



The Saint Francis Herald

At the Game

Wrestler places sixth at state tournament

By Kent Kechter

The Kansas State Wrestling Tournament is tough enough, but the weather made things a bit tougher. A severe winter storm caused much of Kansas to be in a severe weather warning and made travel to the tournament difficult. St. Francis’ only state qualifier, Zach Gienger, left for the state tournament on Wednesday in an attempt to outrun the storm and ensure arrival for the competition. The time schedule for tournament was altered by the Kansas High School Activities Association to allow for more travel time for competitors.

Zach earned a sixth place finish at 182 pounds in the 321A Kansas State Wrestling Tournament.

“I am very proud of what Zach was able to do this year,” said Dylan Loyd, coach. “He is the epitome of hard work and sacrifice.”

Zach defeated Hunter Ackerman (senior, 31-12) from Douglass in the opening round by a 13-6 decision. In the championship quarter-finals, Zach earned a 4-2 decision over Hagen Hanzlick (senior, 33-7) from Hoisington. The win advanced Zach to the championship semi-finals.

Gavin Grater (junior, 37-4) of Riley County, the eventual state champion at 182 pounds, defeated Zach by an 18-3 technical fall in the semi-final match. Zach then wrestled Steven Yergey-Dibel (senior, 38-7) of Hoxie. Zach lost to Yergey-Dibel by fall in 1:48. Throughout the season, Zach wrestled Yergey-Dibel five times, winning two and losing three. Yergey-Dibel won third place in the tournament.

Zach wrestled Levi Hureke (senior, 36-5) of Sabetha in the 5th place match. Zach was defeated



ZACH GIENGER works to turn his opponent on his back for points during a previous wrestling competition.

Herald photo by Kristi Guthmiller

in a 3-1 decision. Zach represented St. Francis well, earning a sixth place finish in the 321A Kansas State Wrestling Tournament. Zach completed the season with a record of 28-11.

“Zach didn’t get to where he is today as a wrestler and person due to accident,” Coach Loyd said. “He has put in his time to improve

and that he has. He has come a long way in the past two years, and it showed in his wrestling.

“I know his state tournament didn’t finish like he had wanted, but the goal was to be a state placer and he was able to achieve that goal. His state bracket was very tough with a lot of quality kids not being able to earn a

state medal.

“In the quarterfinals Zach was able to avenge a loss he had earlier this season to Hanzlick from Hoisington and that win guaranteed him a medal. I think that match right there shows how much Zach has grown and developed as a wrestler, not just physically, but mentally as well.

“Coach Buffington and I are very proud of him and can’t thank him enough for what he did for our program this past season. He was a great senior leader and was someone we could always depend on in getting everybody ready. He will be greatly missed and forever his name will be on the board recognizing him as a

state placer. It’s an achievement that no one will ever be able to take away from him.”

St. Francis tied for 50th place in the tournament scoring seven team points. Norton won the team championship with 129.5 points. Hoxie placed second with 97 points.

Junior high wrestlers compete in league tourney

By Kent Kechter

The St. Francis high school gymnasium was filled with wrestling fans on President’s Day, Feb. 18, when St. Francis hosted the Northwest Kansas League Junior High Wrestling Tournament. Six league teams participated in the tournament including: Decatur Community, Greeley County, Hoxie, Rawlins County, St. Francis and Wichita County.

The tournament was wrestled as a round-robin tournament with each wrestler wrestling every other competitor in the same weight class. If a weight class contained only two wrestlers, the wrestlers competed in a “best-of-three” format. If the same wrestler won both of the first two matches, the third match was not wrestled and the “better” win was recorded as the championship result. Several junior varsity “exhibition” matches were also wrestled during the day, but were not part of the team competition.

Decatur Community won the team championship scoring 144 points. Rawlins County placed a close second with 141.5. The St. Francis Indians placed third in the tournament earning 123 points. Fourth went to Wichita County (75 points), fifth to Hoxie (44.5 points), and sixth to Greeley County (9 points).

“We had our junior high league tournament this last Monday,” said Dylan Loyd, coach. “As a whole we competed fairly well. We placed 3rd out of 6 teams and going into it I thought we had a legitimate shot at being league champions, which was our goal, and we were close to achieving it. The emotions are kind of mixed; we had some very good matches and some matches we just didn’t wrestle very well. I don’t know if having the tournament on Monday

plays into performances or not, I don’t know, but we cannot make excuses.”

Individual match results for the St. Francis wrestlers are below.

