



# At the Game

## Indian wrestlers begin season at Invitational

By Douglas Sloper  
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The 54th annual St. Francis Invitational Wrestling Tournament was held this past Saturday, Dec. 7. Teams from Tribune (Greeley County), Goodland, Colby, Holyoke, Norton, Atwood (Rawlins County), Sterling, Wakekeney-Trego, Leoti (Wichita County) and Wray participated.

The team did very well overall, finishing in fifth place, with 73 points. Overall team standings were: Goodland, 164 points; Sterling, 147 points; Colby, 114 points; Wray, 112 points; St. Francis; 73 points; Leoti (Wichita County), 59 points; Norton, 56 points; Atwood, (Rawlins County), 52.50 points; Wakekeney-Trego, 48 points; Holyoke, 47 points; Tribune (Greeley County), 18 points.

The Indians were well represented as the action got underway. Participants were Clay Cassaw, 132 pounds; Garret Brunk 138 pounds; Justin Pacheco, 145 pounds; Lane Hoffman, 152 pounds; Lane Hobrock, 170 pounds; Kyler Zweggardt, 220 pounds; Shakotah Blanka, 285 pounds.

**Individual results:**  
132- Clay Cassaw (third)- won by a 8-0 major decision over Cole Sramek, Rawlins County; lost by a fall to Austin Krier, Sterling; won by a 5-1 decision over Alex Young, Colby; won by a forfeit over Cole Sramek, Rawlins County.

138- Garret Brunk- won by a fall over Drake Rowh, Norton; lost by a 9-4 decision to Travis Finley, Colby; won by a fall over Edgar Cruz, Holyoke; lost by a fall to DJ Graves, Sterling.

145- Justin Pacheco- won by a fall over Weston Erbert, Norton; lost by a fall to Brandon Schoenthaler, Trego Community; won by a fall over David Ruiz, Wray; lost by a 6-0 decision to Brady Holzmeister, Colby.

152- Lane Hoffman (second)- won by a fall over Kyle Finley, Colby; won by a fall over Beau Beckman, Wray; lost by a 8-4 decision to Ricky Milke, Goodland.

170- Lane Hobrock- lost by a fall to Garret Taylor, Goodland; lost by a fall to Colton Northrup, Wichita County.

220- Kyler Zweggardt (second)- won by a fall over Fernando Rojo, Holyoke; won by a 11-4 decision over Zach Little, Sterling; won by a 3-2 decision to Cesar Escamilla, Wray; lost by a fall to Austin Hart, Colby.

285- Shakotah Blanka (third)- won by a fall over Sidney Struckmeyer, Holyoke; lost by

a 3-1 decision to Aaron Escamilla, Wray; won by a 3-2 decision over Bryce Henry, Rawlins County; won by a fall over Sidney Struckmeyer, Holyoke.

**Coach's awards:**  
Most Exciting Match- Justin Pacheco over Ruiz, Wray.

Coaches Award- Kyler Zweggardt.  
Practice Wrestler- Garret Brunk.

Best Freshman performance- Connor McBride went 3-1 at Goodland Tournament.

Best JV Performance- Connor McBride and Matt White.

Best sophomore performance- Clay Cassaw (third place).

Key Match Award- Lane Hoffman's semi final win over Beckman, Wray.

Most Outstanding performance- Hoffman and Zweggardt both took second at the Invitational.

**Wrestlers of the Week:**

The St. Francis wrestling coaching staff has selected Clay Cassaw, Lane Hoffman, Kyler Zweggardt, and Shakotah Blanka as wrestlers of the week. All four of these individuals placed in the top 3 in their respected weight classes at the St. Francis-Invitational this past weekend.

**Junior Varsity Tournament**  
120- Connor McBride (3-1)- won by a 15-2 major decision over Victoria Rios, Liberal; won by a fall over Mryna Ruiz, Goodland; won by a fall over Nhic Aponte, Holcomb; lost by a 8-2 decision to Peter Keller, Garden City.

138- Phillip White (2-3)- won by a fall over Tripp Pool, Holcomb; lost by a fall to Aaron Ochoa, Ulysses; lost by a fall to Brett Schroeder, Colby; lost by a fall to Javier Acosta, Liberal; won by a fall over Logan Flores, Holcomb.

