Del Norte Triplicate

NEWS

Three Del Norte wrestlers qualify for state championships

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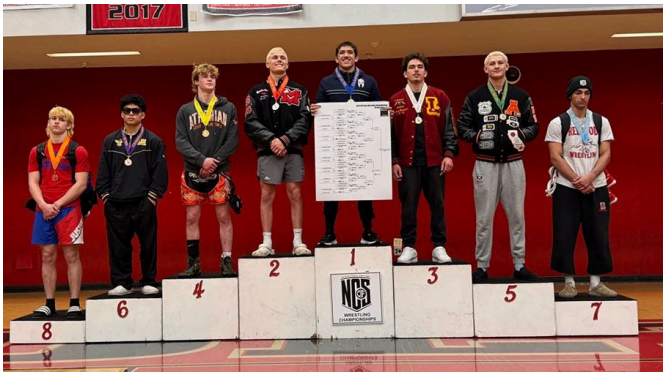





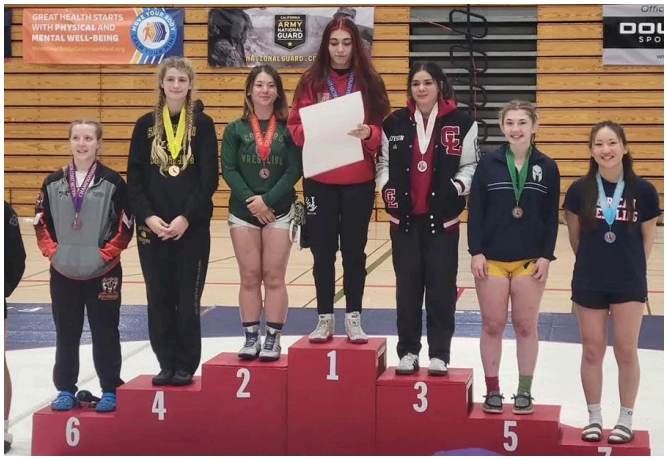

It was a season to remember for Del Norte wrestling, and it was so for several reasons.

The local high school boys team won a seventh straight league title at Arcata High on Feb 15, one week after they took home a second straight North Coast Section Dual Championship.

And they were just getting started.

One week after winning the league championship, they traveled south to James Logan High School in Union City and took home two of the 14 individual NCS titles, while placing third as a team out of 105 section schools and advancing three grapplers to the California state championships in Bakersfield.

The talented trio — seniors Curtis Bartley and Colton Schaad and sophomore Remington Escobedo — would all win at least one match in Bakersfield, with Schaad going further in tournament action than any other Del Norte wrestler has since 2010.

“We battled,” head coach Clinton Schaad said of the trip to state. “The kids did their best. It’s a huge tournament. This is the biggest state tournament in the country.”

Colton Schaad finished 3-2 in Bakersfield, making it to the top 16 in the 165-pound bracket, including victories over the Nos. 15 and 18 ranked wrestlers in his weight class.

It was the most successful appearance at state for any Del Norte wrestler since the legendary Bronk McCovey claimed back-to-back state championships in 2009 and 2010, the only time an H-DNL grappler has ever won a state title in the sport.

“Colton had a fantastic tournament,” his father and head coach Clinton Schaad said.

Colton Schaad also was presented with the prestigious California Interscholastic Federation Pursuing Victory with Honor medal at the state meet for his actions, positive attitude and sportsmanship.

Bartley, who along with Schaad was making his second trip to the state tournament, was seeded No. 14 at 138 pounds.

He lost his opening match, but battled back with a much improved performance in his second match, before eventually bowing out of the tournament and ending a successful high school career that included back-to-back NCS championships in his junior and senior years.

“Curtis had a rough first-round match, but everybody in this tournament is a quality wrestler. This is the best of the best,” Clinton Schaad said. “In his second match he looked much more like the Curtis we know.

“He wrestled tough and he had an amazing career at Del Norte. I told him this is just a stepping stone, part of the process.”

Escobedo, meanwhile, was making his first trip to the state tournament after winning a first NCS championship the previous week, and he immediately looked like he belonged.

Competing at 150 pounds, Escobedo also lost his first match, before battling back to secure a victory in match No. 2 and gaining some valuable experience.

“He looked good,” Clinton Schaad said. “Remington’s only a sophomore and it’s his first time here, but even to make it here is an accomplishment. Remington went out there and gave it his all.”

Bartley will continue his wrestling career on the college mats after graduation and has committed his future to North Idaho Junior College, one of the top JC program is the nation.

Colton Schaad, who was an NCS champion as a junior, will also wrestle in college and has received plenty of interest and offers.

The 4.0 GPA student-athlete is currently considering his options and says he wants to find the right fit for his academic and athletic ambitions.

Several other Del Norte wrestlers impressed at the NCS championships.

In addition to the individual titles for Bartley and Escobedo, five other Warriors placed in the top eight and medalled.

Alex Osborne finished second at 115 pounds, but did not advance to state after losing his true second matchup, which allows a third-place wrestler to face the second-place wrestler for the second and final state berth in the division, providing they have not faced off earlier in the tournament.

Colton Schaad lost his quarterfinal matchup but battled his way back through the consolation bracket with four straight wins to secure third place, before wining his true second matchup to secure state qualification.

Braydon Johnson rounded out the Del Norte boys medalists with an eighth-place finish at 192, while Karlye Dodson finished fifth at 140 pounds for the Del Norte girls at their NCS championships at Albany High School and her teammate Allie Bartley finished seventh.

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