

Two wrestlers qualify for state

Written by Deb Egenberger

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Kottwitz, Goodwin will compete in Omaha

SIDNEY—Two Gothenburg wrestlers accomplished their season-long goal of qualifying for the state championships in Omaha this week by placing at the B-4 district meet at Sidney on Friday and Saturday.

Junior Skyler Kottwitz and senior Dalton Goodwin punched their ticket to state by finishing second and third, respectively, in their weight classes.

Kottwitz won his way into the championship at 170 pounds with a pair of pins and a 9-6 decision victory over Elijah Timblin of Gering.

“That was a huge win for him,” said Swede coach Tom Scott of Kottwitz’s semi-final victory. Skyler had lost to that kid from Gering twice before this season, the last time by 10 points.”

Timblin got a takedown in the first period to take an early lead but Kottwitz managed an escape and his own takedown to go up 3-2 before the end of the first two minutes.

“We really felt like Skyler’s conditioning would be key,” Scott said.

Kottwitz scored again in the second period to carry a 5-2 lead into the final frame.

“Skyler put the kid to his back,” Scott said. “It was very exciting.”

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Up 9-2 with the back points, Timblin made a comeback but couldn't keep Kottwitz down.

That victory set Kottwitz up against Chance Bila of Chadron, the No. 1 wrestler in Class B at 170 pounds.

"Skyler wrestled his heart out," Scott said, "but he got caught and pinned."

With his second-place district finish and 33-14 season record, Kottwitz will face Jacob Touchstone of Nebraska City (34-11) in the opening round of the state meet on Thursday.

Goodwin offered plenty of district excitement of his own right off the bat on Friday in the 182-pound weight bracket.

Goodwin's first match likely offered a moment of deja vu for the Swede senior as he faced Chase Christensen of Holdrege, an opponent Goodwin defeated by ultimate tie breaker during the Gothenburg Invite.

When the score was tied 3-3 between Christensen and Goodwin at the end of regulation, Scott said he knew it could be a wild ride.

There were no takedowns in the first overtime and in the second, both boys earned a reverse.

That moved the match into the ultimate tie breaker.

Christensen chose to be down to start and Goodwin rode him the entire 30 seconds for the win.

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Goodwin lost his second match to Brody Cleveland of Ogallala by a 5-0 decision and then came back to pin a Broken Bow opponent before defeating Fernando Lopez of Alliance by 13-3 major decision in the consolation finals for third place.

“Dalton really opened up and pummeled that kid,” Scott said. “There were eight kids in his bracket with winning records and he was the third best. If he wrestles like that again in Omaha, he’s going to do some major damage.”

Goodwin (32-16) will face Jonathan Parsons of Schuyler (26-4) in the first round at state on Thursday.

The Swedes finished ninth in the team standings with Scottsbluff taking the championship title and Lexington earning runner-up.

Those two teams, in addition to Alliance, qualified for the wrestling dual championships on Feb. 23 in Kearney.

“That just shows how tough our district was,” Scott said.

The coach is proud of his young team and the strides they’ve made this season.

“Last year we left the district meet with heavy feelings because we were leaving some kids at home who were better than some wrestling at state,” the coach said. “We’re still leaving some good kids at home this year but there aren’t the heavy feelings this time around.”

Both Kottwitz and Goodwin have good possibilities to earn medals at state, Scott said.

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“They’ve both put themselves in a position for success.”

Class B wrestling is scheduled to begin at 4:30 p.m. Thursday at the Century Link Center in Omaha.