

Pasker adds exclamation point for Prairie

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 14 February 2015 23:22 -



Most wrestlers have to carefully watch their diet and shed pounds to make proper weight for their matches, but Tyler Pasker of Prairie faced a different problem heading into the Class 3A district meet Saturday.

Pasker actually had to gain seven pounds just to sneak into the 285-pound bracket as one of the lightest heavyweights in state history, and the gambit paid off when he pinned a much larger man to make the state tournament.

The Prairie Hawks won the district title and qualified nine wrestlers for the state tournament in Des Moines next week. Pasker might be the happiest member of the club after what happened in the Prairie gym.

The Hawks had an opening in the 285-pound division and Pasker volunteered for the job, even though he normally weighs about 190. But to be eligible for the 285-pound class, he had to "eat" his way out of the 195-pound division to meet IHSA requirements. And at this time of year, the 195-pound class is actually 197 due to a two-pound allowance.

That meant Pasker had to gain weight in a hurry this past week. He made it, barely.

"About 198," he said with a grin after pinning Tanner Heeren of Dubuque Hempstead in 5:31 in the second place. wrestle-back for

Hempstead Coach Chuck Haas said Heeren weighs "a good 280," which means Pasker was

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giving away more than 80 pounds in their contest. That's highly unusual in the world of high school wrestling, especially in a district meet.



"He didn't even hesitate and said, 'Yes, I'll do it,'" Prairie Coach Blake Williams said about Pasker volunteering for the 285 bracket. "He had to gain weight to get over 195. By rule, you've got to be over the 195-pound class to wrestle heavyweight.

"He gained about seven pounds this week," said Williams. "He was drinking water right before the weigh-in."

Pasker has wrestled for the Prairie varsity at 195 pounds and 220, but he'd never wrestled anyone as big as Heeren, who is a big, big man.

"It takes a lot, just to move him around," said Pasker. "But if I think I can do it, then I can probably do it. It takes a lot of muscle and a lot of push to do it."

The Hawks had already clinched the district title by a considerable margin by the time Pasker took the mat in the final bout of the day. It was a wrestle-back for second place, with the winner making the state meet and the loser hanging up his head gear.

Pasker kept pushing and fighting until he flattened Heeren in the third period. His motivation was simple. "Just knowing that if I win this I get to go to state and be there," he remarked.

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Prairie had already crowned six district champions by the time Pasker went to work, but Williams celebrated Pasker's triumph like it was the biggest victory of the afternoon.

"He got that reversal at the end of the second period and he looked over and smiled," said Williams, smiling himself. "I said, 'Are you having fun?' He was just competing. And that's what it's all about."

Prairie ran away with the district title with 253.5 points, followed by Hempstead (197), Western Dubuque (195) and Linn-Mar (189.5) in a good battle for second place.

Marcus England (106), Trenten Wennermark (113), Sam Uthoff (126), Josh Wenger (138), Jarod Cadena (182) and Taylor Mehmen (195) captured individual titles for the Hawks. Dylan Kleinschmidt (120), Seth Wennermark (132) and Pasker (285) finished second and also qualified for state.

"A pretty good day overall," said Williams. "I don't think I've ever left a district meet completely happy, but nine is a good number. You have to have enough numbers to try and compete for a trophy (at state)."

Linn-Mar's quartet of highly ranked wrestlers all won district titles with Noah Ajram (120), Matt Wempen (145), Toby Northrup (152) and Shea Hartzler (160). The Lions did not have any second-place finishers and will have only four grapplers at state.

Clint Lembeck won the 132-pound title for the Xavier Saints. Jeff Vipond reached the 106-pound finals for the Saints, but he lost the championship match and also lost the wrestle-back for second place and did not qualify for state.

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Linn-Mar is ranked fourth in the state by The Predicament and Prairie is ranked sixth, but the Hawks are hoping to fare better than that.

"I think we have pretty good chances," said Mehmen, the district champion at 195. "We've been working our butts off all year. Our final goal is make it to state and do as well as we can down there.

"It all depends on the day," he said. "We know we can do anything if we want to."

Prairie won the Mississippi Valley Conference tournament and has the Class 3A district flag in its pocket as well. Now the Hawks want more.

"It's a tribute to these kids," said Williams. "They do anything you ask them to do. Very coachable kids. It makes your job a lot easier when you have a bunch of kids like that."

That includes a 190-pounder who volunteered to wrestle the big boys.

TEAM STANDINGS

1. Prairie 253.5, 2. Hempstead 197, 3. Western Dubuque 195, 4. Linn-Mar 189.5, 5. Xavier 94, 6. Marion 60, 7. Maquoketa 59, 8. Dubuque Senior 55.

CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHES

106 - Marcus England (Prairie) dec. Jeff Vipond (Xavier), 6-2

113 - Trenten Wennermark (Prairie) major dec. Bradan Birt (WDubuque), 13-4

120 - Noah Ajram (Linn-Mar) dec. Dylan Kleinschmidt (Prairie), 5-1

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126 - Sam Uthoff (Prairie) dec. Nathan Feldman (Hempstead), 7-2
132 - Clint Lembeck (Xavier) dec. Seth Wennermark (Prairie), 11-4
138 - Josh Wenger (Prairie) pinned Dain Gansen (WDubuque), 0:59
145 - Matt Wempen (Linn-Mar) major dec. Alex Ward (Hempstead), 9-1
152 - Toby Northrup (Linn-Mar) pinned Logan Mayberry (Maquoketa), 1:33
160 - Shea Hartzler (Linn-Mar) pinned Carter Kramer (Hempstead), 2:37
170 - Max Lyon (WDubuque) dec. Brandon Haas (Hempstead), 9-3
182 - Jarod Cadena (Prairie) pinned Kevin Pape (Hempstead), 1:55
195 - Taylor Mehmen (Prairie) dec. Ryan Kenneally (WDubuque), 4-1
220 - Gannon Gremmel (Hempstead) tech fall Dylan Hoefler (WDubuque), 22-6
285 - Aaron Costello (WDubuque) pinned Tanner Heeren (Hempstead), 1:41

WRESTLE-BACKS FOR 2ND

106 - Dillon Gottschalk (Hempstead) dec. Jeff Vipond (Xavier), 5-3
145 - Alex Ward (Hempstead) pinned Caleb Conway (Marion), 1:39
152 - Logan Mayberry (Maquoketa) dec. Morgan Hood (Prairie), 7-4
195 - Ryan Kenneally (WDubuque) dec. Dan Thoma (Dubuque Senior), 3-2
285 - Tyler Pasker (Prairie) pinned Tanner Heeren (Hempstead), 5:31