80 - Matt Leibbrandt won the championship at 80 pounds defeating Joe Ridder of Wichita County by fall in 23 seconds.

86 - Coy Cassaw placed 2nd. Coy won his first match against John Bierman of Wichita County by a 12-0 major decision. Coy lost by fall (1:30) to Kel Grafel of Decatur Community.

98 - Kenny Leibbrandt placed 2nd in the tournament. Kenny won by fall (0:33) over Kole Breth of Decatur Community, but lost to Braden Leitner of Rawlins County by 1-0 decision.

104 - Tate Busse placed 3rd. Tate was defeated by Dylan Dulaney of Rawlins County by a fall (3:29). Tate also lost to an undefeated wrestler from Hoxie, Tristan Porsch, by technical fall (17-1).

122 - Luke Lampe earned a second place finish. Luke defeated Kyle Ricke of Greeley County by 13-0 major decision in his first match. Luke then defeated Zach Chavez of Wichita County 3-2. Luke then pinned Maverick Green of Rawlins County in 3:47. Luke lost his final match to Max Diedrich of Decatur Community by a 9-3 decision.

130 - Joel Hill placed third. Joel lost his first match to Jeff Juenemann of Decatur Community by fall (4:00). Joel pinned (1:15) Josh Gallardo of Wichita County in his second match. Cole Sramek of Rawlin County decisioned Joel 5-0. Joel defeated Tyler King of Hoxie by 7-4 decision in his final match.

138 - Taylor Rogers placed third. Taylor lost a 7-5 decision to Juan Alvarado of Wichita County

in his first match. Taylor pinned (1:25) Gavin Kleymann of Greeley County in his second contest. Cade Wurm of Decatur Community defeated Taylor by fall (1:38). In his final match, Taylor won a 6-1 decision over Sawyer Skolout of Rawlins County.

145 - Dalton Straub was pinned (1:55) by Kolton Sheppard of Wichita County. Dalton then lost to Jose Flores of Rawlins County by fall (0:43). Dalton won a 17-8 major decision over Braden Beagley of Hoxie to place third.

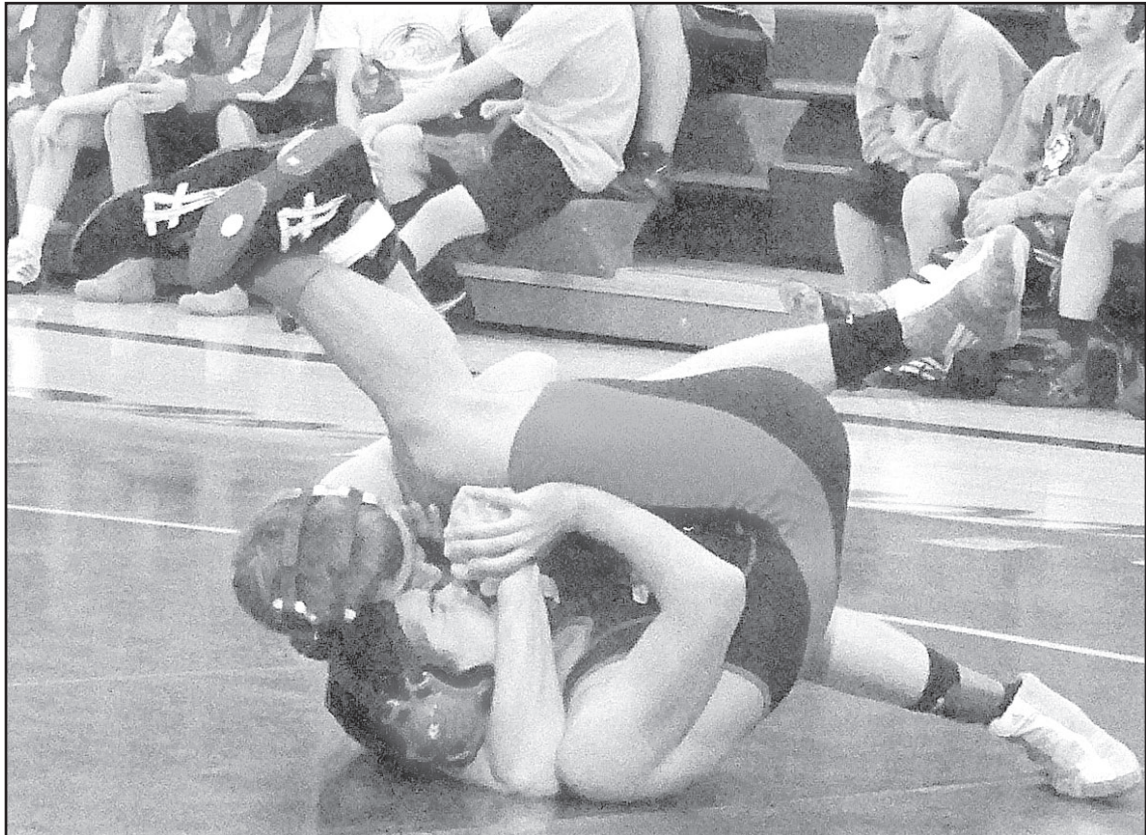
170 - Jeremiah Neitzel lost by fall to Louie Zorn of Rawlins County in 1:27. Jeremiah placed second.

