

Wrestlers make strides at East-West Challenge

Written by Deb Egenberger
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LEXINGTON—When a young wrestling team has to go up against powerhouse opponents such as Omaha Skutt Catholic and Kearney, a little intimidation might be expected.

That wasn't the case with Gothenburg wrestlers, though, during the East-West Challenge at Lexington on Friday.

"We really went after everyone," said Gothenburg coach Tom Scott. "Sure Skutt beat us and they handled us easily but they didn't intimidate us. That's the kind of attitude I'm looking for."

From the western division, the Swedes faced the 14-time Class B state champion Sky Hawks in the first round of dual action against the eastern teams, followed by a much-improved Lexington team and top-notch Kearney.

"I look at it this way," Scott said. "We wrestled Kearney a week before at Ogallala and they pinned us 10 times. At Lexington, they only got six pins."

Against Grand Island Northwest at the Flatwater Fracas in December, the Swedes scored only 11 points. This week they managed 24.

"In fact, we were leading 24-3 at one point," the coach said.

That's the kind of measurable improvement Scott is striving for each time his wrestlers step on the mat.

Sophomore Seth Eggleston provided a good example.

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Cole Woodward of Northwest pinned Eggleston in 47 seconds last month. This week, Eggleston stuck Woodward in the first period.

“The Northwest coach even asked me if it was the same kid,” Scott said. “We’re making strides.”

When it came down to the finals of the western division, Gothenburg faced Gering, a B-4 district opponent next month.

Scott said had the Swedes fielded a full team filling all 14 weight classes, they likely could have beaten the Bulldogs.

As it was, though, only nine boys wrestled.

“There are a couple of matches we’d like to get back before the district meet,” Scott said. “We’ll see them again in Mitchell in a couple of weeks.”

Three Gothenburg wrestlers finished with 3-2 records. Skyler Kottwitz, Dalton Goodwin and Tyson Miller all came out on the winning end.

Scott said the Swedes enjoyed the different format of the east-west division at Lexington and he expects the meet will grow next year.

Now Swede wrestlers will focus on their own invite at home on Friday.

North Platte St. Pat’s, Broken Bow, High Plains, Ainsworth and Holdrege will be in town for the dual-style meet beginning at 2 p.m.

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Scott said at least five of the six teams, including Gothenburg, are vastly improved from last season.

“We’re going to have to be ready to wrestle,” he said.

The Swedes will face Holdrege first, a team they lost a couple of matches to at the Fracas that they’d like to avenge.

“Our team goal is to compete for the meet championship,” Scott said. “Our individual goals are to continue to improve with each match. They guys usually step it up when we’re wrestling at home.”