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The Uwharrie Charter Academy and Avery County high school wrestling teams have enjoyed incredible success on the mat over the years and those two powerhouses will meet once again for the NCHSAA state 1-A dual meet championship Saturday at the Greensboro Coliseum.

The match begins at 3 p.m.

It will be the fourth straight time those two teams have wrestled with a state title on the line with UCA winning in 2023, while Avery won the crown in 2020 and 2022. UCA's first Dual Team Championship came in 2019 over Robbinsville. There were no wrestling championships in 2021 because of the Covid pandemic.

While UCA and Avery County are certainly familiar with one another, Trinity has advanced to the state 2-A championship meet against Seaforth High School, the first time the Bulldogs will be wrestling for a state championship since they last won the title back in 1980. (Trinity won the 2012 team title at the Individual Championship Tournament).

UCA moved into the finals after defeating Albemarle 54-24 in the regional semifinals Wednesday at UCA and Rosewood in the regional finals 40-32. The Eagles led 40-8 against Rosewood before forfeiting the final four matches.

"I don't try to hype anything up," veteran UCA coach Chris Waddell said of the upcoming state championship bout. "We just prepare like we have been. I made the point when we were



*Uwharrie Charter senior Ethan Hines (top). Photo provided.*

wrestling Rosewood the other night, by the second period their guys had their hands on their knees huffing and puffing. They couldn't match the intensity of how we train."

In rounds three and four, UCA's Jair Ulloa, Lorenzo Alston, Carson Robinson, Alek Millikan, Caden Bond, Jaden Maness and Ethan Hines all went 2-0. Jack McArthur and Devonte Harrison were each 1-0.

"I think we're fairly evening matched," Waddell said of the finals with Avery County. "I see some wins for us and some 50-50. I would say us and Avery County are probably two of the better teams in all four classifications. Right now, it's just about executing."

Waddell said he knows he's going against another wrestling juggernaut and matchups, like they always are in wrestling, will be key.

"You look and try to steal one if you can, but you don't want to fall into that hole where you out-think yourself," he said. "You have to find eight wins and that should give you the title."

Avery County upended No. 1 seed Robbinsville to reach the finals.

Trinity has had an incredible season as the Bulldogs meet Seaforth, which has quite an amazing story of its own. The school has been in existence just two years and has only two juniors on the roster. The rest are sophomores and freshmen.

"We haven't matched up with them this season," THS coach Brandon Coggins said. "They have some tough kids and a good coaching staff."

Trinity advanced to the state title meet with a 51-27 win over Lincolnton and a 38-27 win over West Lincoln Wednesday night. Those matches were held at Lincolnton High School.

"Knowing how officials call things is helpful when you are at home, so you're kinda going in blind on that," Coggins said of the two impressive wins Wednesday. "It was a packed house."

Winning two matches Wednesday were Jaden Allred, Charles Schaefer, Lawson Coltrane, Gavin Hardister, Aiden Burkholder, Edgar Vasquez and Spencer May. Brayden Hall was 1-0.



*Trinity's Charles "Bear" Scharfer in regional action. Photo by Charles Schaefer.*



*Bulldog Edgar Vasquez (left) in the regional finals Wednesday night. Photo by Charles Schaefer.*

Coggins said there are no secrets or special drills to get ready for Saturday. The reason for the Bulldogs' success has been hard work and that will still be the formula for Saturday.

"It means a lot for the kids," Coggins said of the opportunity to win a state title. "They have worked hard. I am really excited that they have the chance to catch something that has eluded them for years."

The state 2-A title match is set to begin at noon.