



Controlling his opponent, Sandy High junior Chris Jones posts another win en route to the championship at the state Class AAA wrestling tournament in Forest Grove. Jones won the 148-pound division.

Photos by Mark Floyd

Pioneers claim 4th at state

The Sandy Pioneers crowned two individual champions and picked up 83 1/2 points last week to take fourth place in the state Class AAA wrestling tournament at David Douglas.

Chris Jones, 148, and Dan Martin, 157, won individual titles for the Pioneers. Sandy was the only team to have more than one champion. Larry Toppliff took third place for Sandy at 98 and Mike Russell was fifth at 141.

It was one of the best finishes by a Sandy team in years and the best thing is that next year should be even better. Jones and Martin are both juniors and Toppliff is just a sophomore. Only Russell will be lost to graduation.

Three other Pioneers, all underclassmen, made it to state but lost in the first round.

Sophomore Mike Rohweder, 106, drew defending 98-pound champion Rodney Hawthorne of La Grande in the opening round and suffered a 14-3 loss. Hawthorne went on to place second in the tourney.

Dean Fischer, who was second to Russell at district, was dealt a 4-3 defeat in the first round of the 141-pound match by Kirk Schneider of Churchill. Fischer is a junior.

Another junior, Tim Sytsma, suffered a narrow loss in his opening round at 191. Madison's Rich Law pulled out a 17-15 win over Sytsma in a wild first round match.

Wrestlers had to survive the first two rounds before losing in order to

stay in the consolation bracket. One loss before that and it was the end of the season.

That was the key to Barlow's success. The Bruins successfully defended their state championship by getting enough wrestlers past the first two rounds. They rolled up 101 points to edge Crater, second with 95. La Grande was third with 91, Sandy fourth with 83 1/2 and Benson fifth with 79.

The Pioneers that did make it past the first two rounds really put on a show the final day. Jones was one of the favorites at 148, but he had to struggle to get to the finals. There he put on one of his classic matches with Canby's Kris Pihl to pull out the first Sandy win.

Martin, surprisingly, had an easier time. In fact, the Sandy junior had tougher sledding in the TVL district meet, where he had to overcome an overtime match in the semifinals and a close 2-1 outing in the finals.

See adjacent story on Sandy's champs.

Toppliff, who just kept improving during the course of the year, capped his season with an impressive third place finish. He opened with a 13-0 whitewashing of Crescent Valley's Frank Walter, then topped Medford's Tim Frazier 9-3. That set up a quarterfinal pairing with Barlow's tough Scott Luna, the only wrestler from the state of Oregon to beat Toppliff during the regular



Larry Toppliff, third at 98

season.

Luna had been wrestling strong, but Toppliff dominated the Barlow wrestler and won 15-5. But in the semis, he ran into Ed Woodburn of La Grande who posted a 9-1 win over the Sandy soph and went on to win the tournament. Toppliff then pinned Conrad Eisely of Marshall in the consolation bracket and nipped Troy Santana of Sweet Home 4-3 for third place.

Russell, the only senior in the Sandy lot, opened with a win by default over Roseburg's Mike Pinard, who aggravated a shoulder injury just into the match. Russell then hammered Grant Curnow of Hidden

Valley 20-4 and won a quarterfinal match from Lebanon's Collins Gilbertson 5-2.

