

Sports

Swim Team falls just short of State

CHRIS ERBIN

Staff Reporter

The fear that dogged the Swim Team became reality at Districts on Feb. 9 when the top two teams from the Three Rivers League, Lake Oswego and Lakeridge, advanced to State leaving the third place Lions behind.

At Districts, the Lions finished a solid third, but were far from competing for the state slots. In order for individuals to qualify for State, they had to win their respective competition, a feat no West Linn swimmer was able to accomplish.

The Lions' best result of the day came in the 200 meter backstroke, when Josie Sells, junior, finished a close second to Lake Oswego's top swimmer, a senior. This offers Sells a good opportunity to make the prestigious trip to State next year. She also finished third in the 50 meter freestyle. Many girls also

recorded some of their best results of the year. Hayley McCrae, sophomore, reached the finals in the 200 freestyle, as did Rosa Bhutarak,



Thomas Lord, senior, engraves the West Linn emblem onto the head of Kenneth Salkoski, sophomore. Head shaving was one of many pre-district festivities. Photo submitted by Mary Milton

sophomore, in the 200 in the Individual Medley.

"The water was freezing!" said Bhutarak, who was competing in Varsity Districts for the first time. "Our girls did great. We had more people make it to the finals this year than last."

Other standouts included Alexandria Namhie, senior, and Jessica Broberg, freshman.

"We had a good finish to the season," Namhie said,

"As a senior, it's sad to see it all go by so fast, but it was an amazing season."

Much like the girls, many of the boys realized new personal records. Many competitors swam their best races in the final meet of the season. Thomas Lord and Alexander Jonsson, seniors, also recorded impressive times in their final races as Lions.

The swim teams earned a split in a meet against Putnam prior to Districts to conclude the regular season. The Kingsmen possessed a surprisingly strong team this season, particularly on the boys side. The boys squad defeated Lakeridge earlier in the year, a team that was projected to finish first in the TRL this season.

It was a completely

different story for the girls, as they routed the Kingsmen, winning 98-62, but the Kingsmen boys earned an 87-77 victory over the Lions.

The girls won all but two events in the victory. The Lions got off to a strong start with a win in the 200 medley relay. The team of Whitney Finnerty, junior, along with Sells, Bhutarak and Broberg, got the meet off on the right foot.

McCrae followed with a win in the 200 freestyle and Bhutarak picked up her first individual victory in the 200 individual medley.

Broberg then cruised to a victory in the 100 butterfly while Sells captured the 100 freestyle.

Sells swam in three consecutive events. After winning the 100 freestyle she was on the second place 200 freestyle relay team along with Kaytlin Coffman, Anna Koll, seniors, and Sara Lord, freshman.

She then swam her best event, the 100 backstroke, and won it easily.

Finnerty followed with a win in the 100 breaststroke

and the 400 freestyle relay team of Mary Milton, senior, Coffman, Namhie, and Karleen Schuler, junior, won the final event of the day for the girls.

"I think everyone's done a good job keeping up with the rest of the league, we all did awesome this year," Milton said.

On the boys side, Putnam's depth was evident early on, and dominated the competition throughout.

Lord took second in the 50 freestyle and Brian Laderote, junior, was the runner up in the 100 freestyle. Arthur To, freshman, also recorded a second-place finish in the 100 backstroke.

But, even though Putnam had clinched the meet at that point, the Lions finished well, winning the last two events of the day.

Kevin Sellers, sophomore, won the 100 breaststroke just one event after competing on the 200 freestyle relay.

Finally, the 400 Freestyle Relay Team of Lord, Jonsson, Anders Koll, sophomore, and Hans Farnbach, junior, won the final event.

Boys' Basketball Team falls in away game at Milwaukie

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The Boys' Varsity Basketball Team hope to make the "elite eight" in playoffs, but lost to Milwaukie, 59-70, on Feb. 15 in an away contest.

Aaron Downs, head coach, is still optimistic about the team's chances of reaching the playoffs prior to the game. Their tremendous efforts and ability to "gel" as a team, according to Downs, makes them very talented athletes.

"Their ability to play together as a team makes them one of the most skilled teams I've ever coached. They get along on and off the court and play well off of each others strengths," Downs said.

