

Sproat takes third at state qualifier

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

Cheyenne Sproat, the lone senior and only female wrestler for the Outlaws this year, competed at the Oregon Girls State Tournament Qualifier held at Cottage Grove High School on Saturday, February 7.

Coach John Downs said, “Cheyenne has had a rough year wrestling mostly male wrestlers because female wrestlers are few and far between in the state of Oregon. She’s only had the opportunity to wrestle two girls out of the 14 matches she has competed in.”

Sproat was excited to be able to attend the girls qualifier. She told *The Nugget* that since she wrestled against boys most of the year she felt she would be stronger than many girls she would face.

Downs said, “With her state-placer match time creeping into the evening, you could see she was getting nervous, but also excited to be where she was at the tournament. She kept saying, ‘I hope you’re proud of me. I don’t want to let you down.’ As I was not just her coach, but also her stepdad, I was excited for her. I was so proud of her, and she needed to hear something to calm her nerves.”

As Sproat stood in the staging room just before her match, Downs told her she’d sacrificed much over the season, and pushed hard to prove that girls can compete and wrestle well. She was also assured that no matter where she’d place, Downs would be proud.

The short conversation



PHOTO BY JOHN DOWNS

Cheyenne Sproat has persevered and made it to the state tournament.

sparked a new fire in Cheyenne, and she was ready to face opponent Payton Rigert from Hood River Valley.

Sproat knew she had a tough match ahead against the second-seeded wrestler of the tournament. Cheyenne took the mat and was determined to do her best. At the whistle start, Cheyenne went straight at Rigert, and didn’t waste a second. She was able to get in on Rigert’s legs, but was unable to finish the takedown. Rigert was able to spin behind and instead get the takedown on Sproat.

Downs noted that as the match progressed it was clear Cheyenne was out-matched in skill, but not in strength or heart. Sproat continued to try and get back up but was unsuccessful against Rigert’s moves. Rigert finally caught Cheyenne as she tried to roll through to her belly and was able to hold her on her back just long enough to get the pin and win the match.

Sproat came off the mat knowing she’d done her best, and accepted her third-place medal with pride. The third-place finish scored her enough points on her own to lift the Outlaws to a 24th-place team finish out of 36 girls teams that were in attendance at the tourney.

Cheyenne qualified for the state championships that will be held at the Memorial Coliseum in Portland on Friday and Saturday, February 27 and 28, and hopes that a couple of the boys from the team will be there also, competing in the boys division.

“She’s the start of something great for Sisters High School,” said Downs. “Win or lose, she will be the first girl wrestler to qualify for Oregon Girls State Championships for SHS.”

Sisters lifters break records

Sisters Level 5 Fitness’ lifters broke 18 state records in competition last Saturday.

Results are as follows:
Note — one kilogram equals 2.2 pounds.

- Taya Newton: 3/6 75kg total — 2nd place — two junior state records.
- Sarah Rybka: 4/6 80kg total — 2nd place.
- Lindsay Hamilton: 4/6 87kg total — 7th place.
- Jennifer Lookabaugh: 4/6 90kg total — 6th place — three masters state records.
- Tami Jones: 4/6 96kg total — 4th place.
- Teri Sharp: 4/6 107kg — 3rd place — three masters state records.
- Jennifer Banning: 5/6 114kg total — 3rd place

- three masters state records.
- Michael Dyer: 4/6 160kg total — 5th place — three masters state records.
- McKibben Womack: 3/6 166kg total — 6th place.
- Bill Lookabaugh: 4/6 167kg total — 5th place.
- Jamesynn Mendez: 5/6 176kg total — 4th place — qualified for youth nationals.
- Randy Gardner: 3/6 178kg total — 3rd place — masters state record.
- Keith Banning: 4/6 180kg total — 2nd place — masters state record.
- Trevor Zanella: 3/6 193kg total — 1st place.
- Jason Rybka: 2/6 206kg total — 3rd place — two masters state records.
- Steve Horne: 5/6 225kg total — second place.



PHOTO BY LYNN WOODWARD

Jamesynn Mendez, 16, qualified for youth nationals competition with strong lifts in competition on Saturday.

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