

Lions roar at West Delaware Invitational

Written by

Saturday, 04 December 2010 00:00 - Last Updated Sunday, 02 January 2011 01:38

MANCHESTER — In Iowa, when a coach's varsity roster lists four freshmen, it's likely he's in one of those "rebuilding years" and the phrase "Hey, nice effort kid – we'll get 'em next year," is commonly heard in the post-match pow-wow.

This was definitely not the case for Linn-Mar wrestling coach Doug Streicher and the Lions on Dec. 4 as his young team took home the championship trophy at the Hawk Invitational in Manchester by outscoring New Hampton's Indians by 22.5 points.

Marion was eighth (53) and Washington ninth (49) in the nine-team meet. All four of Linn Mar's freshmen made the finals and nearly achieved perfection, compiling an 11-1 collective record and accounting for 35 percent of Linn-Mar's points.

"Perhaps the best part of our freshman class is their ability to scramble," said Streicher. "Our freshmen are a talented bunch and definitely wrestled some of our smartest matches."

Although Streicher was somewhat pleased with his team's overall effort, he was cautious as well, perhaps because three of Linn-Mar's returning state place-winners landed on the back side of the bracket, not one of them reaching the finals.

"Our upperclassmen didn't seem like their heads were in it," he said.

Perhaps the biggest freshman shocker was Lion 160-pounder Andrew Holladay. Coming all the way from the sixth seed, Holladay roared into the finals by knocking off the No. 3 and No. 2 seeds, earning the silver medal for second place.

"Andrew has some stuff nobody can teach him, and I tell him to go out there and use his God-given ability to create scramble situations," said Streicher. "He just needs to make sure he's using good technique and not merely (rolling around), because against a top varsity wrestler, that can be very dangerous."

Lions roar at West Delaware Invitational

Written by

Saturday, 04 December 2010 00:00 - Last Updated Sunday, 02 January 2011 01:38

"It was tough but I worked my way through it," said Holladay. "High school is a lot tougher; there's much more work and you have much better practice partners. It seems all the hard work is paying off."

Alijah Jeffrey, the 2010 Kids AAU State Champion, put on a dynamic display of takedowns and tangled-up turns, affording him the award stand's very best view. Jeffrey dominated West Delaware's Zach Less, 10-1, in the finals.

Damon Griffin, Linn-Mar's 119-pounder, showed why his placing in the kids AAU State tournament last year was no fluke by winning his first high school tournament with a 12-2 major decision over Keelan O'Shea of Decorah.

"I just went out aggressive and I got it," he said.

Linn-Mar's 135 pounder, six-time place-winner and three-time AAU State Champion Ross Lembeck, made things look relatively easy, compiling a first-period pin, a 12-4 major decision and a 16-0 technical fall in the finals.

Lembeck contributed a team-high 24.5 points to Linn-Mar's 223.5 total. He raised his record to 4-1, with his only loss coming against top-ranked Grady Gambrall of Iowa City West.

"I guess I was a little nervous coming into high school with all the older guys, but I think you just gotta go in with a confident approach and know you can hang with the upperclassmen," said Lembeck.

"Ross has a lot of good stuff," said Streicher. "He's kinda shifty, changes levels well and whenever he's on the attack is very dangerous and puts a lot of guys on their back."

Lions roar at West Delaware Invitational

Written by

Saturday, 04 December 2010 00:00 - Last Updated Sunday, 02 January 2011 01:38

Also winning titles and contributing to the cause for the Lions were Joel Northrup (112) and Mitch Wantock (171). Northrup earned a fall and a major decision before winning the title with a 3-1 decision.

Wantock, the Lions' junior 171-pounder, climbed from the fourth seed to the top with a 15-0 technical fall, a second-period pin and a gritty 3-1 decision in the finals.

Marion had one wrestler reach the championship round, Washington had none. The Indians' Alex Hunter was pinned in the 125 bout by New Hampton's Matt Paulus.

TEAMS — 1. Linn-Mar 223.5, 2. New Hampton 201, 3. West Delaware 170, 4. Decorah 151, 5. West Delaware JV 143, 6. Fairfield 136.5, 7. Waterloo East 56, 8. Marion 53, 9. CR Washington 49.

CHAMPIONSHIP BOUTS

103 — Alijah Jeffrey (LM) major dec. Zach Less (WD), 10-1; 112 — Joel Northrup (LM) dec. Leighton Gaul (NH), 3-1; 119 — Damon Griffin (LM) major dec. Kellan O'Shea (Dec), 12-3; 125 — Matt Paulus (NH) pinned Alex Hunter (Marion), 1:42; 130 — Jordan Roths (NH) pinned Jerad Hoefer (WD), 5:00; 135 — Ross Lembeck (LM) tech. fall Jake Voss (WDJV), 16-0; 140 — Tom Mahoney (NH) dec. P.C. McEnany (WD), 5-3; 145 — Gayge Samuelson (Dec) dec. Sawyer Anderson (NH), 12-6; 152 — Riley Neil (LM) major dec. Colin Hageman (NH), 11-3; 160 — Jacob Pilcher (Fair) pinned Andrew Holladay (LM), 1:53; 171 — Mitch Wantock (LM) dec. Jeremy Helgeson (WE), 3-1; 189 — Dean Broghammer (WDJV) dec. Cody Sacquitne (Dec), 8-7; 215 — Alex Rans (WDJV) dec. Adam Reth (WD), 5-2; Hwt. — Michael Smithburg (Fair) dec. Logan Hopp (NH), 7-3.