

wrestling wrapped

overview of the wrestling season

Kira Johnson
reporter

Finishing the wrestling season as the state champion, Kena Leonard, senior, said her final season ended with success on Feb. 22-24.

“I think the team had a good season,” Leonard said. “This is the most girls we’ve ever brought to state before.”

Leonard said support from her teammates encouraged her on the mat.

“[Wrestling] just made me more confident as a person having success in something [where] everybody’s supporting you,” Leonard said.

Also finishing as state runner-up, Jailynn Taylor, senior, said she enjoys the close relationships between the team and coaches. She said the family dynamic of the team allowed her to create many memories.

“We laughed a lot during the season,” Taylor said. “We were all able to have a deep connection with [the coaches] and joke around with them.”

In addition to forming strong connections within the team, Taylor said wrestling enabled her to create new friendships.

“I made so many different new

friendships, either with the managers, coaches and teammates,” Taylor said. “Outside of school, we all hung out.”

Clayton Younger, senior, and state runner-up, said wrestling affected his mental outlook.

“[Wrestling] creates a mindset that you’re going to use throughout life,” Younger said. “It’s a mindset of growth, not a fixed mindset: to be better and better yourself.”

He said his final match in the state championship brought strong emotions.

“My finals match was double overtime and I really thought I was going to win that one, and I didn’t,” Younger said. “I lost, so it was heart-wrenching.”

Similar to the difficult state match Younger experienced, Kaiden Powell, junior, and state champion, said his finals match forced him to push himself.

“I started getting tired toward the end, but I told myself I wasn’t tired because there was only a minute left, so it just made me more tired after the match,” Powell said.

Powell said he learned a calm mindset benefits him during his tough matches.

“I just breathe and tell myself

it’s going to be fine; nothing to worry about; it’s just one match,” Powell said.

In agreement with Powell, Brock Johnson, sophomore, and state champion, said he learned valuable lessons during the season.

“Always stay healthy and don’t let the injuries get to you,” Johnson said.

Johnson said his favorite moment from the season came from the success of the team.

“Getting third as a team [at state] was a pretty big goal, [and another goal] of our team [was] to bring home a trophy, so that was pretty awesome,” Johnson said.

With all wrestlers contributing to his favorite memory, Darvin Willard, varsity wrestling coach, said his top moment of the season occurred at the home invitational tournament on Jan. 19.

“Seeing both our girls and boys win our own home invitational tournament [became my favorite moment],” Willard said.

Willard said he continues his coaching career because of the members of the team.

“The kids; that’s the thing that inspires me the most,” Willard said.



Focused, Jailynn Taylor, senior, wrestles against her Piper opponent Jan. 1. Taylor said she placed 2nd at state. “[Wrestling] helped a lot with confidence and being myself,” Taylor said. Photo by Laura Waegelein

State Results

Boys - 3rd as a team

Kaiden Powell: Champion 4-0
Brock Johnson: Champion 4-0
Clayton Younger: Runner-Up 3-1
Bryson Rockers: Runner-Up 3-1
Hagen Blanck: 3rd place 5-1
Brayden Rockers: 1-2
Chevez Neely: 0-2
Ryckert Cole: 0-2
Carson Martin: 1-2

Girls - 5th as a team

Kena Leonard: Champion 4-0
Jailynn Taylor: Runner-Up 3-1
Camryn Mather: 5th place 4-2
Alexys Epp: 1-2
Layla Anthony: 0-2
Ellie Baska: 2-2

source: darvin willard

Wrestling, Kyran Mann, freshman, attempts to pin his opponent during the Black and Gold wrestling match Oct. 27. Mann said he enjoyed the season because wrestling gave him a break from everything else. “I like wrestling because it really takes your mind off things,” Mann said. Photo by Alexys Epp

