

Prairie wrestlers want shot at dual meet title

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 07 February 2013 00:01 -

The wrestlers at Cedar Rapids Prairie want to put their best lineup on the mat for the state dual meet tournament next Wednesday in Des Moines and take a shot at the title.

Here's the big question: Will Coach Blake Williams agree?

It's not a simple answer.

The second-ranked Hawks topped 12th-ranked West Des Moines Valley, 40-29, in the regional tournament Wednesday night at Prairie to advance to the state meet.

In an ideal world, all eight of the teams that have reached the state dual meet tournament would use their best lineups in a one-day fight to the finish.

In the real world of Iowa high school wrestling, some coaches (perhaps all) will decide to use a makeshift lineup in the state dual meet tournament on Wednesday and rest their top guys for the traditional individual tournament that will be held next Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Wells Fargo Arena.

Williams used a makeshift lineup in the state duals last year, but the Iowa High School Athletic Association has instructed all the coaches to use their No.1 varsity lineup in the state dual meet tournament.

Will they comply? It's too early to tell.

The Class 3A district tournament will be held this Saturday at Marion High School. The district meet serves as the qualifier for the individual state tournament, so most coaches won't decide what to do until after the district meet.

Prairie wrestlers want shot at dual meet title

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 07 February 2013 00:01 -

If they don't qualify anyone for the individual state tournament, then they can use their No.1 lineup for the state dual meet tournament without putting any of their best wrestlers in jeopardy of not winning an individual title.

However, all eight of the teams that have advanced to the state dual meet tournament undoubtedly will have numerous qualifiers for the individual state tournament, so they'll be faced with the same dilemma they faced last year.

"You know what? Right now we're worried about 14 guys that step on the mat Saturday (at the district meet)," Williams said. "And when Saturday gets done, then we can kind of start thinking about that a little more.

"To be honest, I don't think I will even think about the state duals until after Saturday."

Williams has consistently maintained he'll do what's best for his wrestlers and what's best for his team. He's said all along that he does not want to hinder anyone's shot of winning an individual state title by putting them at a competitive disadvantage.

If they wrestle on Wednesday in the state dual meet tournament, they could get hurt and miss the traditional state tournament.

River Whitters and Cam Rathje, who had clutch pins for Prairie Wednesday night against West Des Moines Valley, want to win the dual meet title on Wednesday. Let's go for it, they feel.

"I'd like to put our starting lineup out there and do our best and see if our team can win the whole thing," said Whitters. "That would be great."

Prairie wrestlers want shot at dual meet title

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 07 February 2013 00:01 -

Rathje said the Hawks were excited about winning the regional title Wednesday night and are looking forward to the state dual meet tournament and a chance to win the top prize.

"It was a big deal to get there," he said. "It's our team goal to be state champs. This is the first round, and we just wanted to get back to Des Moines and see what we can do there."

Prairie (31-2) will face No.9 Dowling Catholic (15-2) in the quarterfinals of the state dual meet tournament next Wednesday at 9 a.m.

"I don't necessarily want to take the day off," said Rathje. "There always is a risk of being injured, yet we still have a goal we want to accomplish. We haven't really talked about it yet, but I'm sure we will.

"We want to win both (tournaments), of course, but I think everybody around the state agrees that they want to win an individual title more."

Williams was glad to hear what his wrestlers had to say about wanting to win the dual meet title. "That's a great mentality to have," he remarked.

The first step was winning the regional dual meet. Everything else would have been a moot point if the Hawks had lost Wednesday.

"It is what it is," Williams said about the dual meet tournament, "and we're proud to be there and excited to be there."

Prairie had to scratch and claw to defeat West Des Moines Valley Wednesday night with four key Hawks sidelined with injuries.

Prairie wrestlers want shot at dual meet title

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 07 February 2013 00:01 -

West Des Moines Valley led, 29-23, with only three matches left and had a chance to pull an upset, but the Hawks went to work. Whitters pinned his man in 59 seconds at 160 pounds to tie the meet, 29-29, then Rathje followed with a pin in 1:21 at 170 pounds for a 35-29 lead.

Jarod Cadena, subbing for injured Austin Gould at 182 pounds, clinched the team victory with a 16-0 technical fall in 4:31 to make it 40-29.

Whitters glanced at the scoreboard and knew the Hawks were trailing by six points when he faced Walker McCabe in a battle of 160-pound seniors. "I knew I had to get a pin," he said. "I had to get a pin to make it interesting."

Rathe came next with a little extra motivation with the meet tied. "But I'm always out there confident that I'm going to do my best and get the most team points I can," he said. "I had a little more energy from the get-go to get that pin, but I just wrestled my match."

Cadena, a sophomore, is not accustomed to the spotlight. If he had gotten pinned at 182, the meet would have been tied 35-35 and the officials would have grabbed a scorebook and figured out a tiebreaker. But there was no need for that as he dominated his opponent.

"He stepped up admirably and did a nice job," said Williams.

The Hawks were missing four key wrestlers Wednesday night with Josh Wenger, Dylan Becker, Gould and Jesse Hynek all sidelined with injuries. Wenger is ranked No.3 at 126 pounds, Becker is ranked No.8 at 132 pounds, Gould is ranked No.3 at 182 pounds and Hynek is the regular at 220.

Williams said they'll decide in the next day or two if the injured wrestlers will compete Saturday in the district meet. If they do not compete on Saturday, they will not be able to compete in the individual state tournament. However, they would be eligible to wrestle in the state dual meet tournament on Wednesday.

Prairie wrestlers want shot at dual meet title

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 07 February 2013 00:01 -

The other first-round pairings at the state dual meet tournament are No.1 Southeast Polk vs. No.11 Pleasant Valley, No.4 Waverly-Shell Rock vs. No.5 Linn-Mar, and No.3 Bettendorf vs. No.7 Ankeny.

Prairie is in the lower bracket with Bettendorf and Ankeny.

PRAIRIE 40, WDM VALLEY 29

195 - Casey Becker (CRP) major dec. Cameron Hansen, 16-6.
220 - Brady Smith (WDMV) pinned Jonah Manson, 3:51.
285 - Andrew Netolicky (CRP) pinned Abdlrahman Abusharkh, 0:40.
106 - Sam Uthoff (CRP) dec. Jack Koethe, 6-0.
113 - Clayton Eicher (WDMV) won by forfeit.
120 - Jake Koethe (WDMV) tech fall Jonah Nassif, 15-0 (4:12).
126 - Austin Stotts (WDMV) dec. Jayden Flege, 2-0 (ot).
132 - RaeKwon Lee (WDMV) dec. Seth Wennermark, 4-3.
138 - Trey Blaha (CRP) pinned Mitch Hagar, 1:35.
145 - Skyler St. John (CRP) major dec. Dennis Curry, 16-5.
152 - Dylan Matter (WDMV) pinned Jamie Day, 3:05.
160 - River Whitters (CRP) pinned Walker McCabe, 0:59.
170 - Cameron Rathje (CRP) pinned Casey Roth, 1:21.
182 - Jarod Cadena (CRP) tech fall Zach Downs, 16-0 (4:30).