

Witte and Team Iowa fall to Team USA

Written by Jim Ecker
Friday, 20 April 2012 22:45 -

IOWA CITY - Zach Witte of Cedar Rapids Prairie was the premier 152-pound wrestler in Iowa this year, but he tangled with the No. 1 guy in the country Friday night and absorbed a major defeat.

Brian Realbuto of Somers, N.Y., defeated Witte, 15-4, in the Dream Team Classic before a packed house at Iowa City West High School.

The event featured an all-star team from Iowa against an all-star team from across the country, but it turned into a mismatch. Team USA won 11 of 13 bouts and strolled away with a 40-7 victory.

Witte was a two-time undefeated state champion for Prairie in 2011 and 2012, but he barely laid a glove on Realbuto, a three-time state champion from New York who rolled up a 277-12 record in high school.

Realbuto, who will wrestle at Cornell University in upstate New York, collected six takedowns and a near-fall in the six-minute match. All of Witte's points came on escapes when Realbuto deliberately let him go.

"Well, I know where I am now and I know what I need to work on. I'll move on from there," said Witte, unhappy with his performance.

"I got my shots deep, I just couldn't finish them. It's disappointing, because I know it could have been a different match if I was able to finish and if I was a little quicker and able to counter his moves. It happens."

Prairie Coach Blake Williams visited with Witte after the match.

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"He kind of felt down," Williams said. "The first thing he says, he goes 'It's embarrassing.' I said, 'It's not embarrassing. You wrestled the top-ranked kid in the country.' Obviously he was down about it."

Witte wasn't looking for excuses.

"I don't care what he's ranked," said Witte, who will wrestle at the University of Northern Iowa. "I know I could have beat him."

"I tried. I thought I was in good shape, but I'm not quite at that level yet. I know what I need to do now. That's good. At least you know."

Williams is confident Witte will have a successful career at UNI, especially when he starts to wrestle the year-round. Witte played football at Prairie and missed the first six weeks of the wrestling season this year with a wrist injury.

"There will be a lot of good things happen to him," Williams predicted. "He'll use this as a measuring stick and know he has a lot of room for improvement and a lot of things to work on."

"He's going to a great place to do that. I think you'll find out he'll improve leaps and bounds the next few years."

Witte was disappointed with his outcome, but glad he got a chance to wrestle in the Dream Team Classic, an event that began in 1997.

"Just being here is a great opportunity in itself," he said. "It's a great reward. I was proud to wrestle for them, but I wish I could have put some points on the board for Iowa."

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Team Iowa got victories from Phillip Laux of Iowa City West at 113 pounds and from Collins Bevins of Creston at 285 pounds. Otherwise, the night belonged to Team USA.

TEAM USA 40, TEAM IOWA 7

113 - Phillip Laux (IC West) major dec. Gunnar Woodburn (Claremore, Okla.), 13-4.
120 - George DiCamillo (St. Ignatius, Ohio) def. Dylan Peters (Denver-Tripoli), 5-4.
126 - Jimmy Gulibon (Derry, Pa.) def. Cory Clark (SE Polk), 5-2.
132 - Mark Grey (Blair Academy, N.J.) def. Kyle Larson (WDM Valley), 3-1.
138 - Nate Skonieczny (Walsh Jesuit, Ohio) major dec. Logan Mulnix (North Linn), 23-10.
145 - Jason Tsirtsis (Crown Point, Ind.) major dec. Gabriel Moreno (Urbandale), 22-8.
152 - Brian Realbuto (Somers, N.Y.) major dec. Zach Witte (CR Prairie), 15-4.
160 - Zac Brunson (Winston Churchill, Ore.) def. Justin Koethe (IC West), 3-1 (ot).
170 - Zach Nevills (Clovis, Calif.) def. Alex Meyer (SE Polk), 7-6.
182 - Jordan Rogers (Mead, Wash.) major dec. Jared Bartel (Mason City), 12-4.
195 - Devin Peterson (Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.) def. Tarin Phillips (WDM Valley), 8-7.
220 - Michael Kroells (Scot West, Minn.) def. Willie Miklus (SE Polk), injury default.
285 - Collin Bevins (Creston OM) def. Austin Goergen (Caledonia, Minn.), 12-9.