

Chicchelly goes high tech for a win

Written by Jim Ecker

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DES MOINES -- Braxton Chicchelly used his skills as a wrestler and computer surfer to reach the semifinals of the Class 3A state wrestling tournament Friday.

Chicchelly, a 130-pound senior from Xavier High School, did not know anything about David Lewis of Bettendorf, his mystery opponent in the quarterfinals Friday morning, so he borrowed an assistant coach's laptop Thursday night in a local hotel room and did some research.

He googled "David Lewis" and found all sorts of useful information, including video of Lewis in action.

"I saw him wrestle an Oregon kid, and I tried to use the exact same thing the Oregon kid did," Chicchelly explained. "It worked for me."

Chicchelly dominated Lewis, 6-2, sending him to the semifinals Friday night at Wells Fargo Arena.

Chicchelly said he used "heavy hands" to subdue Lewis. In other words, he tried to control his opponent's hands and make him submit to Chicchelly's other skills.

"I knew if I did that and kept the pressure up for six minutes, it was going to be a pretty good outcome," he said. "I kind of knew how to take him down and what kind of strategy to use."

Who says wrestling isn't high-tech?

"If I can do one little thing to get a mental edge or a physical edge, I'll do it," Chicchelly said, "because I want to get on the top of the podium."

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Chicchelly (40-6) has to beat Iowa City West's Dakota Bauer in the semifinals to keep his hopes alive of reaching the top rung of the awards stand Saturday night. Bauer beat Chicchelly in the finals of the Mississippi Valley Conference tournament three weeks ago, 10-6.

Chicchelly said he doesn't have to study Bauer on the Internet to prepare for Friday night.

"I know exactly what he's going to do, and I know exactly what I have to do," he said. "It's just a matter of will and determination."

Six Metro wrestlers won in the quarterfinals Friday morning and will wrestle in the semifinals Friday night, having clinched at least a top-6 finish at state.

Zach Witte (36-0) of Prairie collected a 10-2 major decision over Garrett Hathaway of Iowa City West in the 145-pound quarterfinals, but he'll face a stiff challenge from Chad Ryan of Sioux City North in the semifinals. Ryan won the 130-pound title last year and is 47-1 this season.

Mitch Wantock (15-2) of Linn-Mar continued his strong showing in the postseason with a 7-2 victory over Terry Stover of Waverly-Shell Rock in the quarterfinals at 171 pounds.

Ryan Sheldon (40-1) of Kennedy edged Kyle Putname of Lewis Central, 3-2, in the quarterfinals at 171 pounds, keeping his championship hopes alive. Wantock and Sheldon could meet for the 171-pound title Saturday night if they both win Friday night.

Andrew Netolicky (40-8) of Prairie continued his impressive showing at the state tournament with his second pin in two days at 189 pounds, this time a 1:57 job against Ty Flood of West Des Moines Dowling in the quarterfinals.

Netolicky is just a sophomore, one of only two sophomores to reach the 16-man bracket at state and the youngest qualifier for the 189-pound semifinals.

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"It feels really good," he said. "I'll try to keep going and get to the top of the podium."

"A soph at 189. It's a big accomplishment," mused Prairie Coach Blake Williams. "I don't think he'll be satisfied with where he's at, and we don't want him to be. We're going to see how high he can get up on that stand."

Conner Herman of Jefferson reached the semifinals with a 3-1 victory in overtime over Keaton Jurevitz of Bettendorf. Herman's opponent in the semifinals is Urbandale's Jesse South, who placed fifth at 215 pounds last year.

Four Metro wrestlers are alive in the consolation bracket and could finish as high as third place. Alijah Jeffery (103) of Linn-Mar, Luke Kremer (135) of Kennedy, Ross Lembeck (135) of Linn-Mar and Tyler Burrell (285) of Washington will wrestle Friday night, assured of placing no worse than eighth.

Kremer and Lembeck will face each other in the wrestlebacks Friday night at 135 pounds.

Linn-Mar sophomore Joel Northrup, who defaulted his first-round match to Cassy Herkelman of Cedar Falls Thursday because he did not want to wrestle a girl, lost in the 112-pound wrestlebacks Friday morning in overtime and was eliminated from the tournament without placing. Northrup finished third at 103 pounds last year.

Prairie stood in 10th place in the team standings with 27 points heading into Friday night's round. The top-10 teams are Bettendorf (81), Waverly-Shell Rock (74), Iowa City West (72), Southeast Polk (66.5), West Des Moines Valley (45.5), Indianola (39), Lewis Central (37), Mason City (30.5), Urbandale (27.5) and Prairie (27).

[Complete Class 3A quarterfinal and consolation results>>](#)