138- Matt White (2-2)- won by a 7-5 decision over Joel Nunez, Liberal; lost by a 5-4 decision to Kevin Marquez, Garden City; won by a 11-6 decision over Cesar Segovia, Ulysses; lost by a 4-0 decision to Jonathan Prieto, Holcomb.

195- Blake Meyer (1-2)- won by a fall over Javier Varela, Garden City; lost by a fall to Richard Gallegos, Lamar; lost by a fall to Alfredo Luna, Hugoton.

220- Ryan Grover (0-2)- lost by a fall to Luis Castaneda, Garden City; lost by a fall to Brady Slinger, Colby.

**Coach's comments**  
First off, said Dylan Loyd, head coach, it is important to give credit where credit is due and this tournament wouldn't have been the success it was if it hadn't of been for Mr. Werner,

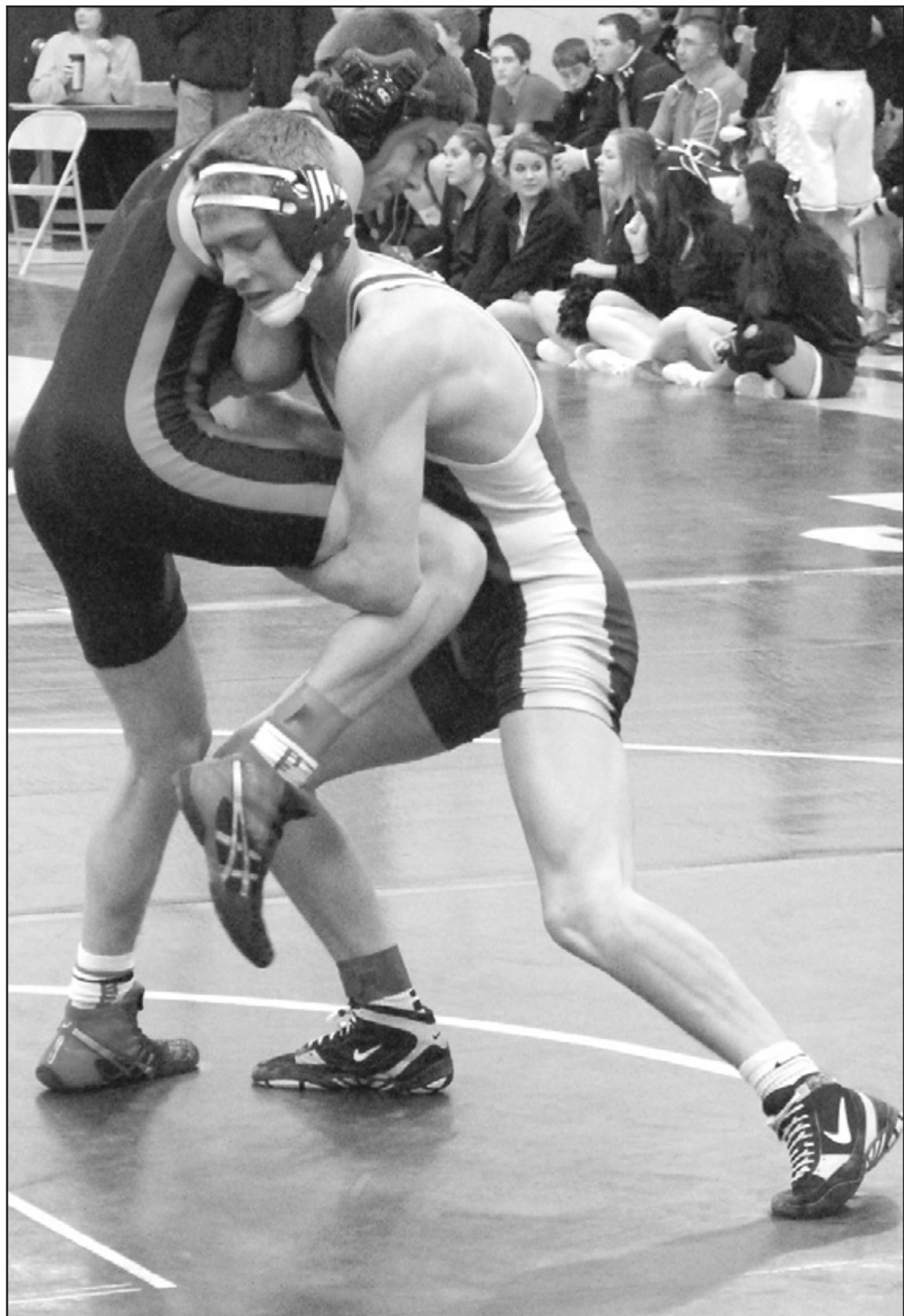
Mr. Kechter, Mrs. Grice, Allison Grice, Mr. Morrow, Mr. Schiltz, Mr. Olofson, Mr. Jenkins, all the faculty who volunteered to help, community volunteers who volunteered to run clocks, the junior high young men who volunteered as blood boys, along with the many other individuals who I have failed to mention and I apologize.

