

Wildcats medal five at Parsons Invitational



Louisburg's Anthony Welborn (left) was one of five Wildcat wrestlers to medal last Friday in Parsons.

PARSONS – There aren't many breaks, if any, in the Louisburg wrestling schedule this season and that was true again Friday when the Wildcats traveled to the Parsons Invitational.

Louisburg competed against two ranked teams in Mill Valley and Lebanon, Mo., among several other tough opponents. Still, the Wildcats were able to find their way to the medal stand.

The Wildcats medaled five wrestlers in the top four and two of those found their way to the championship match. Sophomore Cade Holtzen and senior Blue Caplinger each finished second overall in their respective weight class.

Senior Gabe Bonham and freshman Brandon Doles each finished third, while teammate Anthony Welborn, who was wrestling unattached, took fourth.

"It was a good tournament for us in a lot of ways, but chiefly it

highlighted that we still have some areas to work on," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "I love that our kids are staying competitive in our matches.

There were some solid teams there last weekend. Mill Valley is No. 6 in 6A and Lebanon is No. 5 in Missouri 3A. Throw in all the individually ranked kids in the tournament, and it was tougher than it has been in the past."

Caplinger made Louisburg history at 170 pounds when he picked up his 100th career victory. He recorded a pin and won by major decision to reach the title match.

He squared off with Quentin Sanders, the No. 2 ranked wrestler in Class 6A from Wichita West, and Caplinger held his own despite the 3-0 loss.

"Blue ran into a freshman phenom from Wichita West," Bovaird said. "He lost 3-0, but the thing I liked most about that match was that Blue was technically sound. With the exception of the quick escape and takedown his opponent scored, Blue initiated every move in that match."

As for Holtzen, he cruised to his final match at 113 pounds against Lebanon's Cole Patten. Holtzen controlled the match, but was caught in a move and was pinned to hand Holtzen just his second loss this season.

"Cade was looking strong in his finals match, but he got caught in a funk move," Bovaird said. "It

was just a simple mistake of getting a little too high in a scramble and then his opponent was able to lock him up tight in a 'high flyer.' Cade has watched the video of that match, and I think the lesson has been learned."

Bonham (138 pounds) and Doles (145 pounds) both reached the semifinals, but each lost by decision. However, both wrestlers bounced back to take third as Bonham defeated Welborn by major decision, while Doles pinned Labette County's Braden Barragar.

The Wildcats finished sixth in the team standings with 66.5 points, while Lebanon was first with 238 points. Mill Valley was second with 172.

"This season, we've been talking a lot about believing in the process and competing in everything we do. It's derived from our 'Wildcat Style' philosophy that I've adapted from the University of Missouri head wrestling coach Brian Smith," Bovaird said. "The final component of 'Wildcat Style' is the idea of 'doing one more.' Whether it's doing one more rep at practice, one more drill after training is over, or one more lift in the weight room, the philosophy of doing one more is infectious in everything we do.

"It helps the wrestlers remember that we have outcome goals – going to state, having a winning record, winning state, etc. – and then we have process goals. Those are the goals we set each week to work toward our

final outcome goals. I think the Parsons meet helped reinforce a lot of things, but it also showed us that we need to be digging deeper and doing a little more to get ready for competitions.”

Louisburg returns to the mat tonight when it travels to Ottawa for a dual. Then on Saturday, the Wildcats will compete in the Baldwin Invitational. That tournament is set to begin at 9 a.m.