

Northrup, Netolicky end careers in style

Written by Jim Ecker

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DES MOINES -- Joel Northrup will be remembered as the devout young man who declined to wrestle a girl at the state tournament two years ago, but he also should be remembered as a talented athlete who enjoyed a highly successful high school career.

Northrup placed third at the Class 3A state tournament in 2010, finished fourth in 2012 and capped his career by taking third at 145 pounds again Saturday for the Linn-Mar Lions.

He also qualified for the state wrestling meet in 2011, but that was the year he forfeited to a girl in the first round due to his religious convictions, saying he did not think it proper to engage a female in that manner.

Saddled with a first-round defeat that season, he failed to place in the midst of intense national attention.

"I'm not ashamed of that," he said Saturday. "I'm proud of what I stood up for and I have no regrets on that."

Cedar Rapids Prairie senior Andrew Netolicky also finished his prep wrestling career Saturday as a three-time placewinner when he finished third at 285 pounds.

The Metro area did not claim any individual titles or runnerup finishes this year, but 17 grapplers from Cedar Rapids and Marion placed in the consolation rounds Saturday.

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Northrup and Netolicky topped the Metro charts with their third-place showings. Matt Wempen of Linn-Mar (113), Josh Wenger of Prairie (126) and Trey Blaha of Prairie (138) finished fourth in their weight classes.

Alijah Jeffery of Linn-Mar (120), Skyler St. John of Prairie (145), Ross Lembeck of Linn-Mar (152), Cameron Rathje of Prairie (170), Andrew Holladay of Linn-Mar (182) and Zac Gillis of Washington (285) placed fifth in their brackets.

Damon Griffin of Linn-Mar (126), Michael Moncivais of Jefferson (132), River Whitters of Prairie (160) and Justin Green of Linn-Mar (220) placed sixth. Sam Uthoff of Prairie (106) and Casey Becker of Prairie (195) placed seventh.

The Prairie Hawks brought eight wrestlers to the state meet and all eight of them were placewinners, the first time in Blake Williams' 10 years as head coach that all of his qualifiers made the podium.



Prairie edged Waverly-Shell Rock, 96-92, for third place to earn a handsome trophy. Linn-Mar finished in fifth place with 83.5 points. Southeast Polk ran away with the Class 3A title with 180.5 points. Bettendorf finished second with 134.5 markers.

The Prairie Hawks were sorely disappointed when they lost all four of their bouts in the semifinals Friday night, but they regrouped and scored enough points Saturday to finish in third place.

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"The big thing is, we want that trophy," Netolicky explained.

Netolicky placed sixth at the state meet in 2011, finished fifth last year and jumped to third this season, fulfilling one of his goals of improving each year.

"I feel like I had a great career," he said. "I made my family happy, I made my school happy. I feel good about it."

Netolicky edged Jake Scanlon of Southeast Polk, 1-0, for third place.

Netolicky was also an outstanding football player at Prairie. He originally thought he'd focus on football in college, but now he's considering the possibility of being a two-sport athlete again.

"After this," he said, surveying the state meet at noisy Wells Fargo Arena, "I really like wrestling."

He's leaning toward Coe College but has not made a decision. "I went on a couple of visits to other schools and it didn't feel like a fit for me," he said. "I went to Coe. It feels right."

Northrup is still looking for the right fit for his college years. He plans to wrestle in college and would like to study pre-law with an eye on a potential career in law or politics.

Northrup normally doesn't show much emotion at wrestling tournaments, but he broke down in tears Saturday upon the realization that his high school career had ended a little shy of his ultimate goal.

He collected a 15-0 technical fall over Colin Strickland of Southeast Polk in his final match.

"It's a lot of emotion after you lose and stop short of your goal of winning," he remarked.

"Overall I didn't have a good tournament. I didn't use very good technique, but I was able to get there for my team."

Northrup suffered his only loss of the season at the state tournament and finished the season with a 51-1 record. That one loss, which came in overtime, cost him a shot at the title.

"I have a lot of good memories from wrestling," he said. "Great teammates, great coaches."

Jeffery also became a three-time placewinner for Linn-Mar after finishing fifth Saturday. He placed third in 2011 and 2012.

Lembeck became a three-time placewinner for the Lions as well after finishing fifth this year. He placed seventh in 2011 and second in 2012.

Jeffery and Lembeck will be trying to become four-time placewinners next year as seniors.

CLASS 3A TEAM STANDINGS

1. Southeast Polk 180.5, 2. Bettendorf 134.5, 3. Prairie 96, 4. Waverly-Shell Rock 92, 5. Linn-Mar 83.5, 6. North Scott 66.5, 7. Burlington 60.5, 8. Iowa City West 59, 9. West Des Moines Valley 58.5, 10. Dowling 57.

11. Waterloo West 55, 12. Johnston 49, 13. Clinton 43, 14. Lewis Central 38, 15. Indianola 37, 32. Jefferson 13, 37. Washington 11, 50. Xavier 1.

THIRD-PLACE MATCHES

Metro Only

113 - Bryce Meyer (Fort Madison) dec. Matt Wempen (Linn-Mar), 8-2.

126 - Chris Walters (IC West) dec. Josh Wenger (Prairie), 8-2.

138 - Kegan Wakefield (IC West) dec. Trey Blaha (Prairie), 5-3 (ot).

145 - Joel Northrup (Linn-Mar) tech fall Colin Strickland (SE Polk), 15-0 (5:41).

285 - Andrew Netolicky (Prairie) dec. Jake Scanlon (SE Polk), 1-0.

FIFTH-PLACE MATCHES

Metro Only

120 - Alijah Jeffery (Linn-Mar) pinned Justin Kaitved (Carroll), 1:12.

126 - Keegan Shaw (SE Polk) dec. Damon Griffin (Linn-Mar), 4-3.

132 - Clayton Hocker (Ft Madison) pinned Michael Moncivais (Jefferson), 0:47.

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145 - Skyler St. John (Prairie) dec. Matt Victor (Indianola), 5-4.

152 - Ross Lembeck (Linn-Mar) pinned Dylan Matter (WDM Valley), 2:50.

160 - Dillon Chase (Clinton) dec. River Whitters (Prairie), 4-2.

170 - Cameron Rathje (Prairie) dec. Brady Letney (Pleasant Valley), 10-3.

182 - Andrew Holladay (Linn-Mar) dec. Dylan Fielder (Webster City), 9-5.

220 - Kaleb Staack (Waverly-Shell Rock) dec. Justin Green (Linn-Mar), 2-1.

285 - Zac Gillis (Washington) major dec. Derrick Hurt (Newton), 9-0.

SEVENTH-PLACE MATCHES

Metro Only

106 - Sam Uthoff (Prairie) pinned Erik Birnbaum (Fort Dodge), 4:55.

195 - Casey Becker (Prairie) major dec. Riley Prescott (Webster City), 12-0.

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