

Dark night for Metro wrestlers at state

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 15 February 2013 23:19 - Last Updated Saturday, 16 February 2013 10:04



DES MOINES -- The semifinals of the Class 3A state wrestling tournament turned into Black Friday for Metro athletes at the unfriendly Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines.

All eight Metro wrestlers lost in the semifinals in an astonishing turn of events. One by one, the best grapplers from Cedar Rapids and Marion fell short of reaching their dreams and will have to settle for spots in the consolation rounds on Saturday.

Matt Wempen, a 2012 state champion, lost 3-2 at 113 pounds. Alijah Jeffery, ranked No.1 at 120 pounds, lost 6-2. Ross Lembeck, ranked No.1 at 152 pounds, lost 6-1.

That wiped out the Linn-Mar Lions.

"We didn't get it done. There's no sugar-coasting it," said Linn-Mar Coach Doug Streicher, whose team had a disappointing showing most of the week.

Trey Blaha, ranked No.4 at 138 pounds, lost 8-7. Skyler St. John, ranked No.5 at 145 pounds, lost 5-3. Cameron Rathje, ranked No.5 at 170 pounds, lost 7-5 in overtime. Andrew Netolicky, ranked No.7 at 285 pounds, lost 2-1 in overtime.

That wiped out the Prairie Hawks.

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"It's part of sports," said Cedar Rapids Prairie Coach Blake Williams. "All four of those semifinal matches came down to the wire, and we were on the short end of them. It wasn't a lack of effort."



Michael Moncivais, who pinned his first two opponents in the state tournament at 132 pounds, lost 19-4 in a technical fall. That took care of Cedar Rapids Jefferson's lone semifinalist.

All eight of the Metro wrestlers who lost in the semifinals will try to win two matches in the consolation rounds Saturday so they can finish third, but that's as high as they can go.

All eight grapplers faced stiff competition in the semifinals, but there was nothing but utter dismay as all eight fell by the wayside.

Prairie dropped from second to fourth in the team standings with 68 points. Linn-Mar, which had hoped to compete for the state title when the tournament began Thursday, is in fifth place with 58 points.



Southeast Polk leads the meet with 137.5 points, followed by Bettendorf (117) and Waverly-Shell Rock (86).

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There was a certain amount of satisfaction for seven other Metro wrestlers in the consolation brackets Friday night.

Josh Wenger of Prairie, Damon Griffin of Linn-Mar, Joel Northrup of Linn-Mar, River Whitters of Prairie, Andrew Holladay of Linn-Mar, Justin Green of Linn-Mar and Zac Gillis of Cedar Rapids Washington won their wrestle-backs and will be battling for medals Saturday.

Sam Uthoff and Casey Becker of Prairie lost in the consolation round Friday and will try to finish in seventh place on Saturday when the tournament concludes its three-day run.

Linn-Mar won all four of its consolation matches Friday night.

"Well, kudos to the four guys on the back side," said Streicher. "They fought hard and they're the story of the night.

"They got some wins for us and battled. We'll focus on the positive part of it."

The Prairie Hawks won all eight of their matches Friday morning before stumbling Friday night.

"We pride ourselves on winning those close ones and we just didn't do it tonight," said Williams. "The kids just have to rebound tomorrow.

"They've overcome adversity before and they're going to have to do it again. And I think they will."

The Hawks experienced the highs and lows of sport in one day.

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"That's the epitome of it right there," said Williams. "A great morning and obviously a disappointing night.

"We still have a lot of positives about it. We can still finish on a positive note tomorrow."

METRO SEMIFINAL MATCHES

113 - Kaz Onoo (Mason City) dec. Matt Wempen (Linn-Mar), 3-2.

120 - John Gioffredi (Indianola) dec. Alijah Jeffery (Linn-Mar), 6-2.

132 - Logan Ryan (Bettendorf) tech fall Michael Moncivais (Jefferson), 19-4 (4:49).

138 - Karsten VanVelsor (Ottumwa) dec. Trey Blaha (Prairie), 8-7.

145 - Austin Boyd (Burlington) dec. Skyler St. John (Prairie), 5-3.

152 - Spencer Derifield (Waverly-Shell Rock) dec. Ross Lembeck (Linn-Mar), 6-1.

170 - Dylan Blackford (SE Polk) dec. Cameron Rathje (Prairie), 7-5 (ot).

285 - Zach Renshaw (Lewis Central) dec. Andrew Netolicky (Prairie), 2-1 (ot).

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METRO CONSOLATION MATCHES

106 - Tanner Rohweder (Dowling) major dec. Sam Uthoff (Prairie), 8-0.

126 - Josh Wenger (Prairie) dec. Joe McGinnis (Indianola), 6-1.

126 - Damon Griffin (Linn-Mar) dec. Travis Willers (Pleasant Valley), 12-5.

145 - Joel Northrup (Linn-Mar) dec. Corey Abernathy (Waverly-Shell Rock), 4-2.

160 - River Whitters (Prairie) dec. Andrew Bartel (Mason City), 7-3.

182 - Andrew Holladay (Linn-Mar) dec. Justin Dilks (Mt.Pleasant), 9-4.

195 - Colin Kreiter (North Scott) dec. Casey Becker (Prairie), 7-4.

220 - Justin Green (Linn-Mar) dec. Cordell Eaton (North Scott), 3-2.

285 - Zac Gillis (Washington) dec. Alex Goss (Keokuk), 3-1.