

Wrestling team competes at tough regional tournament

On Friday and Saturday, Feb. 15 and 16, the St. Francis Indian wrestling team was in action in the 321A Regional Wrestling Tournament in Norton. St. Francis placed 11th in the 22-team regional scoring 49 points. Norton won the tournament with 188 points. Decatur Community placed second with 145.5 points.

Teams placings in the tournament were as follows: first – Norton 188, second – Decatur Community 145.5, third – Plainville 134.5, fourth – Hoxie 124, fifth – Scott Community 106, sixth – Oakley 101.5, seventh – Smith Center 100, eighth – Phillipsburg 97, ninth – Russell 80, 10th – Rawlins County 58.5, 11th – St. Francis 49, 12th – Wichita County 45.5, 13th – Hill City 40, 14th – Trego Community 37, 15th – Ellis 34, 16th – Sylvan-Lucas Unified 24, 17th Lincoln 20, 18th – Thomas More Prep-Marian 17, 19th – Stockton 10, 20th – Greeley County 6, 21st – Thunder Ridge 3, and 22nd – Osborne 0.

St. Francis senior Zach Gienger qualified for the 3-2-1A State Wrestling tournament by placing in the top four positions in his weight class. Zach earned a second place finish at 182 pounds. he is seeded third in the Kansas State Tournament and will wrestle Hunter Ackerman (30-10) of Douglass in his first match on Friday.

“This was by far the toughest regional in the state when it comes to 3-2-1A wrestling,” said Dylan Loyd, coach. “We knew going into this tournament that if we wanted to qualify for the state tournament that we had to be on the top of our game. There were a lot of wrestlers from our regional that were returning state placers, or state qualifiers, that are staying home this upcoming weekend. That just goes to show how tough our regional was this year.”

State tournament

The 3-2-1A Kansas State Wrestling Tournament will be held at Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays. Wrestling action will begin at 10 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 22, and at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 23.

Individual results

Individual results for the St. Francis wrestlers in the Regional Tournament are listed below along with a comment from Coach Loyd.

120 - Casey Keller (25-12) – In round one, Blake Boxberger of Russell (17-15) defeated Casey by fall in 3:31. In the first round of consolation, Casey won by pin (0:38) over Katelyn Street of Lincoln (0-10). In the second round of consolation, he won an 8-7 decision over Trevor Houser of Plainville (24-15). Casey was defeated by Riley Juenemann of Phillipsburg (33-14) in a 5-2 decision during the third round. He scored 4 team points.

“Casey Keller had, in my opinion, one of the three toughest weight classes at this regional,” Coach Loyd said. “There were seven to eight guys in this bracket that were very easily good enough to go to the state tournament, and unfortunately they only take four. Casey had a good weekend, I think. He lost a tough first round match by fall to a kid from Russell that he actually was beating 4-0 at the time. He got thrown in a headlock in the middle of the mat and there was just too much time left on the clock to fight off our back. He came through the backdoor and made it quite a ways before losing to Juenemann from Phillipburg who had beaten Casey a couple of times this year, but this was the closest match they had. I’m proud of Casey, and its just unfortunate that he didn’t get through. He

worked as hard as anyone this year, but sometimes things just don’t work out like you hope. He’ll be missed.”

126 - Clay Cassaw (23-13) was defeated by Derick Coomes of Kensington-Thunder Ridge (5-4) in an 11-6 decision in round one. Clay won by pin (1:44) over Garren Beckman of Hill City (4-8) in the first consolation round. In the second consolation round, he won a 4-2 decision over John Solko of Atwood-Rawlins County (13-9). The third round of consolation found Mason Bannister of Phillipsburg (28-18) winning by a 3-0 decision over Clay. Clay scored 4 team points for the Indians.

“Clay wrestled as well as he has all year,” Coach Loyd said. “He lost a close first round match to Coomes from Thunder Ridge, who actually had pinned Clay the week before. On the backside, he beat Solko from Atwood, who is a senior and a returning state placer, out of the tournament. Clay then lost to Bannister from Phillipsburg in a close match, and Bannister ended up qualifying for state. Clay should have developed a lot of confidence in himself throughout this season. I’m looking forward to seeing what he does throughout the rest of his career.”

132 - Austin White (26-11) scored 4 team points for St. Francis. Austin won by pin (4:42) over Corbin Schoenthaler of WaKeeney-Trego Community (11-16) in round one. In the quarterfinals, John Risewick of Norton Community (36-3) defeated Austin by a major decision (14-3). Austin then met Zach Fischer of Smith Center (9-11) and lost by a 3-1 decision.

