

Del Norte Warriors dominate at league championships

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A memorable season on the wrestling mats continued for the Del Norte Warriors on Saturday, as the boys team won a league championship at Fortuna High.

One week after placing second at the North Coast Section Dual Meet Division-2 Redwood Empire Championships, the Warriors dominated the rest of the Humboldt-Del Norte League with another big showing in the league finale tournament.

The Del Norte boys had 11 finalists in the 14 brackets and scored 211 points, which was well ahead of second-placed Hoopa with 144 points.

“Overall, I think the guys wrestled pretty well,” head coach Clinton Schaad said. “Having 11 in the finals was a pretty good showing and we were excited about that.”

Four Warriors took home individual titles, including Chulhs Bates at 106 pounds, as well as Isaac Lopez (138), Colton Schaad (160) and Jase Montonye (195).

Three of the four Del Norte girls in action also won individual titles, including senior Adenne Schaad, who won her fourth league title.

Tescha Gensaw and Channey Schaad each also won league titles for the girls team, while Karlye Dodson placed third in her bracket.

Bates, who is just a freshman, is enjoying an outstanding season with the team and he won both of his matches with a pin, including a victory over Fortuna’s Cayden Spiers in the final.

“Chulhs is having a fantastic year,” Clinton Schaad said of the young grappler, who is seeded No. 2 in his bracket for this weekend’s North Coast Section championships, a big achievement for a freshman. “He’s looking really good.”

Lopez also won both of his matches on the way to the title, including an 8-4 decision over McKinleyville’s William Baumgarten in the final.

The two H-DN rivals had split a pair of matches this season coming into the league championships.

“Isaac’s been training really hard this year,” Clinton Schaad said of the junior. “It was a good job by Isaac. He’s been improving all year long.”

Sophomore Colton Schaad also has shown a lot of improvement this season and got the better of Arcata’s Gavin Smith with a pin in the final after placing second in the league meet last winter.

“He’s put in a lot of time and has been working really hard at practice,” the head coach said. “He puts in extra running and extra time in the weight room. Colton had a great day. He was very patient in the final.”

Montonye, meanwhile, took home a league title for the third straight year after winning all three of his matches with a pin.

“Jase looked really, really fundamentally sound in the final,” Clinton Schaad said. “His conditioning really showed.”

Alex Osborne (113), Eric Stansbury (120), James Gensaw (126), Curtis Bartley (132), Soren Lewis (152), RJ Loftin (170) and Reynaldo Martinez (182) each also placed second in their brackets to score some valuable points for their team, with William Bommelyn placing fourth at 145, Hunter Loftin fifth at 220, and Mason Borges sixth at 285.

All 11 of the Del Norte wrestlers who placed in the top two will now advance to the prestigious NCS meet, which is bigger than many state championships around the country.

The top two in each weight division will advance to next week’s CIF State Championships.

Even more impressive, eight of the 11 Del Norte boys are seeded in the top nine in their brackets for the section championships, which will be held at James Logan High School.

The four Del Norte girls also will compete at the NCS girls championships, which will be held at Albany High School.

Both section tournaments get under way on Friday and will run for two days.

“It’s kind of been the same philosophy for us the whole year,” the head coach said. “We want to take each match one at a time and try to wrestle our best match and give our best performance and go from there.

“You don’t try to look for the finish line when you’re still at the starting line. We want to stay calm and wrestle the best we can.”

At the NCS Dual Meet Championships, the Del Norte boys were seeded No. 1 in their division and made it to the final for the fourth consecutive postseason dual meet tournament.

The Warriors comfortably won their opening match against Piner by a score of 75-6 and followed that with a 35-29 win over Casa Grande in the semifinal.

They lost the final to No. 2 seed Ukiah for the fourth straight year, falling 43-19.

“We’re glad we did what we did, but we definitely had big expectations as the No. 1 seed,” Clinton Schaad said. “Overall we wrestled pretty well. We had nice victories over Piner and Casa Grande.”