

Controversies erupt at state tourney

Written by Jim Ecker

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DES MOINES - Controversy was piled upon controversy at the state dual meet wrestling tournament Wednesday at the Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines.

The Linn-Mar Lions defied a state edict to use their top lineup, got clobbered by Waverly-Shell Rock in the first round and face possible sanctions from the Iowa High School Athletic Association.

The Prairie Hawks used their best guys in the opening round and beat Dowling Catholic, but their worst fears were realized when 106-pounder Sam Uthoff suffered a knee injury that put his status in doubt for the individual state tournament that starts Thursday.

Prairie benched most of its regulars for the semifinals and got pounded by Bettendorf, 51-13, putting the Hawks in jeopardy of being punished by the IHSAA as well.

Prairie finished fourth in the tournament and Linn-Mar finished eighth and last.

The coaches strongly dislike holding the state dual meet tournament a day before the individual state tournament, because it creates a dilemma and a no-win situation for them. They can withhold their top wrestlers and face penalties, or they can use their top guys and risk injury.

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Linn-Mar took the cautious approach and got drubbed by Waverly-Shell Rock (67-12) and Pleasant Valley (67-10) in the first two rounds. Prairie put its top lineup on the mat in Round 1 and defeated Dowling Catholic (41-27), but may have paid a severe price.

"We won the meet, but one of your biggest fears in something like this happened," said Prairie Coach Blake Williams, upset about Uthoff's injury. "I hope the state sees something like that and understands where coaches and wrestlers are coming from. It's a terrible situation to be in."

Williams was especially incensed because he felt Uthoff's injury could have been prevented. Williams and his assistant coaches yelled at the mat officials to blow their whistle because they saw that Uthoff was in a potentially dangerous situation during his match against Isaiah Patton of Dowling, but the bout was allowed to continue and a few seconds later Uthoff was writhing on the mat in severe pain after being pinned.

"It could have been avoided, and it should have been avoided but was not," said Williams. "Safety has got to come first in every match, but down here especially. It's unfortunate that was not the case."

Uthoff had to be helped to the training room and was ruled out of competition for the rest of the day, although he might be able to wrestle on Thursday in the individual state meet.

"We'll move on," said Williams. "It's not as bad as we first thought. No structural damage, but it's sore."

The IHSAA wants all of the teams in the dual meet tournament to use their top lineup as much as possible in the championship rounds, with exceptions granted for injuries and special circumstances, but Linn-Mar Coach Doug Streicher preferred to keep his powder dry for the individual state tournament.

The Lions are one of the favorites for the team championship in the traditional state tournament with 12 qualifiers and Streicher did not want to risk any setbacks in the dual meet tournament,

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even though the Lions could have made a run at that title as well.

"We're kind of giving that up to make sure our individuals are in the best position they can be starting tomorrow," he said. "I'm going to do what's best for my kids, and that's what I said from Day 1. And let the chips fall where they may."

Alan Beste, the state meet director, said the IHSAA will review Linn-Mar's decision once the tournament is over and decide whether a penalty should be applied. The IHSAA could ban the Lions from next year's dual meet tournament if it feels there was a serious violation of the rules.

Prairie also faces possible sanctions, because if fielded a makeshift lineup in the semifinals.

"We won't make any kind of decision today," said Beste. "We need to analyze what happened."

Beste said the IHSAA will talk to coaches and athletic directors after the tournament to get their input. The IHSAA board of directors will hold its next meeting on March 8, which is the earliest any penalties would be imposed.

Banning Linn-Mar or Prairie from next year's tournament "would be the maximum," said Beste. "It may be a letter of reprimand. We're not out to have a heavy hammer on anybody."

Streicher and Williams said they are not worried about possible penalties. Both coaches said they acted in the best interests of their wrestlers and teams.

"I'm just worried about what's best for our team," said Williams.

All of the wrestling coaches received a strongly worded memo from the IHSAA prior to the

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regional dual team tournament, instructing them to use their top lineup or face possible sanctions, but Streicher said the IHSAA seemed to soften its stance somewhat in a conference call with coaches last Thursday.

"They kind of backed off from that stance a little bit, I think, for the most part," he said.

In any case, Streicher said he did what needed to be done.

"I'm a coach of the kids in our Linn-Mar district that are out for wrestling," he said. "They are trying to reach their goals of getting on the podium (for the awards ceremony at the individual state tournament), and that's where my allegiance lies.

"It's not an easy decision, but it was the best decision for our kids and it's what we decided to do."

Linn-Mar athletic director Scott Mahmens supported his coach. "Doug is doing it the right way," he remarked.