182 - Martin Beikman placed second by pinning (1:45) Zeke Jimenez of Decatur Community in his first match and losing by fall (0:57) to Will Crouse of Rawlins County in the final match.

275 - Trayton Doyle was pinned (0:16) by Quinton Cook of Decatur Community in his first match of the day. Trayton again faced Cook in his second match winning by forfeit. Trayton earned an injury default win over Cook in the “rubber” match to win the 275-pound championship.

“This group of young men has been a lot of fun to work with,” said Dylan Loyd, coach. “It was a pure joy getting to know each one of them, and I commend you as parents of these kids for doing a great job of raising them. Every one of them has a good work ethic and did everything that Coach Buffington and I asked them to do to the best of their ability. I know a lot of them had goals to be a league champion and came up just a bit short, but it happens.

“I always think of what Coach Gabel always use to say to us at the end of each season. He always said that you cannot judge



JOEL HILL gets his opponent in a cradle and works for the pin.

Herald photo by Kent Kechter

a season based off of one tournament. Meaning a lot of these kids wanted to be league champions and may be real upset with themselves because they didn’t attain that goal. However, they cannot judge this season and the success that they had just on this one league tournament.

“Every kid on this team is leaps and bounds better than they were seven weeks ago and, I believe the fans and parents that followed them throughout the season, and the wrestlers themselves, can agree with that. It’s important for them to focus on that and to remember just how much they have improved. I’m very proud of each of them, and I’m really looking forward to watching them develop and improve in every aspect of their life.”

Individual placings in the league tournament are listed below:

80 Pounds -- first - Matt Leibbrandt. St. Francis; second Joe Ridder, Wichita County.

86 Pounds -- first - Kel Grafel,

Decatur County; second Coy Cassaw St. Francis; third John Bierman, Wichita County.

92 Pounds -- first - Jorge Gallegos, Wichita County; second Andrew Macki, Decatur County.

98 Pounds -- first - Braden Leitner, Rawlins County; second Kenny Leibbrandt, St. Francis; third Kole Breth, Decatur County.

104 Pounds -- first - Tristan Porsch, Hoxie; second Dylan Dulaney, Rawlins County; third Tate Busse, St. Francis.

110 Pounds -- first - Latham Schwartz, Hoxie; second Ryan Wolters, Rawlins County.

116 Pounds -- first - Skyler Lawson, Rawlins County.

122 Pounds -- first - Max Diedrick, Decatur County; second Luke Lampe, St. Francis; third Kyle Ricke, Greeley County; fourth Zach Chavez, Wichita County.

130 Pounds -- first - Cole Sramek, Rawlins County; second Jeff Juenemann, Decatur County; third Joel Hill, St. Francis; fourth

Josh Gallardo, Wichita County.

138 Pounds -- first - Cade Wurm, Decatur County; second Juan Alvarado, Wichita County; third Taylor Rogers, St. Francis; fourth Sawyer Skolout, Rawlins County.

146 Pounds -- first - Kolton Sheppard, Wichita County; second Jose Flores, Rawlins County; third Dalton Straub, St. Francis; fourth Braden Beagley, Hoxie.

154 Pounds -- first - Tabor Erickson DC; second Will Ginther Rawlins County; 3rd Luke Schippers, Hoxie,

162 Pounds -- first - Dayton Kempt Decatur County; second Tyler Beckman, Rawlins County.

170 Pounds -- first - Louie Zorn, Rawlins County; second Jeremiah Neitzel, St. Francis.

182 Pounds -- first - Will Crouse RC; second Martin Beikman SF; third Zeke Jimenez, Decatur County.

275 Pounds -- first - Trayton Doyle SF; second Quinton Cook, Decatur County.

Junior high girls’ drama production set for March 7