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ASHEBORO - Summertime is becoming more and more important to the success of a high school athletic program. No matter the sport, summertime camps, activities and workouts not only give the student-athlete the opportunity to improve skills, but it gives the coaching staff a glimpse of what may come once the new season begins.

Asheboro High School wrestling coach Wes Berrier said he certainly liked what he saw this past summer as the Blue Comets wrestling squad competed at a prestigious summer camp at Appalachian State University.

Although the Blue Comets were expected to have a very young team for the 2019-20 campaign, those rising underclassmen and upperclassmen showed Berrier and the coaching staff they indeed would be ready for the challenges that waited ahead.

And they have been.

The Blue Comets added another dual meet championship to their resume this past weekend, winning

the Cougar Duals in dominating fashion. AHS posted wins over Greensboro Page 66-12, Providence Grove 60-19, South Davidson 78-6 and then SWR in the title match, 84-0, when the Cougars elected not to wrestle, instead forfeiting every weight class.

The four wins boosted the Blue Comets' overall record to 31-3 heading into exam week.

"We had a great off season," Berrier said. "We took the team to Appalachian State and won our division at that team camp. We knew right then that we had a team that could be a top contender. The great thing is we are still young. We are loaded with freshmen and sophomores with a few juniors and seniors sprinkled in."

While at Appalachian State, the Blue Comets finished undefeated at 8-0 in the team competition.



With three weeks left in the regular season, Asheboro wrestling is in pursuit of a Mid-Piedmont Conference Championship, and more.

"This hasn't been a surprise to me because of what we saw in the off season," Berrier said of his team's success this season. "They are all going out there and getting 14 matches at the summer team camp and then going to other events in the summer. In the past, we had good teams, but we had some holes. This year, we don't have any holes."

Whether in a team tournament or an individual tournament, the Blue Comets have been impressive. Prior to winning a tournament title this past weekend, the Blue Comets won the Disco Duels at Discovery High School in Atlanta, defeating two of the five 5A schools in Georgia in Harris County and Locust Grove High School. AHS then finished second at its own Cold Turkey Dual Tournament, losing a close match to Northern Guilford and then finished second to Northern Guilford again at the Husky Duels at Heritage High School in Wake Forest. AHS then won the Rick Williams Duels at South Stokes and followed that up with the win at SWR.

The Blue Comets are 4-0 in Mid-Piedmont Conference play thus far.

"Something we do every year is set goals," said Berrier, who is assisted by his son Jake Berrier, Bryan Clodfelter and Stan Hicks. "We want to win the conference championship and that means beating Southeast Guilford, who always has a powerhouse wrestling program. This year, we were able to knock them down. Reece Atwood is one of the winningest wrestling coaches in the state and he is at Eastern Guilford now and it was an honor to be able to wrestle against his team and beat them this year."

The underclassmen have certainly done their share. Freshman Diego Gutierrez is 30-5 at 113 pounds, sophomore Yu Chen is 36-5 at 126 pounds, sophomore Logan Lambeth is 33-3 at 160 pounds and his twin brother Luke was 17-0 before being injured. Freshmen Christian Diaz and Xavier Santos and sophomores Luke Bunting, Charles Perry and Arhman Tyson have all contributed greatly to the the Blue Comets' success.

"Some of these kids have had a lot of success in middle school," said Berrier, who is in his sixth year as head coach. "We have a couple of middle school champions not even in our starting lineup."

Off-season work is extremely important for many reasons, Berrier said.

"Some of our kids don't understand the pace of practice," Berrier said. "And we work to continue on the mental part of wrestling. The mental part is 80 percent. When you have freshmen going against juniors and seniors, you have to be on top of your mental game and when you can get some wins, it also builds confidence for the younger kids."

Berrier has worked very closely with the middle school wrestling program.

"We take our middle school coaches to our camps so they can learn what we are teaching the kids," Berrier said. "Work with the kids not only on techniques, but tempo and the pace of our practice. When they transition from middle school to high school, we don't want them to be in shock when they see what we put our teams through."

Of course, any successful high school team needs experience and the Blue Comets have a solid group of upperclassmen in senior head captain Kyle Hicks and juniors Abe Mora, Cruz Parral and Drew Bullins.

With 30 members on the team, Berrier said depth has been key this season.

"That is a big part of our success," Berrier said. "With the injuries and sickness, the flu has gone around and stomach bugs, we have been able to put some duct tape on it and keep going. We have depth and we can bump around, too. We can put our average kid on their average kid and win and we can put our great kid on their great kid and win that one."

Winning is what the Blue Comets have been doing a lot of this season.