

Patterson fifth in girls wrestling regional meet

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

Sisters High School senior Daisy Patterson completed her high school wrestling career on Saturday, February 5, just short of her goal of qualifying for the state tournament for the first time.

Patterson fought her way through the bracket after a second-round loss and had a shot at third place and a state qualification, but it was not meant to be.

The Special District 3 Regional Tournament, held at Redmond High School, was one of four regional meets held around the state and serves as the qualifier for the state tournament for all classifications 6A-1A. The top three finishers in each weight class in each region advance to State.

"It's very competitive to make it to State," said Coach Gary Thorson.

Reaching the pinnacle of her high school career had some ups and downs, according to Daisy.

"I had some injuries when I was younger and that's when I decided to only wrestle against girls," she said. "I worked really hard this year in order to reach my goals."

At the tournament, Patterson started the day strong, with a victory by fall over Dayana Sepulveda of Riverside High School. But when she went up against Kirsten De Lazerda of Estacada, she was pinned at the 2:48 mark.

In the consolation round, Patterson picked up wins by fall over McKenzie Demetrakos of Henley and Luca Willins of La Grande, setting up a match against Maisle Bandal-Ramirez of The Dalles/Dufur. With a shot at qualifying for the third-place match on the line, Patterson came up short and was pinned just before the three-minute mark.

Patterson bounced back in the match for fifth place and made short work of Rilley Robinson of La Grande, pinning the Tiger in just 1:09. She finished the season with a record of 18-8.

Thorson expressed his appreciation for Patterson following the meet. "She has had a great career as an Outlaw wrestler," he said. "She was a bit of a pioneer for the girls wrestling program here and became the first female to wrestle and letter all four years and has been a tremendous leader and mentor for many in our program. She has shown a great work ethic and has been an outstanding teammate."

Her father, Charlie, who wrestled throughout high school himself, talked about Daisy's start as a wrestler.

"When Daisy was in fifth grade she told us she wanted to wrestle because her brother Chaz was doing it. I told her no because I didn't really think girls should be wrestling," he said. "Of course I was made a fool of a year later when she started and I found out how many girls were actually

wrestling in Oregon and how much traction the sport had gained."

He chuckled, remembering how he decided to let her proceed.

"I told her if she really wanted to wrestle she would have to prove it, so I told her and her brother to strip down to their underwear and wrestle right there in the living room and if she could get him on his back, I'd let her wrestle. She did it and the rest is history."

Brady Patterson, Daisy's mother, said, "I love it now, but it was tough at first to watch. It's a brutal sport, but it's what she wanted to do and we have supported her fully."

Daisy hopes to see more and more girls consider wrestling as a sport.

"I think for girls it's important to put yourself out there and get out of your comfort zone, which will definitely happen if you choose to wrestle," she said. "I have learned a lot from wrestling, including how important it is for me to carry my weight on a team."

She continued, "Wrestling is really hard, so to become successful you really have to push yourself, and by doing that you gain a lot of confidence in general."

In reflecting on the tournament, Daisy said, "Even though I didn't make it to State, I am thankful for my coaches, friends, family, and other teammates who came to watch me and support me," she said. "That means



PHOTO BY CHARLIE KANZIG

Daisy Patterson competes for the Outlaws.

everything to me."

While Daisy doesn't plan to pursue competitive wrestling after high school, she is

interested in coaching.

"I would really like to be part of encouraging more girls to try the sport," she said.

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