

Wennermark helps Prairie pin J-Hawks

Written by Jim Ecker

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New Cedar Rapids Prairie wrestling coach Kane Thompson has been preaching a "team championship lifestyle" to the Hawks since taking over the squad this season.

Trenton Wennermark embraced the concept Thursday night.

Wennermark rallied from a 9-0 deficit and pinned Brenden Baker in the biggest upset of the match as the sixth-ranked Prairie Hawks topped No. 7 Jefferson, 42-30, in a Mississippi Valley Conference showdown at Jefferson.

Wennermark lost all three of his matches against Baker last year and was headed for a fourth straight defeat when he turned the tables in the third period. He got a reversal to draw within 9-4, then put Baker on his back and pinned him in 4 minutes, 33 seconds.

Thompson and all the wrestlers on the Prairie bench jumped in the air in celebration. Baker, a senior, is ranked No. 2 at 120 pounds by The Predicament wrestling magazine and Wennermark, a sophomore, is ranked No. 8 at 120. They wrestled a weight higher at 126 and Wennermark gave the Hawks a 21-9 lead with his precious victory.

Wennermark did not panic when he fell behind 9-0 in the second period and nearly got pinned himself.

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"I just kept my cool," he said. "Every time he'd get a move on me I wouldn't let it bother me. I just fought and put him on his back.

"I got him in a cradle," Wennermark said. "That's pretty much it. I got it really tight, laying on him."

Wennermark called it an "amazing" victory over a quality opponent.

"That's a huge testament to his will and his willingness to keep wrestling," Thompson said. "A lot of kids would put their head down and say, 'Hey, maybe I'm just going to try and wrestle for six minutes and maybe not give up a pin or a tech fall.'

"He went at it and put the hammer down. And when you keep wrestling, good things happen."

Prairie grabbed a commanding 36-9 lead after nine matches when Casey Hogan pinned Cody Clendenen at 145 pounds, but Jefferson roared back with three pins and a decision to pull within 36-30 entering the final bout of the night at 195 pounds.



Taylor Mehmen ended Jefferson's comeback when he pinned Taylor Viktora in 1:30, giving Prairie its final 12-point spread on the scoreboard. If Mehmen had gotten pinned, the score would have been 36-36.

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"I just knew we had to get that win," said Mehmen, who is ranked No. 5 at 182 pounds and wrestled a weight higher against the J-Hawks. "We had other kids step up throughout the whole night, so I knew I had to do the same thing they'd been doing the whole night."

Thompson succeeded Blake Williams as Prairie's head coach this season when Williams left for Solon, keeping the program in excellent hands. Mehmen said Thompson, a successful coach at Alburnett, has been talking to the wrestlers about what it takes to be champions.

"He always stresses it," Mehmen said, "to be a champion all the time, on and off the mat."

Tyler Pasker (220), Conrad Braswell (106), Sam Uthoff (132), Casey Hogan (145), Wennermark (126) and Mehmen (195) had pins for Prairie. Marcus England (113) and Chase St. John (138) won decisions.

Colten Mastin (120), Kyle Briggs (152), Tavian Rashed (160) and Nick Dreckman (182) collected pins for Jefferson. David Bonner (285) and Matt Culver (170) won decisions for the J-Hawks.

Prairie will compete in the Battle of Waterloo Friday and Saturday. The Hawks are leaving for Waterloo at 6:20 a.m. Friday, about nine hours after their big win Thursday night. Jefferson will head to the Southeast Polk tournament on Saturday.

PRAIRIE 42, JEFFERSON 30

220 - Tyler Pasker (P) pinned Blake Owens, 1:57

285 - David Bonner (J) dec. Alex Heisdorffer, 6-3

106 - Conrad Braswell (P) pinned Jaden Collins, 0:36

113 - Marcus England (P) dec. Joseph Sibomana, 8-3

120 - Colten Mastin (J) pinned Jacob Tedrow, 0:45

126 - Trenten Wennermark (P) pinned Brenden Baker, 4:33

132 - Sam Uthoff (P) pinned Zach Main, 1:22

138 - Chase St. John (P) dec. Dalton Mastin, 12-6

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145 - Casey Hogan (P) pinned Cody Clendenen, 2:55

152 - Kyle Briggs (J) pinned Rhett Ruzicka, 3:21

160 - Tavian Rashed (J) pinned Morgan Hood, 2:00

170 - Matt Culver (J) dec. Derek Horak, 14-7

182 - Nick Dreckman (J) pinned Preston LaGrange, 3:51

195 - Taylor Mehmen (P) pinned Taylor Viktora, 1:30