

Lembeck wins 152 crown; Prairie takes title

Written by Jim Ecker

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INDEPENDENCE - Ross Lembeck has been wrestling for a long, long time.

"Probably since I could walk," he said Saturday afternoon. "I started competition probably in kindergarten or first grade."

Lembeck is a senior at Linn-Mar now and ranked No.1 in the state at 152 pounds. It's a nice accolade at the start of the season, but the only top ranking he really cares about would come at the end of the year at the state tournament in Des Moines.

His goal for the season is obvious.

"Nothing but No.1," he said. "That's been my goal since freshman year, to get at the top of that stand. It didn't happen last year, so I'll try to make it happen this year."

Lembeck got off to a good start Saturday by taking top honors at 152 pounds at the Independence Invitational with a pin, a 10-4 decision and a 15-3 major decision in the finals.

"I'm feeling pretty good," he said. "I had a lot of work to do (during the offseason) because of the outcome last year, so I just worked on everything to become as tough as I can."

Lembeck finished seventh at the state tournament in 2011, placed second in 2012 and finished fifth last season. "I feel a lot stronger, a lot quicker, a lot more technically sound," he said, "so it

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should be a good year."

Lembeck can picture himself standing at the top of the awards stand in Des Moines. Now he wants to make it actually come true.

"I picture it every morning and every night and write it down: State champ," he said. "Hopefully it will happen."

The fifth-ranked Prairie Hawks captured the team championship at the Independence tournament with 190 points as Marcus England (106) and Skyler St. John (160) won individual titles.

The fourth-ranked Linn-Mar Lions finished second in the 10-team standings with 164.5 points and crowned three champions with top-ranked Alijah Jeffery (120), Lembeck (152) and Andrew Holladay (195).

The Xavier Saints finished in seventh place with 136.5 points and saw Clint Lembeck win a championship at 132 pounds.

Team Standings

1. Prairie 190, 2. Linn-Mar 164.5, 3. Alburnett 157.5, 4. Independence 155, 5. Osage 153.5, 6. North Fayette-Valley 144, 7. Xavier 136.5, 8. Hampton-Dumont 85.5, 9. Chariton 47.5, 10. Starmont 34.

Prairie Placewinners

Top 3

1st - Marcus England (106)

1st - Skyler St. John (160)

2nd - Dylan Kleinschmidt (113)

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2nd - Sam Uthoff (120)

2nd - Zack Fiser (126)

2nd - Jesse Hynek (195)

3rd - Trey Blaha (152)

3rd - Jarod Cadena (182)

Linn-Mar Placewinners

Top 3

1st - Alijah Jeffery (120)

1st - Ross Lembeck (152)

1st - Andrew Holladay (195)

2nd - Toby Northrup (145)

2nd - Sean Hartzler (160)

3rd - Alex Streicher (126)

Xavier Placewinners

Top 3

1st - Clint Lembeck (132)

2nd - Jeff Vipond (106)

2nd - Sean Ickes (182)

3rd - Josh Gerke (120)

3rd - Cole Turner (285)