

DesMoinesRegister.com

December 4, 2008

CIML wrestling: Indianola eager to prove worth of a No. 2 ranking

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Indianola, Ia. — The intensity level inside the Indianola High School wrestling practice room is high these duays.

The Indians are No. 2 in the preseason Class 3-A rankings by The Predicament, the highest starting spot for a CIML squad since Fort Dodge was No. 2 in the 2003-04 preseason.

"Being ranked already makes us want to work harder," said Indianola's Meredith Meador, who placed eighth at 152 pounds in last season's state tournament. "We don't really look at that, the coaches always say they don't mean too much."

The Indians are one of four CIML teams among the top 10. Roosevelt is No. 3, Fort Dodge is No. 5 and Southeast Polk No. 7.

A majority of the CIML teams open their season tonight, and the Indians are at Marshalltown as the first team the Bobcats face with new coach Dan Lovell.

Lovell, a 1992 state champion for the Bobcats, joins former Marshalltown placer Aaron Tecklenburg at Johnston, Drew Kelly at Ames and Kevin Cochran at Ottumwa as new head coaches in the CIML.

Indianola coach Matt Young has the intensity going full-bore.

"You can't worry about where you start the season," said Young, whose team has won the first two CIML Invitational meets, which brings all 17 squads together. "It's all about where we finish it, and that's what we focus on every day."

Roosevelt returns all four of its placewinners from last season, including 152-pound state champion John Nicholson and third-place finisher Chad Lowman. In the preseason rankings, Lowman is No. 1 at 140, and Nicholson, who is trying to become the first two-time state champion from a Des Moines school, is No. 2 at 160.

Above Nicholson is two-time state champion Derek St. John of Iowa City West, who is ranked No. 1 nationally by W.I.N. Magazine.

"That being ranked second doesn't hurt John's feelings one bit," Roosevelt coach Jay Groth said. "It motivates John to prove he's at the same level or a higher level than St. John is."

Nicholson and St. John could meet Jan. 24 at Urbandale's Ed Winger Classic.

Young and the Indians go back to work after tonight's meet getting ready for the end of February.

"I know if we want to beat the teams in our conference or the teams across the state, we've got to be doing a lot of different things and doing them pretty well," Young said.

FIVE WRESTLERS TO WATCH

EVAN KNIGHT

Junior, Urbandale

Knight won the Class 3-A state championship at 160 pounds last season. He moves up to 171 and is listed as the No. 1 junior at his weight class nationally.

CODY SWIM

Junior, Indianola

Swim finished second at 119 last season. "The biggest thing is he always wants to wrestle and he worries about the little tiny things," Indianola coach Matt Young said.

JOHNNY COLEMAN

Senior, East

Coleman has a sixth- and a third-place medal from the state tournament. He is at 112 this season, and another medal would make him the first East wrestler to earn three medals.

ETHAN BASS

Senior, S.E. Polk

Bass is ranked No. 1 at 215 pounds in Class 3-A. He placed fourth at 189 pounds last season. He will be trying to be the Rams' first state champion since Nick Shandri in 2006.

JOHN NICHOLSON

Senior, Roosevelt

Nicholson won the 152-pound state championship last season, giving him an opportunity this season to become the first wrestler from a Des Moines school to win two state championships.
