

Del Norte sophomore qualifies for nationals

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It's been a good year on the wrestling mats for Del Norte's Colton Schaad and it's showing no signs of slowing down.

After an impressive high school season that included winning an individual and team league championship, the standout sophomore has carried that form into the club season.

Late last month, Schaad traveled to the Northwest Regionals in Washington, where he placed third in both the Freestyle and Greco-Roman tournaments at 160 pounds and qualified for this summer's US Marine Corps Junior & 16U Nationals.

The big tournament will take place in Fargo, North Dakota, from July 15 to the 23rd, and Schaad is relishing the opportunity.

"I'm looking forward to it for sure," he said. "I've never been there, but it's a big deal. It's hard to get there, so I'm looking forward to it."

Schaad was one of five Del Norte wrestlers to make the trip for the regional tournament, which featured three age groups, 18U, 16U and 14U.

Competing in the 16U division, Schaad went 4-1 in both the Freestyle and Greco-Roman tournaments, which were held on back-to-back days.

His only losses came to the eventual champion in each tournament.

“It was pretty cool,” he said of the experience. “One of the things you go up there to see is how close you are to the next level. It was fun.”

And the level of competition did not disappoint.

“It was tough,” Schaad said. “There were some kids up there that are next level. Some kids that are nationally ranked, the best kids this side of the Mississippi.”

Schaad certainly held his own, as did his teammates — freshman Chulhs Bates, junior Rey Martinez and sophomores Alex Osborne and Caeson Allen — who each also made the trip and gained some valuable experience.

“I was extremely happy,” said head coach Clinton Schaad, who is also Colton’s father. “I thought all five went up there and wrestled really well, and they all had a really good attitude. We’re trying to expose ourselves to bigger and broader wrestling.”

Osborne enjoyed some success in the Freestyle competition and finished 3-2, before losing his only match in the less familiar Greco-Roman division on the following day.

Allen also competed on both days, finishing 1-2 in each bracket, while Bates and Martinez competed in the Freestyle tournament despite battling sickness and an injury, respectively.

“He wrestled really tough,” Clinton Schaad said of Bates, who was sick all week but still managed to go 1-2 in tournament action.

“He really wanted to go, but when you’re sick, you can only do so much.”

Martinez, meanwhile, was victorious in his only match of the weekend, before being forced to withdraw with an injury.

The top six wrestlers in each division at the regional tournament all qualified for the summer national tournament, and Colton Schaad’s teammates still have the opportunity to make the field if they can place in the top two at the upcoming state tournament.

“Hopefully we can get some more of his teammates and some wrestlers from some of the Humboldt schools to qualify,” Clinton Schaad said.

Regardless of whether any of his teammates can join him, the experience of competing at a national tournament will help Colton Schaad’s development on the mats.

This past winter, the sophomore standout won the H-DNL 160-pound title and placed eighth at the North Coast Section championships.

He also played a major role in helping the Warriors to a league team championship and a second-place finish at the NCS Dual Meet tournament.

“It was a great time,” Colton Schaad said of the season. “We traveled to lots of places, from Oregon down to the Bay Area and Sacramento. We were trying to put ourselves out there, and we did. Everybody did good.”