“Austin is another who wrestled well at a very tough weight class,” Coach Loyd said. “He has improved drastically from last year. We all have known just how tough this kid is when he gets on top. Throughout this season, we have worked with him on getting better on his feet, and he did, and he’s a better wrestler because of it. He lost in the quarters to Risewick from Norton, who very well could be the state champion in this weight class, in a hard fought match. Then, Austin lost to Fischer, from Smith Center in a nail-biter 3-1. Fischer is a returning state qualifier. This weight was another one that was very tough with 8 kids who all were good enough to qualify had they been in another regional, and Austin was definitely one of them.”

138 - Logan Lampe (18-22) lost by fall (1:32) to Michael Dusin of Phillipsburg (37-3) in round one. In consolation round 1, Logan won a 9-7 decision over Wayne Flipse of Oakley (14-22). In the second consolation round, Jonathan Markland of Atwood-Rawlins County (27-11) defeated Logan in a 7-5 decision. Logan scored 1 team point in the tournament.

“Logan had a tough draw right out of the gate, having to wrestle Dusin from Phillipsburg first round,” Coach Loyd said. “Dusin went on to win this tournament. On the backside, Logan beat a kid from Oakley that actually had beaten him twice earlier in the year. In the first round on Saturday, Logan lost a close match to Markland from Atwood in a nail-biter that came down to the wire.”

145 - Justin Pacheco (10-15) lost by fall (1:07) to Nick Sells of Russell (16-3) in round one. In the first consolation round, Michael Ruhge of Smith Center (14-17) won by pin over Justin in 1:21.

“Justin Pacheco battled tough all year, at a tough weight class, for be-

ing just a freshman,” Coach Loyd said. “He lost to a very tough Russell kid in the first round and then was defeated in the backside by a senior from Smith Center. It is very tough to compete at a weight class like this being just a freshman, and he did. He has a lot of potential, and he will only improve. He got a lot of good experience throughout this season.”

152 - Mikey Leibbrandt (29-14) scored 7 team points in the Regional Tournament. Mikey lost his first match to Grant Lambert of Smith Center (25-18) by a 3-1 decision. In consolation round 1, Mikey won a 7-0 decision over Jared Gabel of Hays-Thomas More Prep-Marian (11-23). In round 2, Mikey won by a pin over Cody Werner of Plainville (16-16) in 2:33. Mikey won by fall (2:01) over Austin Biggs of Lincoln (15-15) in the next round. Mikey advanced to the consolation semifinal round where he was defeated by Jared Bohl of Norton Community (19-19) in a 2-1 decision.

“Mikey wrestled as well as he has all season,” Coach Loyd said. “He was in a very tough weight and came within 1 point of being a state qualifier. Mikey has come along way from where he was as a freshman and that all is because he works as hard as anyone. It’s tough to see kids like this not make it knowing that they deserved to go. He has been a lot of fun to work with and a great leader who a lot of the younger guys look up to, and rightfully so. We will miss him.”

160 - Dylan Wolaver (24-7) won by pin (4:22) over Dylan Walker of Russell (19-12) in his first match. In the quarterfinals, Warren Kropp of Scott Community (29-5) won by a fall over Dylan in 3:34. Dylan won a 9-6 decision over Cody Wright of Atwood-Rawlins County (21-14) in the next round. In the third consolation round, Cody Faulkender of Oakley (25-11) pinned Dylan in 2:25. Dylan scored five team points for the Indians.

“Dylan Wolaver got beat by tough kids in another very tough weight class,” Coach Loyd said. “I thought he was another that had a very good chance of making it, and he just fell short. He got caught in a tough scramble position and just couldn’t get himself out of it. He’s another senior that had put in the time and you really hate to see him not make it, but it happens.”

170 - Lane Hobrock (12-16) lost to Cameron Staples of Wakeeney-Trego Community (26-7) by fall (0:45). In the first consolation round, Clayton Beckman of Hill City (9-11) pinned Lane in 1:39.

“Lane Hobrock is a battler and his attitude is contagious,” Coach Loyd said. “He has only wrestled two years and has made leaps and bounds. We asked him to bump up to 170 giving up 12-15 lbs. He wagered and did exactly what we asked of him, and he gave it everything that he had. He steps on the



ZACH GIENGER works to break down his opponent during the regional wrestling tournament held in Norton over the weekend.

Herald photo by Kristi Guthmiller

mat and gives it everything he’s got every time and I love that. He will only improve, and he is one that will put in the time to get better.”

182 - Zach Gienger (24-5) placed second and scored 19 team points. Zach won by pin (1:25) over Anthony Merida of Atwood-Rawlins County (8-15) in round one. In the quarterfinals, Zach won by a 10-0 major decision over Kolton Harting of Norton Community (17-17). Advancing to the semifinals, Zach then defeated Andrew Malin of Plainville (25-9) by an 11-4 decision. In the championship match, Steven Yergey-Dible of Hoxie (33-6) won a 5-1 decision over Zach.

