

## **Dragons fourth at Middle Park; Stroh earns Outstanding Award**

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

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Led by six placers, including three champions, the Dragon wrestling team opened its season in style, finishing fourth amongst tough competition at the Middle Park Invitational in Granby Saturday, Dec. 5.

Adding to the Dragon success, senior Chad Stroh was named Outstanding Lightweight Wrestler of the tourney.

Stroh, at 135 lbs., Skyler Dittmer at 130 and Luke Garrett at 171 all won their weight divisions in the 27-team tourney.

In what coach Duane Stroh called the best bracket of the day, Mark Edmonds wrestled well to take third at 112 lbs.

Additionally, Brian Strong finished fourth at 140 lbs. and Francisco Diaz completed his first-ever wrestling competition with a sixth-place finish at 125 lbs.

Nine Dragons wrestled their way to 158.5 team points for fourth place. All three teams ahead of them had full teams, filling all 14 weight divisions. The top two teams were 5A schools, while third-place was a 4A high school.

Pine Creek won the tourney with 285 points, followed by Cherokee Trail 234, Pueblo South 209, Holyoke 158.5, Lewis-Palmer 118.5, Eagle Valley 110, Legend and NorthRidge 105, Lakewood 91.5, Glenwood Springs 88, Hayden 84.5, Classical Academy 82, Middle Park 68, Saratoga 59, Battle Mountain 58.5, Conifer 56.5, Clear Creek 55, Summit 52, Palmer Ridge 51.5, Coal Ridge 50, University 48.5, Soroco 41, North Park 39, Platte Canyon 36, Sheridan 33.5, Lake County 24 and Steamboat Springs 18.5.

With 360 wrestlers, there were more than 1,700 matches wrestled in Saturday's tournament. A gold bracket was provided, to give additional bouts to wrestlers who lost their two in the tourney bracket. All Holyoke wrestlers had at least three matches, with several of them wrestling five.

Coach Stroh was extremely proud of the Holyoke wrestlers, noting they won a good solid fourth

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place.

At 152 and 160 lbs., Cade Garrison and Ben Martinez were on the injured list. Garrison suffers from a shoulder injury, and Martinez dislocated his little finger during warm-ups at Granby.

With their focus on scoring team points, the Dragons pulled together as a team to kick off the 2009-10 season on a successful note.

### **Larry Stroh Memorial this Saturday**

Holyoke fans will have the opportunity for hometown action this Saturday, Dec. 12, when HHS hosts the Larry Stroh Memorial Tournament.

Bouts will begin at 9 a.m., with eight or nine teams traveling to Holyoke to participate. Stroh said some quality teams are coming to town, and he encourages the local crowd to take time to watch the season open.

Saturday's tourney will be missing Holyoke's two-time state champion Chad Stroh, but a fine crew of Dragons will be worth watching.

### **Middle Park results**

Results from Middle Park for Holyoke's nine participating wrestlers follow:

103 lbs.—Frank Diaz lost a 4-6 decision to Robert Sales of Soroco, won an 11-7 decision over Mason Haycock of Classical Academy, pinned Reece Alles of University in 3:16 and was pinned in 3:57 by Luke McDonald of Clear Creek.

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He also had a match in the gold bracket, going 3-2 for the day. Coach Stroh noted Diaz is still learning and is doing a great job of trying to learn the moves.

112 lbs.—Mark Edmonds placed third, wrestling extremely well. He pinned Matt Huff of Lakewood in 1:52, won by forfeit over Devon Emerson of Summit, was tech-falled 1-16 by Anthony Samson of Saratoga and pinned Jackson Wood of Pueblo South in :30.

Edmonds' semifinal match was a one-pointer going into the third period, when he lost ground. But he came back strong for his third-fourth-place match, winning in a quick 30-second bout.

125 lbs.—Francisco Diaz placed sixth. In his first year on the mats, Diaz is wrestling very aggressively and is working hard, said Stroh

He pinned Michael Palmgren of Coal Ridge in 1:14, pinned Chris Martinez of University in 1:22, was pinned in :41 by Manny Madril of Battle Mountain, pinned Brian Achziger of Platte Canyon in :52, won by forfeit over Mason Martinez of Pueblo South and had to forfeit his fifth-place match to Bryant Brown from Cherokee Trail, as he'd already wrestled the maximum five bouts in a day.

130 lbs.—Skyler Dittmer placed first. He drew a first-round bye, then went out and attacked, said Stroh. Dittmer had three quick pins and also won by a pin in the championship.

He pinned Brandon Lane of Cherokee Trail in 1:09, pinned Corson Kerbs of Saratoga in 1:17, pinned Brian McGrath of Lewis-Palmer in :30 and pinned Casey Abeyta of Pueblo South in 3:52 to take first place.

135 lbs.—Chad Stroh placed first and earned the Outstanding Lightweight Wrestler award. He, too, looked very good in the official season opener, said the coach.

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Stroh drew a first-round bye, pinned Mandrick Holifield of Sheridan in :38, pinned Casey Williams of Steamboat Springs in :41, pinned Neal Schultz of Coal Ridge in 3:06 and won a 15-0 tech fall over Vinnie Sanchez of Pueblo South in the championship.

140 lbs.—Brian Strong placed fourth, wrestling a little small for the weight division. He's new to the weight class, but coach Stroh said he thinks Strong will do some serious damage for the Dragons.

Strong drew a first-round bye, pinned Steven Bell of Lewis-Palmer in 4:48, pinned Casey Montoya of Glenwood Springs in 3:09, lost a 2-9 decision to Zane Leaf of Classical Academy and lost a 1-6 decision to Ben Molina of Platte Canyon.

145 lbs.—Leo Ortiz went out and wrestled well as an extremely light 145-pounder, said Stroh. Ortiz was pinned in :39 by Willy Gustin of Cherokee Trail and was pinned in 1:07 by Andrew Vigil of Eagle Valley before moving to the gold bracket.

171 lbs.—Luke Garrett placed first. He trimmed a lot of weight and was very weak, but he finds a way to win, said coach Stroh. "His championship match was about as good as I've ever seen Luke wrestle," he added.

Garrett drew a first-round bye, pinned Evan Fuellenback of Palmer Ridge in 1:58, won a 17-2 tech-fall over Chris Ayala of Glenwood Springs, won a 23-13 decision over Brendan Vineyard of Legend and pinned Ryley Giacometto of Saratoga in 3:33.

189 lbs.—Casey Sage was a light 189-pounder, but is starting to wrestle extremely well, said Stroh. He scored five team points for the Dragons and did a great job. Sage was pinned in 1:37 by Hayden Davidson of Saratoga, pinned Joey Garcia of Lakewood in 1:44, pinned Taylor Farrell of Legend in 4:14 and lost a 3-13 major decision to Zach Knutsen of Palmer Ridge.