

H.S. wrestling: Warrior Run qualifies eight at Central Sectional

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By Marion Valanoski

BENTON—Wayne Smythe never shied away when talking about the toughness of the District 4 Central Sectional Wrestling Tournament. In fact, the veteran Warrior Run head coach considered it a blessing for his team to be prepared for the postseason by their participation. This year that level of tough increased by four with the addition of Montgomery, Montoursville, Loyalsock and South Williamsport.

And how did the Defenders fare out against the competition?

Eric Hunt and Zack LeBarron captured individual championships while Warrior Run qualified eight wrestlers for this week's District 4 Tournament at Williamsport High School, proving the Defenders have the mettle to handle whoever they come up against and back down from no one.

"I always said this was the toughest of all the sectional tournaments and my thoughts have not changed," Smythe said. "We added four schools to an already tough field and they all have solid wrestling backgrounds so that makes advancing out of here that much more gratifying because of what it takes to move on to the next level."

Brian LeBarron and Elias George finished second in the competition while Jared Miller and Hunter Bohannon placed third and Wes Cupp and Matt Kilgus were fourth.

"I'm pleased with our overall performance in the tournament," the veteran mentor said. "We'll head back to practice and work on what we need to improve upon for next week."

Hunt (113) improved to 30-2 by using a five-point outburst in overtime to claim a 7-2 decision over Montgomery's Kyle Drick after sing a 17-1 technical fall in the semifinals to reach the championship round. LeBarron (120) wasted little time in improving to 30-1 as he pinned Benton's Mike Stuart in 40 seconds to claim the second Defenders' title. He advanced into the finals with a fall over Trevor Sones of Hughesville.

Warrior Run's initial loss in the finals came at 126 after Central Columbia's Lewis Williams got past Brian LeBarron, 6-2. LeBarron (29-3) decisioned Jacob Strassner of Montoursville, 9-0, and won by medical default in the semifinals to reach the finals. Elias George (22-5) was pinned by Jeric Kasunic of Benton in 1:38 at 160 to earn runnerup status.

In the consolation finals, Jared Miller collected three wins, including a fall over Hughesville's Braden Stahlnecker to claim the bronze medal.

Bohannon (220) came into the tournament with just a 5-2 record, but after losing his first-round match, he registered three consecutive pins to claim third place. He flattened Benton's Jared Sivco in 50 seconds and then decked Loyalsock's Brennan Moodie in 1:31 before capping his performance with an 18-second pin over Loyalsock's Brennan Moodie.

"I thought we went into all four bouts focused and ready to wrestle," Smythe said. "We did well in some areas and there are other spots where we can correct problems this week at practice. I'm pleased with our effort because that's the one aspect of the competition we can control as coaches."

Hughesville won the team title with 153 points ahead of runnerup Benton's 1650 while Warrior Run placed fourth with 128.5.