

Dragons take 8th place on State Wrestling mats

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt



Holyoke's six-man team that qualified for the 2009 State Wrestling Championships finished in eighth place with 88 points.

Coach Duane Stroh was quite emotional in expressing pride for his Dragon team members.

Each state participant contributed to the point-count, and gained great experience on the state mats.

Within the HHS success was Chad Stroh's second straight state championship, Mark Edmonds and Skyler Dittmer's third-place finishes, Luke Garrett's fourth-place effort and Brian Strong's sixth-place award.

As the only freshman in his 140-lb. weight division, Broc Pelle also performed well, earning one victory on the state mats in the first-round consolations Friday morning.

As a team, it was a goal to finish higher than last year (10th), which was accomplished. The extreme goal was to place in the top five.

While it was a goal to have two state finalists, Stroh said he's extremely proud of his five medalists. "We did what we needed to do."

"Next year our goal will be to get to full potential," added coach Stroh.

Paonia wins team championship

Paonia scored 139.5 points to win the 2009 2A state championship in the field of 47 teams.

In the top 18, following Paonia were Wiggins 120, Rocky Ford 107, Hayden 103, Norwood 94.5, Ignacio 94, Rangely 92, Holyoke 88, Burlington 83.5, Sedgwick County 72.5, Holly 59, Akron 49, Wray 49, Simla 47, Stratton 46, Crowley County 44, Merino 44 and Dove Creek 43.

School record tied

Five place-winners on the state mats is the most any Dragon team has had. This year's team tied that record, set by the 1981 team.

In 1981, placewinners included Tim Bornhoft, second at 167 lbs.; Larry Stroh, third at 98; Dave Harris, third at 112; Dan Hirsch, third at heavyweight; and Todd Sprague, fifth at 105.

Ironically, that year's team also took six qualifiers to state. The team scored 89.5 points to place fourth, missing third by only 1.5 points.

Pelle gains valuable experience

Seeded in a very tough 140-lb. bracket, freshman Broc Pelle met up with the eventual third-place finisher in the first round on the state mats.

Pelle wrestled tough, losing an 11-17 decision to senior Raudel Lucero of Ignacio.

While Pelle was a little timid on his feet, coach Stroh said he wrestled a very good match and was in it the whole time.

First-round consolations led Pelle to a 13-3 major decision over senior Tyler Fox of Eads.

With several good attacks by Pelle in the first period, it was still a scoreless match. Pelle started in the down position in the second period, got an escape within 30 seconds and then went to work.

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He took Fox down, got a couple of back points and then three more back points. Fox chose neutral to start the third period, and Pelle got a take-down.

In trying to get back points, Pelle got out of position. "He showed his maturity in backing away to give his opponent a point," said coach Stroh. Pelle got another take-down on a very nice Peterson counter on the edge of the mat, noted coach Stroh.

Pelle's tournament experience ended in second-round consolations when senior Mason Smith of Rocky Ford won a 15-0 tech fall.

He was definitely up against a more experienced wrestler, but was still trying hard, clear to the end, said Stroh.

Pelle did an outstanding job for the team, noted Stroh. "He improved every week," he added. "He's the future," said Stroh of Pelle. "And he's going to be tough."

Pelle is glad for the state experience and said he hopes to be back next year.