

Perseverance, determination ultimate virtues

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Sunday, 13 February 2011 15:09 - Last Updated Sunday, 13 February 2011 23:58



The postseason is all about perseverance. Fight through the tough times and press forward during the good.

The high school district wrestling tournaments are poignant illustrations of how perseverance is an ultimate virtue. The top ranked wrestlers will get every opponent's best effort, so they must be on their game to avoid an upset loss. The lower seeds exude optimism, knowing the regular season means nothing in this one-day qualifier.

Jordan Baskerville of Cedar Rapids Kennedy and Riley Welsh of Cedar Rapids Jefferson were prime examples Saturday of wrestlers who overcame adversity, pressed ahead and took their shot at postseason glory.

Baskerville and Welsh both had been injured during the regular season and their careers were in doubt. Baskerville recovered more quickly than anticipated and was ready for the districts. Welsh was on the sideline late in the season and wasn't sure he'd be able to return until a doctor gave him the OK.

Baskerville (21-12) and Welsh (14-9) not only qualified for the state tournament but each won district championships. Baskerville took the 160-pound title at Epworth; Welsh won the 189-pound crown at Waverly.

Neither is in the state individual rankings but they now find themselves in the state field.

SELECT COMPANY – Kiah Stokes' selection to the McDonald's High School All-America Game is a rare one for Iowa prep basketball players and an even rarer one for Metro stars.

Stokes, the Linn-Mar standout, joins Waterloo West's Gillian Goring (2002) as the only Iowa

girls to be chosen for the McDonald's team. Others may have been considered in previous years but McDonald's didn't begin choosing girls squads until 2002.

The only other Metro player to be picked for a McDonald's game is Al Lorenzen of Cedar Rapids Kennedy in 1984. Three other Iowa boys have been tabbed: Harrison Barnes of Ames last season, Nick Collison of Iowa Falls in 1999 and Raef LaFrentz of MFL/Mar-Mac in 1994.

Incidentally, Stokes is one of three Connecticut recruits selected this season. Iowa recruit Samantha Logic, a 6-foot guard from Racine, Wis., will play on the East team.

MOVING UP – Cedar Rapids Jefferson's Jarrod Uthoff could claim to be the most prolific scorer in school history who did not play four varsity seasons.

The J-Hawks' top two career scorers, Jackson Jones and Bryant Kucera, each played on the varsity four seasons. Uthoff has scored his points in 2-1/2 seasons. He did not move up to the varsity squad until the last half of his sophomore season and yet has 1,121 career points going into the last week of the regular season. He likely will pass Kucera (1,138) but Jones (1,304) may be out of reach.

Jefferson would have to go all the way to the state championship game and Uthoff would have to average 26 points for him to pass Jones. Uthoff is averaging a state-best 26.2.

Uthoff recently passed his cousin, Dean Uthoff (1,010), for third on Jefferson's all-time scoring list. Dean played just three seasons for the J-Hawks.

Jefferson hosts Linn-Mar Tuesday night and is at Prairie Thursday.