Collins, DeWeese medal to lead Wildcat girls at Atchison County



Louisburg's Maliya Collins (left) and Brooklyn DeWeese earned medals on Dec. 21 at the ACCHS Invitational in Effingham.

EFFINGHAM – The Louisburg girls wrestling team ventured into tournament action on Dec. 21 in Effingham and a couple of the Wildcat wrestlers left with some hardware.

Louisburg's Maliya Collins and Brooklyn DeWeese came away with medals and a top three finish in their respective weight classes at the ACCHS Invitational. As a team, the Wildcats also wrestled strong as they finished sixth out of 18 teams with 50.5 points.

“Overall the girls had a great performance,” Louisburg coach Heather Eslinger said. “For many of our freshmen, this tournament helped boost confidence as they proved to themselves that they can perform at the varsity level. For our newer wrestlers who may not be at the varsity level yet, this tournament gave them just that more experience and time on the mat to learn. Each and every girl battled though wins and losses, never giving up.”

Collins had a big day in the 140-pound bracket. The Louisburg sophomore advanced to the championship match with a pair of wins.

She opened with a 33 second pin of Washburn Rural’s Ayla Ross and then won by technical fall over Sabetha’s Naomi Pearson in the semifinals. Collins then faced Jefferson West’s Taryn Taylor and was pinned in 53 seconds to finish second overall.

DeWeese also had a strong performance at 120 pounds as she went 3-1 on the day and took third overall.

She opened with a pin of Washburn Rural’s Makenzie Cowhick, but lost a tough 14-9 decision in the semifinals to Jayhawk-Linn’s Alayna McCarty. DeWeese would bounce back with a pin in the consolation semifinals and then pinned Rock Creek’s Claire Steeves in the third place match.

“I was thrilled that Maliya and Brooklyn medaled,” Eslinger said. “Both girls are extremely competitive and are their own worst critics. They are much harder on themselves than I am. I think that medaling helps them to understand that wrestling isn’t about each match, but about growth over time, and how we learn, improve and perform over the span of the entire season.”

Emma Duckworth nearly became the Wildcats’ third medalist on the day, but fell just short at 125 pounds as she finished fourth.

Duckworth opened with a pin in her first match, but fell by pin to Washburn Rural's Gabby Collins in the semis. Duckworth responded with a pin in the consolation semifinals, but lost to Rock Creek's Ali Wilcoxson in the third place match.

Evelyn Rue (130), Alina Wojciechowski (135), Leola Eslinger (145) and Nora Smith (170) also competed for the Wildcats.

It has been a good start to the season for the Wildcats as they have had three competitions to start the year.

"I think the girls are going into the break on a positive note," coach Eslinger said. "This is a well-earned and needed break. Most of the team is bruised and battered, as all the wrestlers are, but being young they are learning that this physical feeling is part of wrestling. Break will give them some rest and recovery time to prepare for the next seven weeks."