

Journal-Press SPORTS & SCHOOL NEWS

STATE WRESTLING

Habisch takes down first title; Scherber finishes runner-up



Sophomore Ryan Scherber finished state runner-up at 126 pounds in Class 3A.

By Rob LaPlante
Sports Editor

If there was any dispute who this year's top high school wrestler was at 170 pounds, Buffalo senior Riley Habisch ended the debate.

Ranked No. 1 in his weight class from the opening day, Habisch put the finishing touches of his high school wrestling career with a 3-0 decision over No. 3 seed Chase Dressel of Mounds View in last Saturday's championship match at Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

Habisch's win capped off a perfect 39-0 season and earned him his first-career state title. A flex of his muscles and a couple pump fists followed his win, along with a big group hug with his coaches and a run to the stands to hug his parents.

"I really want to thank my teammates and my coaches. They are so great, and they push me every day to be my best," said Habisch, who became the first wrestler from Buffalo to win a state title since Jason Birr last did it in 1991. "It's crazy. It feels great."

Habisch becomes just the 10th state champion in school history, and the ninth different wrestler to do so.

Birr won back-to-back titles in 1990 and 1991.

Tom Olson also won in 1990. Other past champions include: Rick Habisch (1983), Terry Sanders (1982), Mike Habisch (1980), Dave Bonk (1977), Greg Holmberg (1973), and Mike Hickman (1969).

Riley wasn't alive yet to see any of the past championship wins, but the titles won by his two uncles, Rick and his late uncle Mike, remain close to his heart.

"I always hear stories from Rick about my other uncle, Mike, and how much of a bad-ass he was," Habisch said. "I try to take that into my game and really just rip the kids apart."

Habisch's dad, Jeff, was also a standout wrestler, who once placed as high as third at state. With a rich family history in the sport, Riley embraced the challenge to live up to his family's name.

"There's a little pressure, but that's okay," he said. "I just want to thank my mom and dad. They are so supportive."

Riley was making his fifth state appearance. A year ago, he placed third at 160 pounds. Ironically, his last defeat came in last year's semifinal round to Austin Brenner of St. Cloud Tech.

Since the Brenner match, Habisch proved from day one that he was the best in his weight class. He accomplished the rare feat of being ranked No. 1 in the pre-season, and kept that ranking all the way to the final match of the season.

"There's a lot of good wrestlers, and multiple state champions, that wrestled today (Saturday) that started No. 1, but didn't end No. 1, or even have a loss in there," said Buffalo Head Coach Ben Presler.

Wrestling

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Undisputed champ!



Buffalo senior Riley Habisch flexes his muscles in celebration of his first-career state wrestling championship last Saturday at Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul. Habisch capped off an undefeated (39-0) season with a 3-0 decision over Chase Dressel of Mounds View. (Photos by Rob LaPlante)

STATE SWIMMING & DIVING

Buffalo diver lands on podium at state

Kabe sets school history with eighth-place finish; swimmers just miss cut

By Rob LaPlante
Sports Editor

History was made when junior Quincy Kabe registered an eighth-place finish in last weekend's Class AA state diving meet at the Aquatic Center in Minneapolis.

Sitting in ninth place after eight dives in last Thursday's preliminary and semifinal rounds, Kabe knew he had work to do if he wanted to reach the podium (top-eight).

"They definitely didn't go how I wanted them to," said Kabe, referring to his eight-dive score of 230.20. "I mean, there were a few that were okay, but some of them I didn't get the scores I wanted."

Trailing the eighth-place diver by just 1.15 points, Kabe knew that if he executed his final three dives during Saturday's finals that he would have a shot.

Kabe says his best two 11 dives are his second one – a forward double, and his final one – a back twist. His ability to execute all three of his final dives brought his final score to 331.30, which leapfrogged him into eighth place and a spot on the state podium, something that has never been accomplished by a Buffalo boys' diver.

Former teammate Hunter Brings posted a higher score of 363.80 in 2016, but just missed the podium in ninth place.

"I think compared to other years, the competition is not nearly what it's been," said Kabe, who the prior week scored a section title with an 11-dive score of 402.00.

Kabe didn't qualify for state as a sophomore, but as a freshman, he made his first state appearance and placed 23rd with a score of 142.85.

"It was super-exciting to get back," he said. "I'm super-happy I made it to finals, but I really wanted to get a medal. That was my goal."

Ironically, Tyler Barrett of St. Michael-Albertville placed third at state with a score of 366.40. Barrett placed fourth in the section meet 353.20.

"That was impressive," said Kabe, on Barrett's state performance. "I've never seen him dive like that before."

Kabe's finish gave Buffalo 11 team points, 31st out of all Class AA schools. Barrett's total gave STMA 26. Edina was first at 268.

Swimmers just miss

Kabe was joined at state with four other teammates who just missed advancing to Saturday's finals round.

Making his second consecutive state appearance, but first in an individual event was senior Max Menzemer, who placed 19th in the 200



Max Menzemer

freestyle (1:47.44).

The top-16 swim/relay events advance to finals, with the top-eight reaching the podium.

Menzemer's time just beat his personal record of 1:47.50 set the prior week when he won a section title.

"State competition is a lot different from section competition," Menzemer said. "It's a lot harder here. Even though I really didn't do as well as I wanted to here, I feel very accomplished. I'm happy with what I did. State is just an awesome experience."

Menzemer also swam anchor on the 200 freestyle relay team that placed 17th in 1:30.09. Buffalo's time was just .43 seconds slower than Rochester John Marshall's 16th place prelim time of 1:29.66.



Quincy Kabe performs one of his first five dives during last Thursday's Class AA state prelims. Kabe finished the tournament in eighth place with a score of 331.30. He's the first Bison to medal in diving at state. (Photo courtesy of Tom Brophy)

BOYS BASKETBALL

Big crowd sees Bison blow past Elk River



Josh Birkholtz (front) stumbles over Elk River's Brock Burdine (back) as he dives for a loose ball during Tuesday's 85-66 Section 8-4A quarterfinal home win for the Bison. (Photo by Rob LaPlante)

By Rob LaPlante
Sports Editor

The Buffalo boys' basketball team has played its share of nail-biters this season.

Junior forward Aidan Bouman made sure the home fans would leave Tuesday's Section 8-4A home game against Elk River with their full nails intact.

With easily the largest home crowd of the season gathered for one final home game, Bouman used his size and skill to dominate an undersized Elk squad in an 85-66 Bison victory.

While the final score was lopsided, the first half was anything but, as the No. 7 seeded Elks (6-21 overall) did their best early on to strike fear into the home team and its big crowd.

Buffalo maintained a marginal lead throughout most of the first half, but thanks to 11 first-half points by Devon Roberts, Elk River only trailed 36-30 at halftime.

"Elk River is a good team. They play a tough schedule and it wasn't more than two weeks ago they played Maple Grove to a 58-52

game," said Buffalo Head Coach Josh Ortmann. "But, we had so many silly turnovers on offense in the first half, and we didn't get the job on defense."

The game started to slip from the Elks in the final two minutes of the first half. Tied 30-30, they missed an uncontested layup and turned the ball over twice. The second-seeded Bison capitalized on each possession change to close the half on a 6-0 run.

Things quickly went south for the Elks in the second half, starting immediately when Bouman scored an early layup, and Matt Willert followed with a dunk and one.

Willert ended the night with 20 points. Bouman scored 21 of his 29 points in the second half, which included eight layups, a dunk, and two free throws.

"We did a great job of breaking them down on defense," Bouman said. "We got a lot of dump-down passes, and I just scored, which is kind of my job

Boys Basketball

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Swim/Dive

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