

Wenger, Cadena, Kuehl eye state titles

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DES MOINES - Josh Wenger, Jarod Cadena and Dalton Kuehl are one step away from winning a coveted state wrestling title, but it won't be easy for any of the Metro seniors.

All three wrestlers will face the top-ranked man in their weight class in the championship round Saturday night at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines.

Wenger, who owns the Cedar Rapids Prairie school record for most wins in a career, will face top-ranked Daniel Kelly of Cedar Falls in a showdown for bragging rights at 138 pounds. Wenger is ranked No. 2 in the state.

Cadena, who is ranked No. 6 at 182 pounds for the Prairie Hawks, will meet top-ranked Mitch Otto of Sioux City East in the finals.

Kuehl, who is ranked No. 2 at 285 pounds for the Jefferson J-Hawks, has a date with top-ranked Jake Marnin of Southeast Polk in the championship round. Kuehl has committed to play football at Coe College, but is toying with the idea of wrestling for the Kohawks as well.

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The Prairie Hawks are a solid fourth in the team standings with 75.5 points and probably will finish fourth, no matter what happens in the wrestle-backs and championship round Saturday. Jefferson has climbed to sixth with 49 points, just 1.5 points behind Dowling for a top-five finish. Linn-Mar is tied for 14th place with 28 points.

Prairie brought nine wrestlers to the state tournament and four of them are still competing. Marcus England (106) and Sam Uthoff (126) are alive for third place in wrestle-backs that begin Saturday morning, then Wenger and Cadena will be aiming for titles Saturday night.



Jefferson brought eight wrestlers to the tournament and four of them are still in contention. Brenden Baker (113) and Kelly May (182) are in the hunt for third-place finishes, Kyle Briggs (132) is competing for seventh place and Kuehl is in the finals.

Linn-Mar brought four wrestlers to the state meet and three of them are battling for third place with Noah Ajram (120), Matt Wempen (145) and Shea Hartzler (160) hoping to claim bronze medals Saturday morning. Toby Northrup (152) appeared on his way to a medal as well, but he was injured in the third period of his consolation match Friday and had to default despite owning a big lead at the time, knocking him out of the tournament.

Nolan Hromidko (120) of Kennedy and Clint Lembeck (132) of Xavier are in contention for third-place finishes.

Wenger has been one of the hottest wrestlers in the state tournament for the Prairie Hawks at

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138 pounds with two pins and a technical fall. Cadena also has been impressive for Prairie with a technical fall, a major decision and a regular decision. Kuehl has looked good at heavyweight with two pins and a 3-1 verdict.

Wenger walloped Chase Seaney of Fort Madison, 16-0, in the semifinals. Cadena rolled by John Ware of Ankeny Centennial, 18-7, in the semifinals. Kuehl pinned Tyler Clark of Clinton in 2:57.

Class 3A Team Standings

1. Southeast Polk 165, 2. Bettendorf 128, 3. Fort Dodge 93, 4. Prairie 75.5, 5. Dowling 50.5, 6. Jefferson 49, 7. Waverly-Shell Rock 48, 8. (tie) Pleasant Valley 47, West Des Moines Valley 47, 10. North Scott 43. 14. Linn-Mar 28, 31. Kennedy 14.5, 35. Xavier 10.5.