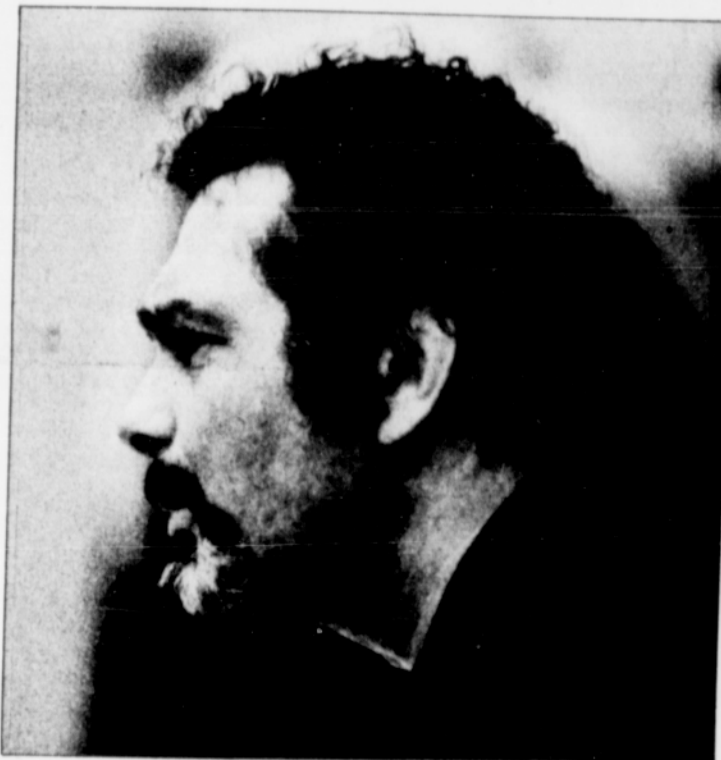
That put Russell in the semis against a tough Benson wrestler, John Borich. Borich, one of the only wrestlers to beat Jones this year, dropped down to 141 for the tourney and beat Russell 10-1. Borich went on to win the state championship.

Russell then suffered a tough 9-6 loss in consolation to Roosevelt's Lorenzo West, but snagged fifth place honors with a hard-fought 9-0 win over Putnam's Boyd Goodpasture.

"I was really pleasantly surprised with the way things came out," Sandy coach Ron Calhoun said. "I had hoped that Mike could get by Borich, but Borich really wrestled well. Barlow had a lot of seeded wrestlers who got by the first two rounds and that made a big difference in the team scoring."

Next year, it should be Sandy who will get the breaks. If Jones and Martin stay at the same weight, they should be seeded first. Toppliff, if he stays at 98, should have a good shot at the title. And Sandy may get the services of Chuck Kearney, son of the Pioneer assistant coach, who placed second in the state at 168 for Parkrose. The Kearneys are looking for a house in the Sandy area.

Two state champs and fourth in the state ain't bad, but next year could be the whole ball of wax for Sandy.



Sandy coach Ron Calhoun watches the action.

Martin, Jones capture first titles in 20 years

It's been 20 years since Sandy High School has had a state wrestling champion, according to coach Ron Calhoun.

Now the Pioneers have two of them. Chris Jones and Dan Martin, both juniors, came away from the state Class AAA meet with championship trophies.

"It was awfully nice to have two in the finals and two win it," Calhoun smiled. "We were the only team to have two state champions. It's been 20 years since Sandy had a champion—I hope that's not a trend or cycle."

Jones, 148, opened with an 18-3 win over Crescent Valley's Dennis Moore and scored a 9-2 win over Klamath Union's Marty Madsen. That put him in the quarterfinals and he had no problem with Redmond's Mery Leckbee, winning 13-0.

But things got tougher from there. Jones tied Eagle Point's Don Snoko 1-1 after regulation in the semis and nipped the tough senior 2-1 in overtime to gain the finals.

In the finals it was Jones against a familiar adversary, Kris Pihl of Canby. Pihl was the defending state champion, but Jones had beaten him during the regular season and during the Timber Valley League district meet. Both victories were by one point.

The state finals were no different. Jones fell behind Pihl, but never lost his cool and came back to nip the Cougar star 5-4.

