

Wrestling clubs have tourney success

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It's been a busy few weeks for the Crystal Lake Wizards wrestling clubs that competed at championship tournaments at the bantam, midget, novice and senior levels.

At the Illinois Bantam Championship on Feb. 10 in Joliet, the Wizards had 10 wrestlers place, including two title winners. Dillon Carlson won at 52 pounds and Jacob Jensen at 55.

Bantam wrestlers are 5 to 6 years old.

Also winning bantam championships were Ryder Hunkins at 67 from the Golden Eagles– Jacobs' junior club team – and Tyler Evans from the Wolves – Prairie Ridge's junior team.

At the Illinois Midget Championship, March 16-17 in Danville, the Wizards had 10 wrestlers place, including Chris Moore. who won at 67.

Midget wrestlers are 8 to 10 years old.

Also winning in Danville was Dylan Connell from the Marengo Youth Wrestling club.

Wizards coach Tony Fontanetta said his younger wrestlers had a good year.

"We've got some good young ones coming up," Fontanetta said. "We made good strides this year with our bantams and midgets."

At the Illinois Kids Wrestling Federation state tournament March 8 and 9 in Rockford, the Wizards had five seniors and four novice wrestlers who placed. Novice are 10 to 12 and seniors are 12 to 14.

Winning a senior championship was Josh Fiegel from Harvard. Fiegel took eighth last year at state and Fontanetta said Fiegel did not want to be at the lower end of the podium this year.

"[Fiegel] really worked his butt off and did everything it took," Fontanetta said. "He's a great all-around kid. He's one of the hardest workers in the room."

As a team, the Wizards were third in bantam, fourth in midget, fifth at state for seniors and ninth for novice.

"We've got a special group. I'm lucky to have the ones that have come with me," Fontanetta said. "They're putting in the extra time. They want to succeed."

Fontanetta said sometimes wrestlers are a little more driven to win a first championship. Following that up is a little more difficult.

"Kids have success and that next year they're going to coast and rest on their laurels," Fontanetta said. "It's hard to repeat. You're not going to sneak up on anybody anymore."

In addition to getting his wrestlers ready for tournaments, the Wizards also hosted some former wrestlers. Fontanetta said he helped some high school wrestlers get ready for the AAU freshman/sophomore state championships.

“ ‘We forgot how hard this was,’ ” Fontanetta said his former wrestlers told him. “We work the kids pretty hard. If they can make it through my practices, they can make it anywhere.”

One of greatest sources of pride for Fontanetta is watching his wrestlers succeed at the high school level. That’s especially true at the Fox Valley Conference Meet where he gathers all the former Wizards for a group photo after the meet.

“We get them from all over,” Fontanetta said. “They never forget where they came from.”

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