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By Dennis Garcia
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TRINITY - There are times when a high school coach feels very strongly that his team is about to have a successful season. Trinity High School varsity wrestling coach Brandon Coggins said before this season began, he felt the Bulldogs were in for a fantastic year. Coggins was right.

The Bulldogs, who went undefeated in the Piedmont Athletic Conference this season, will enter Tuesday night's first two rounds of the state dual meet tournament with a 27-3 record. Trinity is scheduled to travel to Dixon High School Tuesday along with Morehead and Reidsville.

The third and fourth rounds of the tournament are scheduled for Thursday.

"When we started this year, we thought we would have a good dual meet team because of the number of returners we had back," Coggins said of losing just one senior from a team that finished 22-2 last season. "These kids always rise to the occasion. We have a young squad and we don't have a lot of depth, but we have awesome kids and they work hard. We have a really good freshmen

group and we have a special junior class. We tell them every day that we are a family. We are together more than they are with their own families."

The only losses the Bulldogs have suffered all season were to 4-A Lumberton, 3-A West Henderson and 3-A Parkland and those came without a full THS squad in tact.

"Last year, we sent seven kids to the state tournament and only graduated one of them," said Coggins, who wrestled at Randleman High School. "Our kids put a lot more work in than the majority of teams we wrestle. We have 90 percent of our wrestlers wrestling in the off-season and the others are participating in track or something else. Our kids love to compete in dual meets."



Trinity wrestling coach Brandon Coggins.

The Bulldogs have been led by Chris Grubb (32-15 at 106 pounds), K.J. Stafford (30-19 at 120 pounds), Aaron Ortega-Perez, who is 43-12, David Makupson (42-5 at 126), Alex Minish (44-11 at 138), Jermell Brockington (39-6 at 152), Sebastian Talent, who is 38-3 and Ayden Prevatte, who is 46-8.



The Trinity sideline during a recent conference match.

"K.J. Stafford has really stepped up," Coggins said. "We knew he would be better after placing sixth last year at the state tournament. He has been one of our most improved kids and that's because of all the hard work he has done in the off-season."

The closest any PAC team came this year to the Bulldogs was a 16-point win over Wheatmore.

Another big reason for the Bulldogs' success has been the work of assistant coach John Anders, who

Coggins said is more of a co-head coach than an assistant.

"One of our mottos is that we're in the business of hanging banners," Coggins said.

Perhaps the Bulldogs will be raising another in just a few days.