

## 8 Dragons place at regional wrestling

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

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Five Dragon wrestlers placed in the top four in regional tournament action Feb. 14-15 at NJC in Sterling to qualify for the 2014 state championships.

First-round state action for the Fab Five is slated for Thursday afternoon, Feb. 20, with the finals on Saturday night, Feb. 22 at the Pepsi Center in Denver.

Third-place regional finishes were earned by sophomore Eric Rojo at 106 lbs. and junior Luke Stewart at 160.



**Luke Stewart has Merino's Ace Conger on his back on his way to a pin in 2:44 to advance to the 160-lb. match for third and fourth.** □ □

—Enterprise photo

Taking fourth at regionals to qualify for the state mats were sophomore Fernando Lopez at 120

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lbs., freshman Dylan Lousberg at 132 and sophomore Sid Struckmeyer at 285.

Also placing in the weekend tournament to close out their 2013-14 wrestling season were sixth-place finishers sophomore Issac Brandt at 126 lbs., junior Nick Ortner at 145 and junior Javy Rojo at 152.

“After reflecting back on Holyoke’s regional tournament, I am pleased with our performance,” said coach Cutter Garrison Monday.

“The season had its ups and downs, but I feel the team really ended on an upstroke this weekend,” added the coach.

Garrison pointed out that the Region 3 wrestling tournament is by far one of the hardest, if not the hardest regional wrestling tournament in 2A.



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**Eric Rojo works to control Akron’s Tanner Watson in this 106-lb. regional semifinal match. Rojo l**

**—Enterprise photo**

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“I knew we would have to ride the waves round by round as we hit tough opponents, but the boys did an awesome job firing back while keeping the goal of qualifying within reach.”

Garrison acknowledged that to some, it may seem like a typical wrestling year in Holyoke—taking five to state. Or it may even seem like a letdown because HHS had no one in the finals at regionals.

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