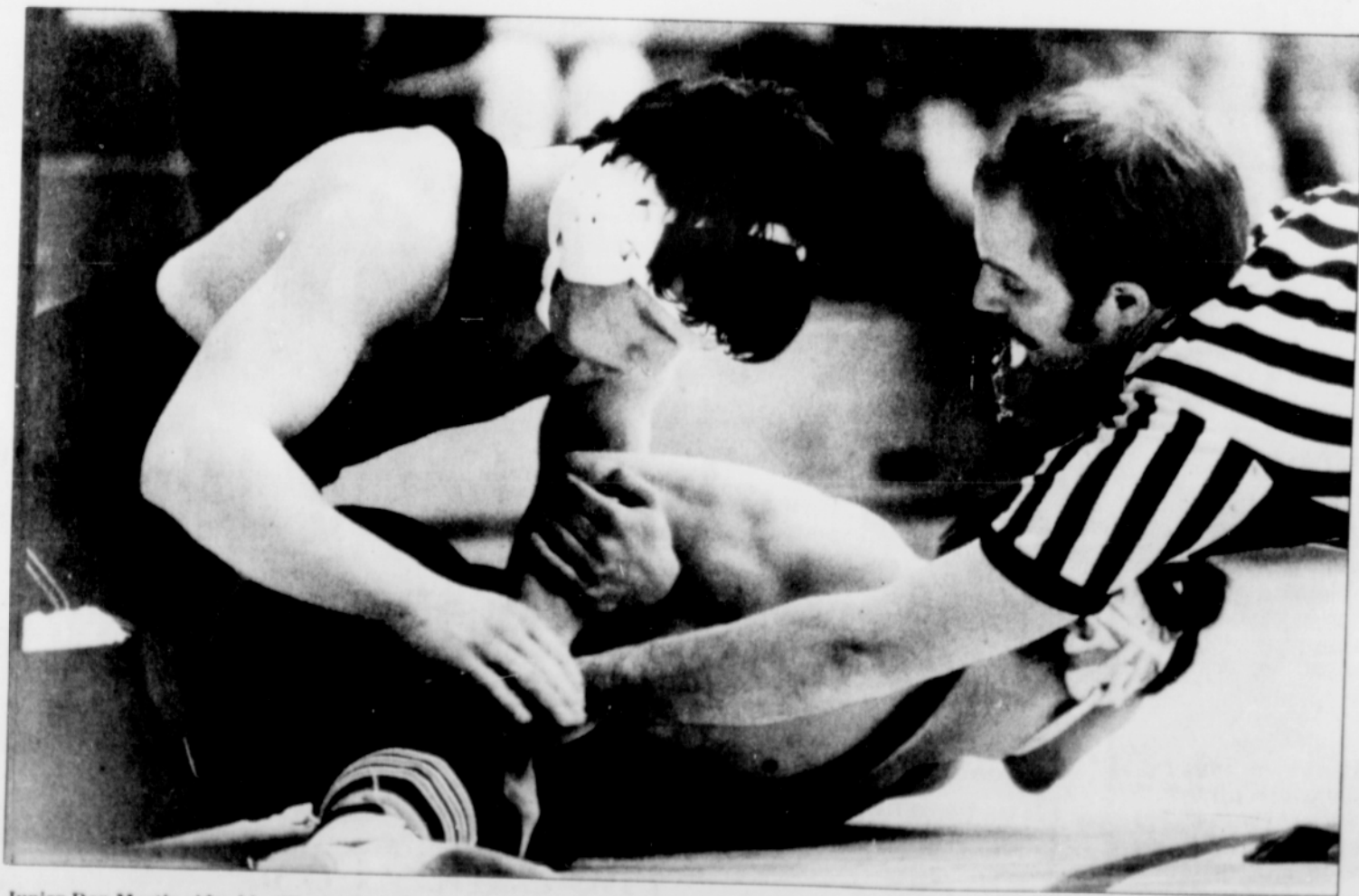
"Jones really had a donnybrook there," Calhoun said. "Pihl is so strong, it usually takes about 5 1/2 minutes to break him down. Jones got two takedowns in the last 30 seconds to win it."

Martin, at 157, has been tough all year, but not many thought he would come away with a state title. After all, he had to scrape for his life at the district meet where he won a pair of 2-1 decisions.

But the TVL is that tough and the experience got Martin ready for state. He opened with an easy victory over Crescent Valley's Pat Spence, then hammered Churchill's Ben Edwards 13-1. Martin edged Barlow's tough Steve Scott in the quarterfinals 3-1, then outmaneuvered Pat Wreath of host David Douglas by a 6-1 score in the semis.

The finals were no contest, as Martin pounded Emory Kleck of Baker by a 9-4 score.

"Dan Martin really wrestled well," Calhoun said. "He actually had a tougher match in the semifinals. The finals appeared to be no contest."



Junior Dan Martin rides his 157-pound opponent, winning handily. Martin dominated his weight and claimed Sandy's second state title.