"I had nothing but positive feedback from the coaches and have even heard of other teams that would like to come to this tournament just based on the fact of how our tournament is run," Coach Dylan Loyd said. "It takes many months of planning to run a successful tournament and I thank you who were involved in the process. Also, I need to thank the community and students who spent all day, on a very cold day, in a gym supporting our wrestlers. It means a lot seeing the community support for these young men."

Coach Loyd was very pleased with the team and individual results. "Now, as far as the tournament goes I feel like this tournament was quite a bit tougher than it was a year ago, and for us, with only seven wrestlers, to finish fifth out of 11 and compete with the other teams that had fuller teams says something about these guys. There were a lot of solid teams and solid individuals and it was a good, tough tournament right out of the gate. I feel like our wrestlers all did a very good job for their first tournament.

With it being the first tournament there definitely is a lot of things that we need to correct but, that it is to be expected each and every week. Coach Kyle Buffington and I stress everyday to find a way to improve each day, it's important to focus on getting better and to focus on each practice and match as an opportunity to get better. We feel like we are leaps and bounds from where we were a year ago as far as technique and attitude go. This whole team is a special group of young men, they all feed off one another and it's important to them to have success. These guys work hard, they push one another, they hold each other accountable, and they have high expectations for themselves, and that makes Coach Buffington and my job easy.

Clay Cassaw had a good tournament minus one match. He placed third in a tough weight class with a couple returning state placers and qualifiers and I feel like he could have won this weight. He works hard and has improved a lot from a year ago.



CLAY CASSAW prepares to take down his opponent in the St. Francis Invitational Wrestling Tournament on Saturday.  
Herald staff photo by Douglas Sloper

Garrett Brunk I thought competed very well for his first varsity tournament in his high school career. Due to an injury he suffered last year he missed the whole season. He worked hard this offseason to make up for that and he will be one to watch out for because he works as hard as anybody and I'm excited to see where he's at towards the middle to later part of the season. Justin Pacheco did a great job of just competing. He's come along ways from last season and you can see that he is wrestling with more confidence. This kid is tough and gritty and he will not go down without a fight.

Lane Hoffman is another who missed all of last season with concussion issues. He did a great job and wrestled as well as I've ever seen him wrestle to be honest. He stayed in good position, wrestled with confidence and he has a lot of experience that

will help him win those tough matches. I believe he was the best wrestler in his weight class this weekend.

Lane Hobrock battled in both of his matches. He suffered two losses, one to the champion at this weight and the other to the kid who finished third, so his losses were to quality kids. This kid is tough and he works hard. You know every time he steps on the mat he's going to go as hard as he can for six minutes and he's not going to back down. It's important to him to be good and I know he will correct mistakes that were made and he will improve.

Kyler Zweggardt had never wrestled before until our first day of practice and it is exciting to see just how far he has come in just three weeks. He is very coachable and disciplined, and he wants to be good. From his first match on Saturday to his last

match you could see improvements and you could see him wrestle with more confidence. He's a great kid, a good teammate, and I am excited to just watch him improve each day.

Shakotah Blanka was the best heavyweights in this tournament. He suffered a tough loss in the semi-finals to a kid he knows he shouldn't have lost to, but he battled back and took third in dominant fashion. He was very close to qualifying to the state tournament last year and he spent a lot of time this past off-season to make improvements. I feel like if he continues to work hard and to push himself each day he has what it takes to place high at the state tournament."

The next match for the Indians will be at the Colby Invitational, on Saturday, Dec. 14, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

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