

Conner Herman wins J-Hawk title

Written by

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Ask Conner Herman about his sixth place finish in last year's state tournament and he'll tell you that wasn't the plan.

"Sixth place is not where I had my goals set," Herman said.

Herman got a measure of payback Saturday against top-ranked and undefeated Joe Scanlan of Johnston. Herman defeated Scanlan last year en route to the state semifinals, but Scanlan ended up fourth and Herman sixth.

"I beat him last year but he came back further in the wrestle-backs than I did," Herman said.

In a tough field of 13 teams that boasted second ranked Waverly-Shell Rock, the Herman-Scanlan bout was the only match that featured the Nos. 1 and 2 ranked wrestlers in Class 3A.

Both wrestlers seemed to be content early with some pushing and pulling and neither was able to orchestrate a first period takedown.

"You don't want to make a mistake," Herman said.

In the second period, Herman used an outside-leg stand-up allowing him to gain his feet and cut away for the one-point escape.

Herman tried a few throw-bys, Scanlan some squat-doubles but again, neither athlete was able to secure a two-point takedown. So entering the third , the match was still very much on the line with Herman clinging to a 1-0 lead.

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And that's when it happened.

Herman took full advantage of Scanlan's choice to choose the bottom-position, and tactfully and forcefully locked up a very tight cross-face cradle.

After several tense seconds of pulling and cajoling, Herman was finally able to rock Scanlan backwards, rolling him to his back to gain the three-point near-fall much to the delight of the Jefferson crowd.

"The cradle seems to be there a lot – it's basically my go-to move on top," Herman said.

Coach Dick Briggs likes what he sees in Herman and couldn't say enough about his prize athlete's character, attitude and ability -- both on and off the mat.

"He's a terrific person, very active, a top-notch student and has a great personality," Briggs said. "And, obviously, (he's) a darn good wrestler, too".

Waverly-Shell Rock shell shocked the rest of the field and took home the team trophy, eight individual titles, and the outstanding wrestler award.

West Delaware and Alburnett each had one individual champion and placed second and third, respectively.

Also placing for the J-Hawks were Cody Hensel (112), PJ Rashed (119), and Tyler Boesenberg (152).

TEAMS -- 1. Waverly Shell Rock 300.5, 2. West Delaware 204.5, 3. Alburnett 166, 4. Fort Dodge 140, 5. Fort Madison 121, 6. Dubuque Hempstead 71, 7. Jefferson 66, 8. Benton

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Community 56, 9. Oskaloosa 55, 10. Marshalltown 53, 11. Johnston 51, 12. Boone 43, 13. Waterloo East 40.

CHAMPIONSHIP BOUTS

103 -- Andrew Steiert (WSR) dec. Zach Less (WD), 6-0; 112 -- Spencer Derifield (WSR) pinned Matt Birnbaum (FD), 1:28; 119 -- Eric DeVoss (WSR) dec. Tyler Shulista (Alb), 6-2; 125 -- Christopher Halblom (Alb) pinned Alex Clark (Boone), 3:23; 130 -- Seth Ebling (WSR) pinned Colton Martin (Alb), 3:16; 135 -- Brayton Taylor (FD) major dec. Kolton Rottink (WSR), 12-0; 140 -- Jordan Rinken (WSR) pinned Alex German (Alb), 3:17; 145 -- Blake Seehusen (WSR) tech. fall Dylan Windfield (Alb) 15-0; 152 -- Cody Caldwell (WSR) major dec. Chase Skoneczka (BC), 12-0; 160 -- Jeremy Helgeson (WE) pinned Nolan Zumbach (WD), 4:52; 171 -- Levi Peters (FD) dec. Sam Lahr (WD), 6-2; 189 -- Adam Reth (WD) pinned Dane Jones (Osk), 2:45; 215 -- Conner Herman (CRJ) dec. Joe Scanlan (John), 4-2; 285 -- Cody Krumwiede (WSR) pinned Pedro Gomez (Marsh), 2:48.

Outstanding Wrestler -- Eric DeVoss (WSR) 119

Gorrian Award (most pins in least amount of time) -- Zach Fincher (FM), four falls in 8:09