

Tyler Surface takes fourth at regional tournament

By Rongi Yost
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The Outlaws took 21 wrestlers to the 2017 OSAA 4A Special District #2 Regional Tournament on Friday and Saturday, February 10-11. The tournament was held at Philomath High School, and 12 teams brought wrestlers who all competed for a berth to the state championships.

Sweet Home was a dominant force and took top honors with a team score of 407. North Marion was runner-up with 300.5, Cascade took third at 244.5, and Junction City finished fourth with 147.5. Sisters finished 12th with a team score of 74.

Senior Tyler Surface was the Outlaws' standout wrestler. Surface defeated Logan Schmidt of Elmira for a fourth-place finish.

Coach John Downs said, "I've watched Tyler grow up, from a Cub Scout in second grade through middle school sports, and as a wrestler through high school. He earned a spot to the state championships and it's a tough road. Tyler knows all about tough roads, and with the support of family and friends has stayed on track. I

am proud to be one of those that Tyler has leaned on. Tyler is truly deserving of this trip to state."

Five Outlaws, Dalton Ford; Cole Pade; Damien Wills; Ethan Martin; and Casey Warburton, all earned a seventh-place finish.

Ford (113 pounds) won two matches in the tournament. Ford started the season at 120 pounds, but went down to fill the empty spot in the 113 pound weight class at the end of the season.

"Dalton struggled with injuries throughout the season, but always made sure to do the best he could with the limitations he had due to injuries," said Downs.

Pade also earned a seventh-place finish, and Downs told *The Nugget* that Cole was the hardest-working wrestler on the squad.

"Even through injuries, Cole was a leader on the team," said Downs. "I was proud of Cole this year and the efforts he made. Many of his teammates look up to him and his work ethic."

Wills injured his shoulder mid-season, did what he could at practice despite the injury, and battled hard for a seventh-place finish.



PHOTO BY JOHN DOWNS

Tyler Surface booted up for the podium after a fourth-place finish that earned him a berth at state.

"Damien didn't want to have any excuses," said Downs. "He is the toughest competitor I have on the team. There is no quit in his vocabulary. I have seen him fight out of being pinned more than anyone on the team, and come out and win."

Martin (182 pounds) fought hard for his seventh-place spot.

"As a freshman, Ethan continues to amaze me as he fights in such a tough weight class," stated Downs. "He's a big wrestler, but the upper

classmen he wrestles against are even bigger. That doesn't deter Ethan at all. He steps out onto the mat and shows no fear. I was very proud of him this year."

Warburton earned seventh in the 220-pound weight class.

"Casey has been a great asset and leader this year," said Downs. "He fought through illness a couple of times this season and was still competitive. He is a great mentor and helped many of the larger, younger wrestlers

improve their skills."

Downs was very pleased with his team's performance.

"This young wrestling team had an incredible showing," said Downs. "With only one senior, a few juniors, and the rest sophomores and freshmen, the Outlaws showed the region that they have the commitment to work hard and make an impression."

Tyler Surface will compete at the state championships, which will be held at the Memorial Coliseum on Friday and Saturday, February 24-25.