

LKWC has record number of state qualifiers



Louisburg's Mason Koechner works for a pin during the USAWKS District 1 wrestling tournament Saturday at Blue Valley Southwest High School. The Louisburg Kids Wrestling Club set a record with 15 state qualifiers Saturday.

Photo courtesy of Penny McCaskill

OVERLAND PARK — The Louisburg Kids Wrestling Club (LKWC) made sure it was going to be well-represented at the upcoming state tournament.

At the USAWKS District 1 tournament Saturday, the Wildcats qualified 15 of their 20 wrestlers for state and put nine in the championship finals, including four champions. Louisburg finished with a 44-29 overall record and had 19 pins at Blue Valley Southwest High School.

The 15 state qualifiers is also a LKWC record and gives the Wildcats nice boost heading into this weekend's state tournament in Topeka.

Tyson Blancarte (8-and-under, 46 pounds), Brandon Doles (10-U, 110), Brayden Dame (12-U, 92) and Ryan Adams (high school, 145) all earned district titles.

Brayden Yoder (8-U, 67), Ashton Moore (8-U, 80), Harrison Kalinka (10-U, 90), Blue Caplinger (14-U, 135) and Nathan Keegan (high school, 120) finished runner-up to earn state bids.

Jay McCaskill (8-U, 64) and Mason Koechner (high school, 220) finished third overall. Kaden Allen (8-U, 52), Gage Gilliland (8-U, 73), Ryan Owens (12-U, 68) and Austin Moore (14-U, 145) came in fourth to also qualify for state.

Blancarte, who already won a state title in the 6-and-under division, recorded three first period pins to cruise his way to a district crown.

Doles also picked up three wins at 110 pounds. His opening match of the day was his toughest as he won a 2-0 decision over Leavenworth County's Gabriel Bailey and then pinned Ottawa's Andrew Spangler early in the second period in round two. In his final match of the day, Doles defeated Tonganoxie's Conner Cole by a 7-0 decision to get his district title.

Dame opened his quest for a district championship with an 8-1 decision over Atchison's Jayden Watkins in the quarterfinals. He then pinned Bonner Springs' Anthony Ferguson in the semifinals before defeating Paola's Noah Bowden 6-2 in the championship match.

Coming off a state tournament appearance during the high school season, Adams picked up right where he left off as he pinned De Soto's Michael Lynn in 54 seconds and then followed it up with an 11-0 major decision against Spencer Fortney of the Junior Vikings.

Adams squared off with Osawatomie's Brendon Chrisjohn in the championship and left with an 11-2 major decision.

Yoder, Moore, Kalinka and Keegan each finished the day with a pin, while Koechner ended the tournament with two pins.

The Wildcats will now prepare for the two-day state folkstyle tournament beginning Saturday at the Kansas Expocentre in Topeka.