Currently, Justin Monahan, senior, leads the team in average points per game with 17.3 points. According to Downs, Spencer Flores, senior, and Ryan Barnes, junior, have stepped up, along with Jeff Bush, sophomore, who has really advanced the team throughout the last couple games.

West Linn, after a back-and-forth battle against Lakeridge on Feb. 5, squeezed out a 59-55 win, in what was a must win game for the Lions. Monahan carried the

team with 34 of the 59 points, with the remaining points split between Flores, Barnes, Bush and Ryan Cathcart, senior. With that win, the team moved into fourth place, still in contention for the final playoff spot.

However, the Lions did not fare as well against the Oregon City Pioneers on Feb. 12. With the first quarter yielding only five points for West Linn, their comeback in the remaining quarters came too late. Barnes and Bush tied for point leader with 10 points each. West Linn lost to Oregon City, 48-70, dropping them to fifth in the league and temporarily suspending their playoff spot, this was a good effort against the number one ranked team in the TRL.

"It has been a good season. They're fun to coach," Downs said. If the team triumphs in the next couple of games, they will earn a fourth place standing in the league, and will be well on their way to the playoffs and their goal of the "elite eight."

The next two games, against Lake Oswego on Feb. 22, 7:15 p.m. at Lake Oswego and Putnam on Feb. 28, 7:15 p.m. at home should be really close and intense, according to Downs. Winning these are vital to the success if they hope to make the playoffs.

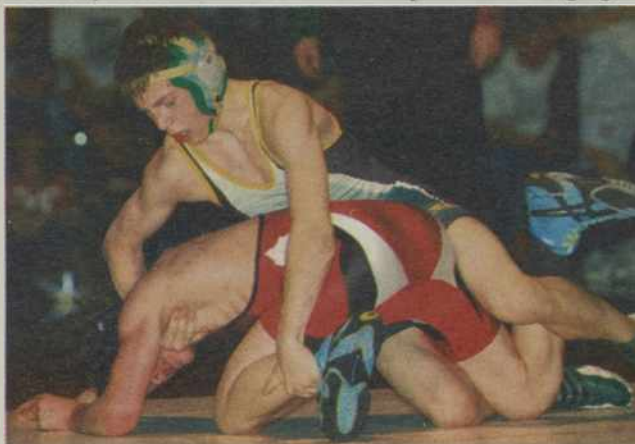
Wrestlers surprise opponents at Districts

JON HELMKAMP

Staff Reporter

After predictions the Varsity Wrestling Team would most likely reach no higher than fourth place in Districts, the team came out

in the highly competitive Three Rivers League. Given the toughest schedule in the state, this young team decided to do what it does best and fight through it, which proved challenging,



Donald Paulson, sophomore, grapples with a Clackamas Cavalier wrestler during Districts. Paulson took first in his weight class at Districts and earned himself third place at State. Photo by Tracie Krellwitz

and put on a show, earning a second place finish to Oregon City.

"The Lions have not placed lower than second since 1984. This year is a rebuilding year and we were still able to take second in Districts," Geoff Bingham, assistant wrestling coach, said.

Due to a lack of seniors, underclassmen have borne the burden of competing

Despite their record, Bingham is optimistic. "Our kids took their lumps this year and will be better for next year," he said.

Eight grapplers earned a trip to State, the lone senior being Devan Schiewe at 140 lbs. The other seven include Andrew Kim at 119 lbs., Mitchell Gaulke at 285 lbs., juniors, Sam Ihrig at 103 lbs., Donald Paulson at 112 lbs., Michael MacClanathan at

171 lbs., sophomores, and Travis Schutzler at 130 lbs., freshman.

Last year in State, Paulson took seventh and Kim took eighth. All eight of this year's competitors had to place in the top three in their weight classes at Districts to advance to State. According to Bingham, the eight State qualifiers have the potential to place high.

"I think we did really well this year, better than expected because we're so young. To get ready for State we've been doing a lot of live wrestling, trying to improve our skills before this weekend," Schutzler said.

There is a great amount of pride in being a Lion wrestler. The Lions have a long tradition of success—an 11 year streak of winning District and a 23 year streak of finishing second or higher.

State was held last Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Memorial Coliseum in Portland. The State Tournament is set up as a double elimination bracket system. Paulson had lost in the semi-finals, and after winning his next match, took third in his weight class. He was the only wrestler this year who placed.