Written by Steve Ostermann and Mitch Maersch
Wednesday, 03 March 2010 17:46

One year after near miss, Port junior pins down his second state championship

Mission accomplished.

One year after falling short in his quest for a second state wrestling title, Port Washington’s Alex Dieringer stormed his way to the top at the WIAA Division 1 individual finals last Saturday.

The junior capped a 45-1 season by rolling through the 140-pound field at the Kohl Center in Madison. His four-match flurry culminated in a 5-1 victory over Wisconsin Rapids’ Rylan Lubeck in the title match.

“Last year, when I lost in the finals, I made up my mind to work harder and win it this time,” said Dieringer, who took second at 125 pounds in Division 2 as a sophomore after winning the 103-pound crown in Division 1 in 2008.

“I just had to get back to wrestling my style. I had to be aggressive and smart.”

Dieringer was certainly both.

He faced a tough foe in Lubeck, a sophomore who finished the season 48-4, but had little trouble controlling the match. After scoring a first-period takedown, Dieringer tacked on a second-period escape and kept Lubeck off balance until the final horn.

“I knew Rylan was the best wrestler I was going to face in the tournament, so I was prepared for him,” Dieringer said. “I thought he would be in the finals against me.”

Dieringer, who improved his career record to 128-4, had an easier time on his way to the final. After opening the three-day tournament with a 15-1 win over Hortonville’s Kegan Gennrich, he blanked River Falls’ Cam Loomis, 11-0.

In the semifinals, Dieringer pinned Wilmot Union’s Matthew Gray in 3 minutes, 41 seconds.

“Alex just dominated the field,” Port coach Alex LaRosa said. “It was 5-1 in the final, but the match was really one-sided.

“It was awesome. Alex’s been on a mission since last year, and he wasn’t going to be denied this time.”

The biggest challenge for Dieringer, according to LaRosa, was making sure he stayed focused on one opponent at a time.

“We talked about concentrating on each guy he went up against rather than looking forward to wrestling Lubeck,” LaRosa said. “That was the only thing I was concerned about.”

LaRosa and his assistant coaches were also paying attention to two other Port wrestlers who reached the state level — junior Justin Meins (125) and senior Ryan Wischer (152), who both made their first appearances in Madison.

Meins had a solid tournament and finished fourth in a weight class dominated by Germantown’s Jesse Thielke, who won his third straight title.

Meins (37-8) won his first two matches — defeating Middleton’s Nate Misenheimer, 7-6, and Wisconsin Rapids’ Ben Westover, 8-6 — before facing Thielke in the semifinals.

Thielke prevailed, 17-3, with a performance LaRosa described as “the best I’ve ever seen him wrestle.”

“Thielke is just a stud,” LaRosa said. “He’s like Alex. He wasn’t going to lose to anyone.”

Meins showed his mettle by shaking off the loss to win his first match in the consolation round. He defeated Ashwaubenon’s Chad Stuiber, 10-8, to reach the third-place final, a rematch against Westover.

This time, Westover (40-7) got his revenge with a 3-2 win.

“The matches in the consolation round are shorter time periods, and that didn’t help Justin,” LaRosa said. “He usually wears down his opponents because he’s so well-conditioned, but the format didn’t allow him to do that.

“But Justin had an awesome tournament and a great season. It was a nice reward for all his hard work, and it should motivate him to make it back there next year.”

Wischer took the mat in Madison after a whirlwind series of events that had him replacing another state qualifier who couldn’t participate.

On Wednesday, the day before the tournament started, LaRosa received a phone call from the father of Neenah’s Sam McGinnis, who defeated Wischer in a sectional meet the previous Saturday on his way to a state berth. LaRosa was told

McGinnis wouldn’t be able to wrestle in Madison due to illness, opening the door for Wischer, who finished third at the sectional, one place behind McGinnis.

After WIAA officials confirmed McGinnis’ absence, Wischer was added to the 152-pound field. Although Wischer’s state dream ended with a 1-0 loss in the first round to Mukwonago’s Ryan Aprahamian, it was an experience the Port wrestler won’t
forget, LaRosa said.

“At first, Ryan was disappointed to just miss qualifying for state, but then he was thrilled to get the chance,” LaRosa said. “Just to be there was great for him and everybody who knows him.”

Wischer, who LaRosa called one of the Pirates’ hardest-working wrestlers, finished the season 30-15.

IT WAS CELEBRATION TIME for Port Washington’s Alex Dieringer after he won the 140-pound title in the WIAA Division 1 state individual wrestling tournament last Saturday. The junior’s four tournament victories included a 5-1 decision over Wisconsin Rapids’ Rylan Lubeck in the final. Photo by Diane Kinzer

CG-B’s Garcia leads local Division 3 wrestlers with 3rd-place state finish

Cedar Grove-Belgium’s Tyler Garcia earned his second Division 3 third-place medal at last weekend’s WIAA state individual wrestling tournament and is primed to move up next season.