“Individually we only had one qualifier, Zach Gienger,” Coach Loyd said. “I think Zach wrestled as well as he had all year Friday. He beat two quality kids, one in the quarterfinals, and one in the semi-

finals Friday night to guarantee his trip to state. Saturday night, he lost a tough match in the finals to Yergey-Dible from Hoxie, a wrestler Zach has beaten twice this year. I know Zach didn’t wrestle as well in that match as he would of liked, but it is hard to wrestle a quality opponent like that when you haven’t wrestled a match all day Saturday up until the finals match. Zach is set up to do well at the State Tournament. There is no doubt in my mind that he is one of the top wrestlers in the state in this weight class. I’m looking forward to see what he does this coming weekend.”

285 - Shakotah Blanka (8-7) won by fall (0:42) over Jared LeiVan of Osborne (0-21) in round one. In the quarterfinals, Michael McEachern of Scott Community (29-8) won by pin over Shakotah in 1:20. Shakotah won a 2-1 decision over Bryce

Henry of Atwood-Rawlins County (13-16) in the second consolation round. Taten Pulec of Stockton (17-12) won by fall (1:00) over Shakotah in the third round of consolation. Shak scored five team points.

“Shakotah Blanka wrestled very well,” Coach Loyd said. “This was his first tournament back, having not competed since the Colby Tournament, which was the second weekend of December, so he had missed a lot of the season. I believe that if he had wrestled all season that he very well could have been a state qualifier this year, but hindsight is always 20-20. This kid has come a long way from where he was one year ago. It’s starting to click for him, and I am excited that we will have him back for two more years.”

Young team wrestles in Atwood

The junior high wrestling team competed in Atwood on Thursday, Feb. 14. St. Francis competed with teams from Hoxie, Rawlins County, Trego Community and Wichita County. St. Francis won 18 matches during the evening and lost 19.

Individual results for St. Francis are listed below:

Matt Leibbrandt (2-1) - won by a fall over Clanton, Trego; won by a fall over Beirman, Wichita County; lost by a 18-2 technical fall to Kuhn, Trego.

Coy Cassaw (2-0) - won by an 11-4 decision over Kuhn, Trego; won by a fall over Ridder, Wichita County.

Jake Faulkender (0-3) - lost by a fall to Horinek, Rawlins County; lost by a fall to Flax, Trego; lost by a fall to Dinkel, Trego.

Tate Busse (1-2) - lost by a 10-0 major decision to Leitner, Rawlins County; won by an 8-3 decision over Hayes, Rawlins County; lost by a fall to Porsch, Hoxie.

Kenny Leibbrandt (1-1) - lost by a 19-3 technical fall to Porsch, Hoxie; won by a 6-0 decision over Leitner, Rawlins County.

Connor McBride (0-3) - lost by

a 4-2 decision to Gallardo, Wichita County; lost by a 8-3 decision to Dulany, Rawlins County; lost by a 7-2 decision to Green, Rawlins County.

Luke Lampe (2-1) - won by a 4-2 decision over Depriest, Trego; lost by a 5-0 decision to Sramek, Rawlins County; won by a 3-2 decision over Gallardo, Wichita County.

Dalton Straub (1-2) - lost by a fall to Skolout, Rawlins County; won by a fall over Domsch, Rawlins County; lost by a Alvarado, Wichita County.

Taylor Rogers (2-0) - won by a fall over Folsum, Trego; won by a fall over Alvarado, Wichita County.

Joel Hill (2-0) - won by a 13-0 major decision over Kruep, Rawlins County; won by a fall over Folsum, Trego.

JR Landenberger (1-2) - lost by a 8-4 decision to Alvarado, Wichita County; lost by a 11-2 major decision to Sheppard, Wichita County; won by a fall over Flores, Rawlins County.

Jeremiah Neitzel (2-1) - lost by a fall to Lowry, Trego; won by a

8-1 decision over Crouse, Rawlins County; won by a 10-3 decision over Walt, Trego.

Martin Beikman (1-2) - lost by a fall to Zorn, Rawlins County; won by a fall over Schippers, Hoxie; lost by a fall to Beckman, Rawlins County.

Coach Dylan Loyd shared the following comments on the evening, “I think overall we wrestled really well Thursday afternoon,” said Dylan Loyd, coach. “It was a great last competition before our league tournament. The kids have continued to show improvement throughout this year, and I think going into league we are wrestling the best that we have throughout the entirety of this short season.

“Some of our guys have been beaten by a couple of the same kids throughout the year, but each time we have wrestled them we get closer and closer, and that is encouraging to see. It’s truly hard to believe that this season is almost over. I’m looking forward to seeing how these young men finish this season.”

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