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## Frisco claims regional title by only 3.5 points

By: JIM DONOVAN , Staff Writer

**Two weeks ago Centennial's girls wrestling team narrowly edged Frisco's, but the regional meet gave Frisco the chance it needed to exact its revenge.**

The regional tournament did much to prove just how good Frisco ISD's girls wrestling programs are. The Lady Titans and Raccoons each qualified five wrestlers and one alternate for the state tournament, easily the best showing of the 24 girls teams in competition.

Frisco's team win came down to one match. It was not any specific one, but the fact that the Lady Raccoons won the regional title by only 3.5 points shows just how even the two teams were at the competition.

"It was a different kind of talent because you had so many more teams," said Frisco head coach Chuck Brown of the differing levels of competition from the district to regional level. "I thought both teams wrestled really well, and it shows. We proved that we are the best two teams in the region."

Overall three Frisco ISD girls wrestlers won their respective regional tournaments. Vanessa Epps, largely regarded as one of the top girl wrestlers in the state at any weight class, claimed the regional crown with an undefeated sweep of the 138-pound division and improved her season record to 41-0. With the regional championship comes added pressure to perform at the state meet.

"We hope Vanessa wins it," Brown said. "She is 41-0 so she is expected to win it. So we'll see what happens."

Centennial's Lenee Wood (195) and Sarah Lewis (215) also won their respective regional titles. Still, Centennial head coach Mike Eaton thought his girls would do better.

"Honestly, we had several girls quit in matches," Eaton said. "The girls didn't give a complete effort. We can wrestle better and now we are focusing on state."

Eaton also had high expectations for his 102-pound wrestler Emily Martin. She finished second in her weight class to qualify for state, but narrowly missed winning her division's title.

"I would have liked to have three champions, but we have a pretty good look at state," Eaton said.

Frisco also qualified Allannah Griego, Kristen Bennett, Kirsten Strickler, and Alyssa Frye for the state tournament. Brandi Blade qualified as an alternate.

Brown believes that his team's best chance to win the team state title lies on the shoulders of his two freshmen in Bennett and Strickler.

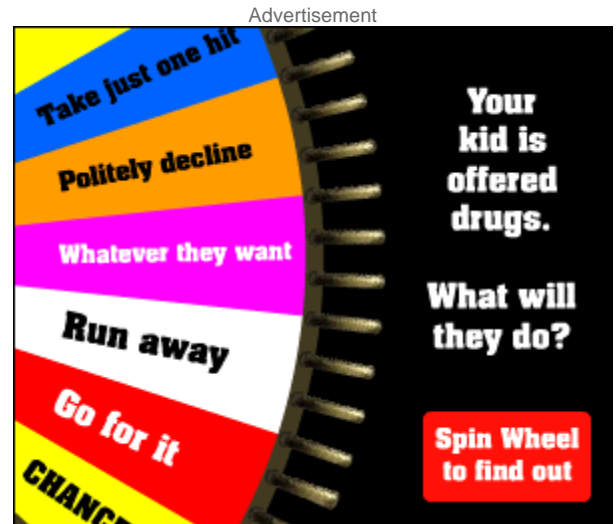
"They are peaking at the right time for us. If they can win a match I think that would make us happy," Brown said. Centennial also qualified Breanna McNeil and Christina Wall and saw Ashley Lee qualify as an alternate for state.

Both Frisco schools also made impressive showings in the boys regional tournament.

Frisco's only boys qualifier came in the form of a state alternate. Jake Dykema finished in fifth-place, one spot behind Centennial's Matt Crook for the fourth and final guaranteed spot in the 189-pound division.

Centennial will be sending more boys to the state tournament than any other Region II team. One of the qualifiers, Isiah Ortega, placed fifth at 119 pounds, but earned the right to challenge the fourth-place finisher from Coppell for the final state spot due to both wrestlers not facing each other in the tournament. Ortega won the match, and secured fourth-place and a trip to Austin. Josh Spicer also qualified by finishing as the runner-up in the 215-pound class.

Both teams will depart for the Delco Center in Austin for the state tournament sometime Thursday with hopes of getting in at least one workout before the meet begins Friday.



Boys will begin wrestling at 9 a.m. Friday with the girls slated to begin at noon.

After the teams show up, it's any coach's guess as to who will perform the best.

"A lot of it is going to come down to match-ups. I'm pleased with them, but in some of these cases, until you actually get there and see who is wrestling well, you never know," Brown said.

Until then the wrestlers will be fine-tuning the skills in hopes of bringing home Texas high school wrestling's ultimate prize.



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