

McCovey becomes first H-DNC state champ

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Del Norte junior Roger McCovey was one of three local wrestlers who placed at the California Interscholastic Federation State Wrestling Championships Saturday in Bakersfield.

McCovey, wrestling at 285 pounds, defeated Central Catholic's Dominic Galas 2-1 to become the first Humboldt-Del Norte Conference state champion ever. Galas was 55-0 coming into the match and McCovey finished his season at 41-0.

Arcata head coach Robert England said McCovey's victory was very impressive considering the circumstances.

"Unlike other sports, (high school) wrestling has one division," England said. "It's quite an accomplishment."

England added that three H-DNC wrestlers had previously lost in the state finals before McCovey won.

This marked the first time since 1985 that more than one H-DNC wrestlers placed at state, and the first time any local wrestler has placed since Eureka's Jeff Brink was seventh in 1999.

Arcata's Trent Stevenson (140) lost in the semifinals to eventual champion Vlad Dombroski from Natomas by a score of 6-4 and also fell to St. John Bosco's Mike Martinez 4-3 before defeating Enterprise's Jeremy Moreno 17-2.

The win over Moreno meant Stevenson finished in fifth place.

Stevenson said he didn't do as well as he expected.

"I think I could have done better," he said.

England agreed with his wrestler to an extent.

"I felt Trent could have wrestled with a little more energy," England said. "He could have finished more takedowns and it ended up costing us."

England added that he thought Stevenson was right there with everyone he wrestled in terms of skill, but unfortunately, he still came up short.

Another H-DNC wrestler, McKinleyville's Mike Larson (189), defeated Buchanan's Jake Gingold 4-0 and lost to Red Bluff's Stephan Hampton 9-2 before defeating Hesperia's Danny Reyes 9-3 for seventh place.

Larson said that he thought he did well considering Hampton finished in fourth place as well as how he performed against Reyes.

"I kept going after Reyes the whole match and it paid off for me," Larson said.

Larson added that he liked being with the other top eight wrestlers in his bracket at the awards ceremony, calling it a special experience.

"It's pretty cool seeing the best of each weight up there," Larson said.

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