



February 9, 2022

By Dennis Garcia
SportsTone.net

Randolph County has long been one of the top counties in the state when it comes to high school wrestling. Each year, dozens of wrestlers qualify for the state tournaments with the goal of earning a coveted state championship.



This year is no different as 30 wrestlers will represent schools from Randolph County in the upcoming state championship tournaments in Greensboro beginning Thursday. Six of the eight wrestling programs in the county will be represented.

There will be a school-record 13 wrestlers from Uwharrie Charter Academy and two from Eastern Randolph in the 1-A state championships; five wrestlers from Trinity, three from Southwestern Randolph and two from Providence Grove in the state 2-A championships; and five wrestlers from Asheboro High School in the state 3-A championship meet. All wrestlers qualified for their state tournament by placing in their respective regional tournament last weekend.

The 1-A meet will be led by the Eagles, who captured the East Regional Tournament last weekend in impressive fashion, finishing with 290 points. Rosewood placed second, a whopping 101 points behind the Eagles.

"Obviously, we're certainly excited and pleased with what we were able to do at regionals," veteran UCA coach Chris Waddell said. "It was as dominant an effort as I have ever been involved with. Looking into it, at the low end we would get nine in and the high end 13. We have a strong team and the region is down a bit. Still, we had some guys in some tough brackets that did well."

Representing UCA will be sophomore Ethan Hines (39-5) in the 106 pound weight category, freshman Brandon Jordan (30-7) at 113, sophomore Jack McArthur (32-7) at 126, junior Aldo Hernandez (46-3) at 132, senior Byan Lackey (36-7) at 138, sophomore Jair Ulloa (21-5) at 145, sophomore Carson Robertson (34-12) at 152, junior Grayson Roberts (45-4) at 160, senior Doug Bowles (45-4) at 170, sophomore Jaden Maness (37-10) at 182, senior Aiden Carter (12-6) at 195, senior Jaden Marion (30-3) at 220 and junior Jake Morin (33-7) at 285.

The Eagles had seven regional champions as Jordan, Hernandez, Lackey, Robertson, Roberts, Bowles and Marion all placed first. Hines and Maness placed second, McArthur, Carter and Morin placed third and Ulloa finished fourth.

"We just want to do the same thing we've been doing all year and that's to be consistent," Waddell said. "They have practiced hard all year long and that's why they are where they are at. People see the competition, but where everything is won and lost is in practice. Our guys just don't practice with us, they go out and practice with their clubs, run and train on their own. All the extra stuff is making a difference."

Representing Eastern Randolph will be junior Adrian Lopez (23-7) at 126 and junior Bryce Foland (18-7) at 126. Both finished fourth at last week's regionals.

Trinity is sending five to the state 2-A meet. Sophomore Brayden Hall (45-8) at 106, sophomore Spencer May (41-4) at 113, senior David Makupson (46-1), sophomore Casey Hohn (38-11) and sophomore Gavin Hardister (33-7) at 182 will vie for state titles.

May and Makupson captured regional championships, while Hohn and Hardister placed third and Hall fourth.

"I would like to say yes, but it really doesn't," THS coach Brandon Coggins said about being surprised after four sophomores qualified for the tournament. "We knew our sophomore group would be pretty good."

Still, the Bulldogs have been led by Makupson, who is looking for his first state title.

"David has been good year in and year out," Coggins said. "We know he is in one of the toughest weight classes. We've been telling them to just basically do the same thing they have been doing all year."

SWR junior Luke White (33-4) at 132, senior Clay Sugg (27-7) at 195 and freshman Jose Flores (27-8) at 220 qualified after White placed third and Sugg and Flores fourth in regional action.

PG will have a pair of wrestlers at the state meet as senior Brooks Freeman (32-12) at 182 and junior Colton Wood (32-9) at 285 will fight for titles. Wood captured a regional championship and Freeman was fourth.

The only 3-A team in the county, the Blue Comets, have five wrestlers competing for a state championship. Junior Xavier Santos (35-6) at 113, junior Diego Gutierrez (30-4) at 126, senior Luke Lambeth (36-5) at 160, senior Logan Lambeth (41-3) at 182 and junior Michael Brady (30-14) at 195 will represent AHS, which finished fourth as a team in the regional last

weekend. Santos won a regional championship, while the Lambeth twins placed second. Gutierrez and Brady placed third.

"Records don't matter this week," AHS coach Wes Berrier said. "Even seeding doesn't matter. I have seen four seeds beat one seeds for state championships. That is the message we're trying to tell all the kids."

Like all the other participants, the AHS wrestlers spent this week fine-tuning.

"It's all about cleaning up our moves, cleaning up things on top and on the bottom," Berrier said. "All the teaching and instruction is done and over with. Now we have to go out and wrestle hard and with intensity."

Wrestling begins Thursday at the Greensboro Coliseum for 3-A (3 p.m.), 4-A (5 p.m.) and 2-A (7 p.m.) participants. Friday consolation rounds begin at 9 a.m. in those three divisions with 1-A wrestling beginning at 2 p.m. Semifinals in all classifications are scheduled for 6 p.m. Championship Saturday begins with consolation matches at 9 a.m. and concludes with the Parade of Champions at 4 p.m., followed by the championship matches.