Williams decided to use a makeshift lineup in the semifinals after Uthoff got hurt in the opening round.

"After Sam got hurt, it made decisions a little easier," he said. "It made a tough decision maybe not as tough. After watching Sam, you get a sick feeling in your stomach."

The majority of coaches, including Streicher and Williams, would like to see the state dual meet tournament moved to a different time, perhaps in mid-January or perhaps a week after the individual state tournament. Until that happens, the coaches are faced with tough decisions and possible penalties if they do not comply with IHSAA guidelines.

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Streicher did not enjoy seeing his team lose in the first two rounds by lopsided scores with essentially a junior varsity lineup, but felt it was for the greater good.

"I'm a competitor. I want to win," he said. "It's tough sitting there watching that."

Beste said he understands the coaches' point of view. "We just want it to be a varsity competition," he said, "and we want to work with them and figure out how we can do that."

Cam Rathje, Casey Becker, Jesse Hynek, Trey Blaha and Skyler St. John collected pins for Prairie in its opening-round victory over Dowling Catholic.

Waverly-Shell Rock used its varsity lineup when it defeated Linn-Mar's makeshift lineup in the first round. Bettendorf had more than half of its varsity lineup on the mat when it defeated Prairie's makeshift lineup in the semifinals.

Linn-Mar forfeited three matches against Waverly-Shell Rock, Pleasant Valley and Dowling en route to an 0-3 finish.

STATE DUAL MEET TOURNAMENT

QUARTERFINALS

Southeast Polk 42, Pleasant Valley 29

Waverly-Shell Rock 67, Linn-Mar 12

Prairie 41, Dowling Catholic 27

Bettendorf 36, Ankeny 34

SEMIFINALS

Southeast Polk 46, Waverly-Shell Rock 19

Bettendorf 51, Prairie 13

CONSOLATION SEMIFINALS

Pleasant Valley 67, Linn-Mar 10

Ankeny 58, Dowling Catholic 9

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FINAL ROUND

1st Place: Southeast Polk 46, Bettendorf 20

3rd Place: Waverly-Shell Rock 51, Prairie 12

5th Place: Ankeny 39, Pleasant Valley 23

7th Place: Dowling Catholic 51, Linn-Mar 18

PRAIRIE 41, DOWLING 27

160 - Isaiah Patton (D) major dec. River Whitters, 11-3.

170 - Cam Rathje (P) pinned Matt Collins, 0:52.

182 - Reed Flood (D) major dec. Jarod Cadena, 14-4.

195 - Casey Becker (P) pinned Joe Brett, 3:29.

220 - Jesse Hynek (P) pinned Jonah Goaley, 3:20.

285 - Andrew Netolicky (P) dec. Andy Blackford, 3-0.

106 - Tanner Rohweder (D) pinned Sam Uthoff, 4:51.

113 - Jonah Eide (D) major dec. Zack Fiser, 10-0.

120 - Michael Zachery (D) dec. Jayden Flege, 13-6.

126 - Johnathan Eide (D) pinned Austin Erlandson, 1:18.

132 - Josh Wenger (P) major dec. Merrick Purcell, 11-3.

138 - Trey Blaha (P) pinned Harrison Farrell, 1:47.

145 - Skyler St. John (P) pinned Cole Barnabo, 3:10.

152 - Jamie Day (P) major dec. Eli Gaul, 10-2.

BETTENDORF 51, PRAIRIE 13

170 - Michael Belanger (B) major dec. Mason Jones, 10-2.

182 - Jarod Cadena (P) dec. Austin Snow, 8-6.

195 - Austin Dougherty (B) dec. Jonah Manson, 5-4.

220 - Jesse Hynek (P) dec. Ian Burkland, 4-0.

285 - Raekwon Jefferson (B) pinned Colton Sickels, 1:46.

106 - Steventon Wagner (B) major dec. Marcus England, 18-6.

113 - Jacob Schwarm (B) pinned Jonah Nassif, 2:42.

120 - Jayden Flege (P) major dec. Jackson Gallagher, 13-1.

126 - Fredy Stoker (B) pinned Austin Erlandson, 1:04.

132 - Logan Ryan (B) pinned Seth Wennermark, 2:17.

138 - Xavier LaDouceur (B) major dec. Jacob Viktora, 16-3.

145 - Taylor Mehmen (P) dec. Jacob Ludwig, 13-7.

152 - Brady Neyrinck (B) pinned Jamie Day, 1:53.

160 - Elijah Preisser (B) pinned Tyshawn Bush, 1:11.

