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Weaver’s golden performance in Division 1 final gives local gymnastics team its first WIAA individual champion

Warm-ups hadn’t gone well.

Renae Weaver was under-rotating or over-rotating on her vault. She was thinking too much.

When it came time for the Grafton/Cedarburg gymnast to compete at the WIAA Division 1 state meet last weekend in Wisconsin Rapids, she told herself to relax.

“It was my last meet in Wisconsin because I’m going to nationals later in May. I just wanted to have a lot of fun at it,” Weaver said.

The approach paid big dividends for the senior, who soared to first place with an average score of 9.6.

Weaver completed the front handspring front tuck, a vault so difficult that only two other high school gymnasts in the state even try it.

“I landed and I wasn’t moving. Why am I not moving?” Weaver recalled of her landing. “I was really surprised because I never stick it.”

Weaver stuck the landing all right, and she knew a good score would be coming, though she had no idea how good.

Grafton/Cedarburg coach Ali Pfeiffer was thrilled. She also knew a high mark was in order.

“I was standing right there. I kind of picked her up and hugged her. Everyone was cheering,”

Pfeiffer said.

Weaver, who attends Cedarburg High School, received scores of 9.5, 9.6 and 9.7 on her three vaults. Coming off of a sectional championship with a 9.4, she had worked on her form all week in preparation for the state meet.

"Her form was very much improved. The practice definitely paid off," Pfeiffer said.

As a senior, Weaver wanted to execute skills she never had quite done before.

The difficulty alone put her in the mix for a medal at state, even though she hadn't previously reached the top six in an event. She jokingly told her family and friends she would win state but never imagined it would actually happen.

"I was in complete shock. That was the highest score I have ever gotten," Weaver said.

Then came the waiting and watching. Weaver had to sit through other top-notch vaulters aiming for her score.

Emily Fuchs of West Allis Hale/Central came the closest but had to settle for second place at 9.467.

"I know that the last rotation was going to be pretty scary for me. I was kind of on the edge of my seat," Weaver said.

Weaver's winning score tied a state record and made her the first Grafton/Cedarburg gymnast to earn a WIAA individual title.

"I was sitting next to my family at the time, and they just started going crazy," she said.

A pep rally to honor Weaver was held Monday at Cedarburg High School.

Weaver ended her prep career on a high note. Although gymnastics is an individual sport, she said she didn't do it alone.

"My team really helped me throughout this whole entire process. I probably wouldn't have been able to be this successful this year if it wasn't for them cheering for me and shouting words of encouragement," she said.

Among the biggest cheerleaders was sophomore teammate Catie Ball, who joined Weaver in qualifying for state this year in the uneven bars.

Ball finished 18th with a 8.433 score, and Weaver was 23rd with 8.2.

Image Information: GRAFTON/CEDARBURG GYMNAST Renae Weaver held a banner made by her fans after winning a WIAA Division 1 title in the vault.