

Matmen place close second at state match

By Kelly Laughlin

Of The Print
Wrestling Coach Norm Berney didn't predict a blowout win for his grapplers at the state championships in Coos Bay.

But his young squad of nine freshmen, without the services of 134-pound sophomore Darwin Tramal, still managed to deliver, under "questionable circumstances," a second-place trophy, edged by Southwestern Oregon Community College, 77 1/4-73 1/2 last weekend.

The grapplers took home four state champions, two second-place finishers, and a fourth-place state wrestler.

At 142 pounds, Lance Wilson was undefeated in three contests, finally complying on a 20-6 mop-up in his final encounter; a 24 fall, 25-4 dual meet season record, and the state championship in his weight class.

Bill Blackford, wrestling at 158 pounds, though a questionable prospect at



NONCHALANT NORM? CCC wrestling coach Norm Berney has plenty to be emotional about after his team's fine showing at the state tournament. Photo by Duffy Coffman.

regionals this Friday and Saturday in Bend, nabbed a first-place trophy and a knee injury. His presence for the Cougars at regionals may spell the difference for them. Blackford, at 21-4 for the season, could still fill the 150-pound slot.

Craig Joplin, 6-2, 177 pounds, cashed in for the championship in his weight class, and Rusty Crape picked up the crown in the heavyweight class.

Where the question mark arose was in the final, 190-pound Roy Bonner match, one of the last matches of the tournament. According to Berney, two Coos Bay-based referees monitored the matches all day, whereas three or four refs normally do. Though Berney didn't say that his squad was ripped off, he did argue with the referees on four stalling calls, accredited to Bonner. "I thought the referees were very indecisive; they were tired, also," he said. Four points to SWOCC's credit in the Bonner match spelled victory for SWOCC.

Bonner, 16-2, with 11 falls for the season, still settled for second place in state, as did Mark Twidwell at 167 pounds. At 118 pounds, Vane Dickey slated a fourth-place finish.

Berney expects all 10 squad members at regionals, but in the unpredictable wrestling field, Berney made the same prophecy for state, only to have Tramal, the team veteran, who was almost a sure win in the 134-pound class, out with a cold.

On paper, a regional title would take a little less than a miracle for the Cougars. With the CCC grapplers not ranked by the National Junior College Athletic Association as one of the top 20 teams in the nation, they have to scratch the surface of Rick's College, rated 18th, and Columbia Basin, another formidable opponent at 11th, to have a chance at fifth-ranked Northern Idaho, who provided the Cougars' only loss of the regular season.

The team does have a chance at individual national berths. Tramal, if he gets over the cold, and can wrestle in the 126 slot for rib-injured Eric Martin, could go to nationals. This would be his second trip to nationals. Lance Wilson should be able to fill in for Tramal at the 134-pound position, or wrestle at his own weight at regionals. With an impressive season slate, Wilson, though a freshman, may travel to nationals this season.

Bill Blackford, if his knee injury isn't too serious, could possibly place at regionals, while Roy Bonner and Rusty Crape in the 190 and heavyweight classes might also travel for a national title. At the very least, CCC should have two regional champions, and thus, a couple of qualifiers for national competition.

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by the time she was 20.
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She's been loved and cheated on.
She became a singer and a star
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