The 160-pound junior led the Rockets with the highest finish of their four state qualifiers, going 3-1 in the three-day meet at the Kohl Center in Madison. He finished the season with a 32-3 record.

“Tyler’s got two third-place finishes at state. Those guys (ahead of him) are all seniors now, so they’re gone,” Cedar Grove-Belgium coach Trevor Peterson said.

“He should have a real good shot at the state title.”

Garcia opened with a 4-0 win over New Lisbon’s Cobretti Forsythe before losing, 16-2, in the semifinals to Glenwood City’s Garrett Bonte (42-2), who eventually placed second.

Against Bonte, Garcia kept it close through one period, trailing by only 2-0. In the second, he got caught on his back and couldn’t recover.

“Bonte was pretty tough. As the match went on, we realized how tough he was,” Peterson said. “I still thought Tyler wrestled real hard.”

In the consolation round, Garcia pinned Cadott’s Gage Burish (36-7) in 3 minutes, 52 seconds, of a semifinal match. Garcia then faced Forsythe in a rematch and defeated him even more decisively, 9-2.

“Tyler wrestled great on Saturday. I don’t think he was going to accept anything less than third,” Peterson said.

Garcia had the top finish among 10 local wrestlers who qualified for Division 3 state competition, including four from Cedar Grove-Belgium and six from Ozaukee.

Senior Wayne Paulus had the Rockets’ next-best finish with a sixth-place effort in the 215-pound weight class.

Paulus overcame a knee injury that sidelined him much of the season to earn his first state medal. He posted a 1-3 record in Madison and finished the season 17-4.

After receiving a first-round bye, Paulus lost to Iowa-Grant’s Bryant Edge, 5-0, but rebounded to defeat Shiocton’s Josh Knorr, 9-2.

“It was a big win for Wayne. He had never gotten a medal from the state tournament, and you could tell he really wanted one,” Peterson said.

In the consolation semifinals, Edgar’s Aaron Karlen defeated Paulus, 11-3. In the fifth-place match, Paulus lost, 9-2, to Boyceville’s Cody Hegeman (50-4).

The Rockets’ other two state qualifiers, sophomores Zach Schulz (112) and Matt Mueller (285), didn’t place but gained valuable experience.

Mueller (30-14) opened with a 7-5 win over De Soto’s Frank Ames. However, he was then pinned by Coleman’s Jordan Zeitler in 3:02 and Heritage Christian’s Dylan Lange in 2:20.

Schulz (32-9) was eliminated by a 9-0 loss to Mineral Point’s Cody Bertram in the first round.

Ozaukee’s state qualifiers failed to win any of their seven matches but walked out with their heads held high after a valiant effort.

“We wrestled very well. Every one of the kids had a top-10 performance down there,” Ozaukee co-coach Luke Gundrum said.

“They were relaxed and performed well. We just got beat by better kids.”

The Warriors’ Brady Watry, a 125-pound junior who finished the season 35-13, received a first-round bye. On the second day, he lost, 6-0, to Weston/Ithaca’s Nate Duren (33-5). Duren went on to take second place.

In the consolation round, Watry lost, 12-3, to Coleman’s Mitch Champagne (39-6), who ended up placing third. Watry had highly regarded Champagne on his back in the third period, Gundrum said.

“Brady wrestled very well and ended up losing to the second- and third-place finishers. You can’t ask too much more,” Gundrum said.

Senior Pat Leonard (140), the only Ozaukee wrestler with previous state experience, saw his high school career end with a 7-5 loss to Cadott’s Cory Matott. Leonard finished the season 34-10.

In the 145-pound class, senior Scott Watry (36-12) lost, 13-2, to Cashton’s Dominic Flock.

At 152, junior Vince Cardarelle (39-8) lost to Reedsville’s Alex Spatchek, 9-0.

Two Ozaukee freshmen fell in tough first-round matches.

At 103, Ian Hughes (39-12) lost to Glenwood City’s Riley Knops, 4-0.

At 119, Ethan Brouillette (29-16) was pinned in 4:24 by Edgar’s Jake Frane.

“Every one of them performed as well as they have this year. It’s hard to be disappointed with that,” Gundrum said.

The Warriors had their most state qualifiers since 2003, and Gundrum is looking forward to a bright future. He believes this was the first time an Ozaukee freshman qualified for state in at least a decade.

“Getting those two freshmen qualified this year was a big deal,” Gundrum said. “It’s going to be a big boost for them coming in as sophomores being down there already.”

As far as next season’s team leaders, Watry and Cardarelle will head the list as seniors.

Gundrum also expects a large group of freshman wrestlers to bolster the Warriors’ prospects.

“We did quite a bit this year with a limited number of kids,” he said.

“Next year, our numbers should be a little bit better and we should be better as a team.”