrup (LM) dec. Keegan Shaw, 6-2.
- 120 - Jonah Williams (SEP) pinned Grant Bauermeister, 3:41.
- 126 - Aaron Strothers (SEP) major dec. Seth Fawcett, 10-2.
- 132 - Brady Buchheit (SEP) dec. Seth Stecker, 7-4.
- 138 - Sam Jones (SEP) pin Beau Oberbroeckling, 2:14.

ANKENY 44, PRAIRIE 28

- 145 - Peyton Wagner (CRP) dec. Derrick Huber, 5-4.
- 152 - Zach Witte (CRP) pinned Ian Begg, 1:17.

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160 - Casey Becker (CRP) major dec. John Ware, 16-7.
170 - Carson Powell (A) pinned Steven Wallace, 1:07.
182 - Joel Lanning (A) major dec. Jesse Hynek, 10-0.
195 - Ross Larson (A) pinned Trent Schulte, 2:57.
220 - Jordan Rouse (A) pinned Conner Nolan, 0:57.
285 - Xavier Quigley (A) pinned Tony Kavanagh, 4:52.
106 - Austin Anderson (A) pinned Tanner Fisher, 1:33.
113 - Josh Wenger (CRP) pinned Aaron Noce, 2:50.
120 - Sam Reichenbacker (A) pinned Austin Erlandson, 1:14.
126 - Trey Blaha (CRP) pinned Tyler Pagliai, 1:00.
132 - Zach Becicka (CRP) dec. Grant Knowler, 9-7 (ot).
138 - Patrick Steffen (A) major dec. Nick Hogan, 15-3.

SEVENTH PLACE

PRAIRIE 32, SOUTHEAST POLK 31

152 - Jarod Cadena (CRP) pinned Davonn Phothiboupha, 3:57.
160 - Adam Christian (SEP) tech fall Jonah Manson, 17-2.
170 - Cody Brown (SEP) dec. Steven Wallace, 9-6.
182 - Luke Sargent (SEP) major dec. Jesse Hynek, 11-3.
195 - Trent Schulte (CRP) pinned Sam Wilkens, 4:17.
220 - Deion Mikesell (SEP) dec. J.T. Anderson, 4-2.
285 - Josh Jones (SEP) pinned Tony Kavanagh, 0:39.
106 - Zack Fiser (CRP) pinned Brett Stevens, 1:21.
113 - Keegan Shaw (SEP) major dec. Seth Wennermark, 14-6.
120 - Cory Parsons (SEP) pinned Austin Erlandson, 0:49.
126 - Jayden Flege (CRP) dec. Aaron Strovers, 5-0.
132 - Zach Becicka (CRP) major dec. Colin Strickland, 16-7.
138 - Skyler St. John (CRP) dec. Sam Jones, 4-0.
145 - Jamie Day (CRP) major dec. Stephen Jones, 9-1.

FIFTH PLACE

ANKENY 50, LINN-MAR 16

152 - Ian Begg (A) pinned Forrest Sanborn, 2:45.
160 - John Ware (A) pinned Josh Pederson, 5:04.
170 - John Conner (LM) pinned Chris Bash, 1:46.
182 - Joel Lanning (A) major dec. Andrew Holladay, 18-9.
195 - Ryley Stancel (LM) dec. Mathias Palmersheim, 4-3.
220 - Jordan Rouse (A) pinned Joe Eppard, 1:55.
285 - Xavier Quigley (A) dec. Justin Green, 3-1 (ot).
106 - Austin Anderson (A) major dec. Noah Ajram, 10-0.

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- 113 - Toby Northrup (LM) major dec. Aaron Noce, 14-2.
- 120 - Sam Reichenbacker (A) pinned Grant Bauermeister, 0:59.
- 126 - Tyler Timp (A) pinned Seth Fawcett, 0:26.
- 132 - Grant Knowler (A) dec. Seth Stecker, 5-3.
- 138 - Patrick Steffen (A) pinned Beau Oberbroeckling, 1:38.
- 145 - Spencer Clabough (LM) dec. Josh Johnson, 7-1.