WAVERLY-SHELL ROCK 51, PRAIRIE 12

182 - Jarod Cadena (P) pinned Jamiir Moore, 1:10.

195 - Adam Walther (WSR) pinned Jonah Manson, 1:27.

220 - Kaleb staack (WSR) won by forfeit.

285 - Sean Lord (WSR) won by forfeit.

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106 - Marcus England (P) pinned Logan Derifield, 5:40.
113 - Nathan Sands (WSR) pinned Jonah Nassif, 3:08.
120 - Isaiah Mundell (WSR) dec. Jayden Flege, 2-0.
126 - Justin Reiher (WSR) pinned Austin Erlandson, 3:27.
132 - Seth Wennermark (P) dec. Seth Walker, 10-3.
138 - Josh Mundell (WSR) major dec. Logan Viktora, 15-2.
145 - Levin Meier (WSR) major dec. Taylor Mehmen, 16-4.
152 - Sky Holmgren (WSR) dec. Jamie Day, 5-0.
160 - Izaak Miller (WSR) major dec. Nick Hogan, 14-1.
170 - Casey Schulte (WSR) dec. Mason Jones, 3-1.

WAVERLY-SHELL ROCK 67, LINN-MAR 12

160 - Izaak Miller (WSR) pinned Beau Oberbroeckling, 3:02.
170 - Thomas Foy (WSR) won by forfeit.
182 - Andrew Holladay (LM) pinned Jamiir Moore, 1:06.
195 - Adam Walther (WSR) won by forfeit.
220 - Sean Lord (WSR) dec. Ben Overdyk, 2-1.
285 - Kalel Staack (WSR) won by forfeit.
106 - Noah Ajram (LM) pinned Logan Derifield, 1:28.
113 - Nathan Sands (WSR) pinned John Clymer, 2:36.
120 - Isaiah Mundell (WSR) pinned Mark Trautman, 1:40.
126 - Justin Reiher (WSR) major dec. Seth Fawcett, 11-0.
132 - Bryce Steiert (WSR) pinned Zach Huffman, 3:39.
138 - Andrew Steiert (WSR) pinned Alexander Geers, 5:30.
145 - Corey Abernathy (WSR) pinned Brandon Snider, 1:41.
152 - Spencer Derifield (WSR) pinned Andrew Verhile, 1:20.

PLEASANT VALLEY 67, LINN-MAR 10

106 - Noah Ajram (LM) pinned Destin Babcock, 1:07.
113 - Scott Kraft (PV) pinned Amar Srivastava, 4:36.
120 - Spencer Nevills (PV) tech fall Mark Trautman, 16-1.
126 - Travis Willers (PV) pinned Seth Fawcett, 1:32.
132 - Christian Foote (PV) pinned Zach Huffman, 1:26.
138 - Randy McPhee (PV) major dec. Alexander Geers, 16-6.
145 - Shea Hartzler (LM) major dec. Caleb Wheeler, 15-7.
152 - Jay Huettman (PV) major dec. Andrew Verhile, 10-1.
160 - Grant Rosenboom (PV) pinned Austin McCulloh, 2:51.
170 - Brady Letney (PV) pinned Beau Oberbroeckling, 1:54.
182 - Seth Skahill (PV) won by forfeit.
195 - Joe Picchiotti (PV) won by forfeit.
220 - Connor Moroney (PVB) pinned Ben Overdyk, 3:04.
285 - Landon Carney (PV) won by forfeit.

DOWLING 51, LINN-MAR 18

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- 182 - Tommy Gookin (D) won by forfeit.
- 195 - Joe Brett (D) won by forfeit.
- 220 - Jonah Goaley (D) pinned Ben Overdyk, 1:55.
- 285 - Andy Blackford (D) won by forfeit.
- 106 - Ted Petersen (LM) pinned Daniel Copeland, 1:39.
- 113 - John Clymer (LM) won by forfeit.
- 120 - Michael Zachery (D) pinned Mark Trautman, 0:48.
- 126 - Merrick Purcell (D) dec. Seth Fawcett, 6-3.
- 132 - Caleb Murray (D) dec. Zach Huffman, 7-4.
- 138 - Harrison Farrell (D) dec. Alexander Geers, 9-3.
- 145 - Brandon Snider (LM) pinned Cole Barnabo, 3:45.
- 152 - Eli Gaul (D) dec. Andrew Verhile. 6-2.
- 160 - Beb McLuen (D) dec. Austin McCulloh, 4-3.
- 170 - Matt Collins (D) pinned Beau Oberbroeckling, 1:13.