This Uthoff is a wrestler for Prairie

Written by Jim Ecker
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If your last name is Uthoff, you can either play basketball during the winter or you can wrestle.

Sam Uthoff is a wrestler for Cedar Rapids Prairie. And he's a darn good one.

"The story that my dad always told me is, if you're tall and a Uthoff you go to Jefferson to play basketball," he said Saturday, "and the Uthoffs
that go to Prairie are wrestlers.

"It makes the name sound good when they're both pretty good."

Uthoff upheld the family name Saturday by capturing the 126-pound title at the Independence Invitational with three pins and a decision.

Uthoff's father, Vince, was an undefeated state champion for Prairie in 1975 and a collegiate wrestler at Iowa State. His older brother, Jordan,
was a state qualifier for the Hawks and graduated in 2008. Uncles and
cousins also wrestled.

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"It's a family thing," said Uthoff. "My little sister is a stat girl this year and my older sister was a stat girl when my brother was in high school.
It's a family outing every time we got to a wrestling meet."

The taller members of the Uthoff family were basketball stars at Cedar Rapids Jefferson, including current Iowa Hawkeye Jarrod Uthoff and former
Iowa State star Dean Uthoff.

Sam Uthoff boasts that he's 5-foot-10 - "Taller than most of the guys I wrestle" - but that's about a foot shorter than Jarrod and Dean, who are
his second or third cousins (he's not sure which).

"I'm glad he chose wrestling," said Prairie Coach Blake Williams. "I think he picked the right sport, that's for sure."

Uthoff, a junior, is ranked No. 3 in the state at 126 pounds. He placed seventh at the state meet as a freshman, finished sixth last year and
is looking to climb higher this season.

Uthoff pinned Derek Fox of Osage in 3:17 for the 126-pound title Saturday. He began the day with a pin in 52 seconds in the opening round, collected
another pin in 1:42 in the quarterfinals and posted a 17-11 verdict in the semifinals.

"My goal is to go out there and dominate every time that I wrestle and do my best and always keep getting better," he said. "Good things will happen

if you keep getting better."

In addition to upholding the family name in wrestling, Uthoff plays in the band, sings in the choir and is a good student at Prairie.

"He's just an extremely hard worker and a great kid," said Williams. "He's an all-around good kid.

"I remember when I first came to Prairie, I remember little Sam always around the mat, watching his older brother and he always had all this
energy. He never seems to get tired, which is good. That's an advantage
for him, because he's always on the go."

The Prairie Hawks crowned three champions Saturday with Josh Wenger claiming top honors at 138 pounds and Nick Hogan prevailing at 170. The
Hawks finished second in the team standings behind Apple Valley, a
perennial state power from Minnesota.

Prairie got second-place showings from Marcus England (106) and Taylor Mehmen (195). The Hawks had four third-place showings with Dylan
Kleinschmidt (120), Seth Wennermark (132), Jarod Cadena (182) and Tyler Pasker (220).

Shea Hartzler captured the 160-pound for Linn-Mar and Toby Northrup placed second for the Lions at 152. Matt Wempen, who is ranked third at 145
pounds for Linn-Mar, is currently sidelined with an arm injury but is
expected back after Christmas.

Linn-Mar finished eighth in the standings. Xavier placed 11th.

TEAM STANDINGS

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1. Apple Valley (Minn.) 230, 2. Prairie 190, 3. Independence 162, 4. Osage 147.5, 5. Alburnett 141, 6. Crestwood 136, 7. Hampton-Dumont 95.5, 8.
Linn-Mar 90, 9. Sumner-Fredericksburg 66, 10. Algona 62, 11. Xavier 58.5,
12. North Fayette 55.5, 13. Chariton 38, 14. Starmont 10.