

## Dittmer's come-from-behind pin leads to third-place finish

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

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Sophomore Skyler Dittmer, a first-time qualifier on the state wrestling mats, stepped in to the competition like a veteran and brought home a third-place medal.



After a first-round pin, Dittmer came back in the quarterfinals to clearly show his tenacity. Trailing 4-7 in the 130-lb. match, Dittmer never stopped attacking and ended the match with a pin, with 1:05 remaining.

A one-point semifinal loss was a momentary set-back, but Dittmer picked himself up and proved he had what it takes to move forward.

Two wins by pins and two by decisions, offset by the one-point loss, boosted Dittmer's season record to 35-14.

Very proud of his achievement for his first year at state, Dittmer said he's ready to return next year and win it all. He knows it takes hard work, and he's willing to give it that—planning to attend summer tournaments and camps.

Coach Duane Stroh said Dittmer wrestled the best matches of his life at state.

Stroh noted Dittmer looked really good from the onset, attacking right away in his opener with Jace Nordyke of Holly. It looked like he had Nordyke pinned a couple of times, but Dittmer continued to bump up the score to 13-1 before claiming the second-period pin in 3:28.

It is his come-from-behind pin over Seth Gabardi of Norwood in the quarterfinals that Dittmer is most proud of.

Coach Stroh said Dittmer started slowly, a little bit flat-footed. He didn't attack initially, and his opponent hit a head and heel to take him down and get back points for a 5-0 first-period lead.

Dittmer worked the bottom hard in the second period, and got into some trouble, finding himself on the bottom of a 2-7 score as the final period began.

"All our stuff started working better in the third," said coach Stroh. Gabardi got out of position, Dittmer stepped over and put a leg in for a complete surprise to his opponent.

"Then Skeeter (Dittmer) put him in a mill's half, worked into proper good position, put him on his back, walked around his back and got the pin," said Stroh.

"Talk about relentless pressure. He just never stops attacking," praised Stroh of Dittmer and his match that ended in a great way.

Heartbreaking matches are character building, but Dittmer's 11-12 semifinal loss to Josh Plehinger of Ignacio was a rough one.

Dittmer came out flat, said coach Stroh of the 0-4 start to the match. By the end of the first period it was 4-6.

Taking the down position to start the second period, Dittmer reversed and put Plehinger on his back to change the momentum and take a 9-6 lead.

But the Ignacio wrestler started the third with a reversal and two back points to lead by one. Always ready to give it his all, Dittmer earned a reverse and brought the one-point advantage back to his score.

Coach Stroh said he got in a mill's half and was trying to turn his opponent when the ref called a stalemate. Plehinger earned two points on a reversal with five seconds on the clock and won the one-point match.

Both Dittmer and his opponent Adrian Lopez of Paonia were very aggressive in their

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semifinal consolation round Saturday morning. Dittmer got the take-down, but Lopez came bolting out for a reversal and a 2-2 tie at the end of the first.

“Skyler just never stops attacking,” Stroh said once again. He stayed in good position and finished the match with a 7-4 win.

In his quest for third place, Dittmer met league opponent Alex Dorr of Wiggins. The two battled to a tie in the regional semifinals, and Dittmer picked up the overtime win.

It was a slow start in their final match of the state tournament, when Dittmer finally scored two on a reversal in the second period.

With Dittmer ahead 2-0 as the final period started, coach Stroh said he asked him, “What period is it?”

Stroh said Dittmer responded with an “I know,” and proceeded to take Dorr down for back points and ultimately a 7-1 victory and a third place medal.

“I am so proud of Skyler,” said coach Stroh, commending his come-back effort within matches and between matches and his push to do his best.