

Alderman and Atwood earn top four finishes

Oracle wrestlers Donovan Alderman and Michael Atwood both finished in the top four of the state tournament on Saturday.

Competing in the individual portion of the Indiana State Wrestling Tournament, Alderman finished third in the 119-pound weight class and Atwood, fourth, in the 160-pound class. Delphi has only had one other wrestler, Kameron Banes, who finished in the top four, earning fourth place two years ago.

Alderman, a senior, took his undefeated season into the tournament Friday night, beating Tyler Clark of South Dearborn 12-2.

Atwood, a sophomore, also wrestled on Friday. He was only one of three wrestlers who placed fourth in the semi state to win Friday night. Fourth place finishers wrestle a champ from one of the other semi states. Atwood beat

state's final four.

In the semi final round Alderman lost a tough match to the eventual state champion, Louis Queggra, 1-6.

Atwood also lost to the eventual state champ, Andrew Howe, 5-23. Howe has won three straight state titles and many consider him to be the best wrestler in Indiana history.

Both young men wrestled in the consolation round for third and fourth. Alderman wrestled Anthony Napules of Merrillville. This was a rematch from last week's semi state in Merrillville. Alderman won 7-3 to claim the third place state finish. Atwood was the only wrestler in the tournament to place fourth in the semi state and place in the top four. He wrestled Ron Baker of Belmont who was the champ from Fort Wayne in the consolation round. At the end of

regulation the score was tied 11-11. Atwood attempted a throw and just missed getting the take down, losing a close match to finish fourth.

"These two young men not only represented Delphi in the tournament, they opened a lot of eyes to where we are heading with our program," said coach Mike Atwood.

DCHS wrestler is honored for academic achievement

Comet staff report

The Oracle wrestling team received another honor last weekend. Senior Shane Evans, who wrestled at 171 for the Oracles all year, was selected to the First Team Academic All-State Wrestling Team.

His season record was 30-14 and his overall career record, 91-39. He has maintained through his high school career a grade point average of

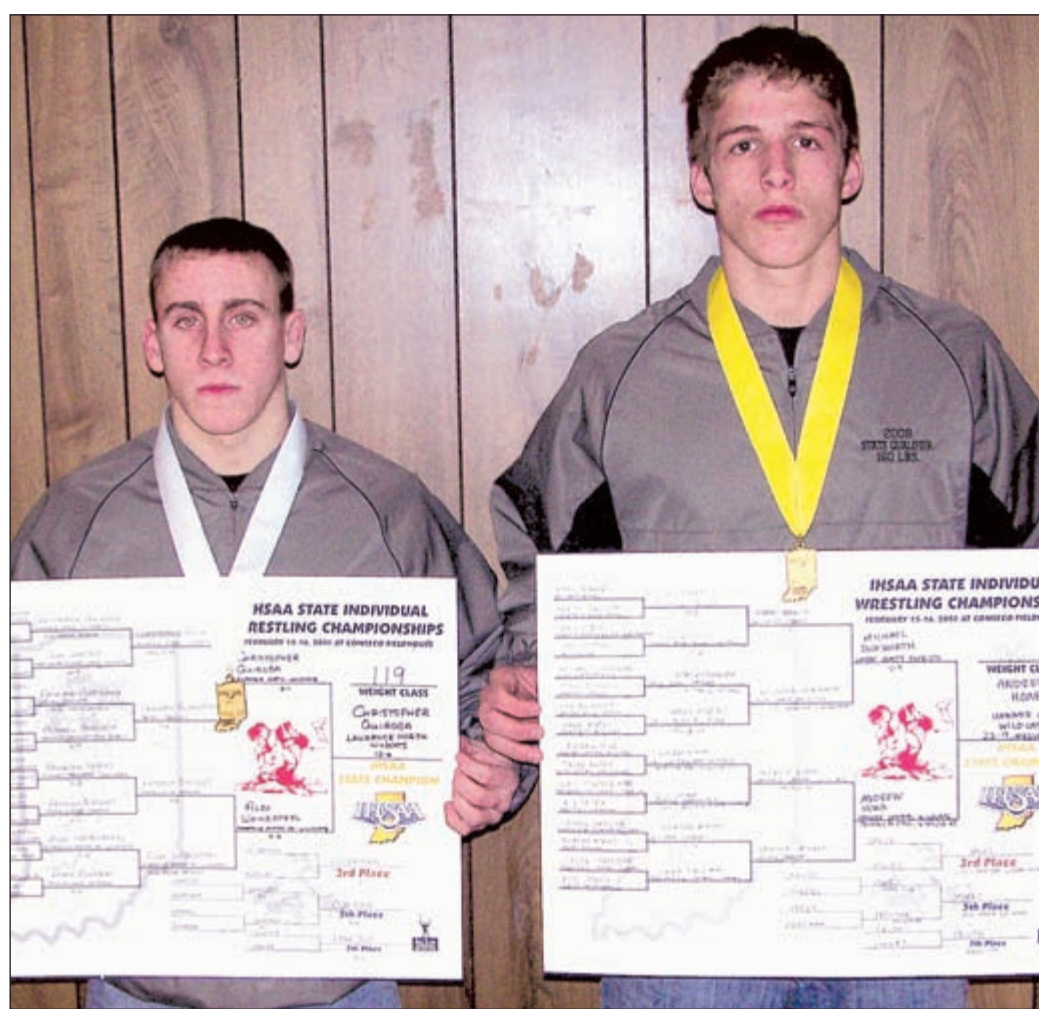
4.5 on a 4-point scale due to the weighted classes he has taken.



Evans

Evans was accompanied to the IHSWCA wrestling banquet to receive his award by his parents, Shawn and Shannon Evans, his sister Hannah, and coaches Mike Atwood and Craig Shaw.

Monday evening the team was honored for its accomplishments with a meal prepared by Pat Duff and the Conner family.



Wrestlers earn state honors

Delphi wrestlers Donovan Alderman, left, and Michael Atwood earned top four finishes at the state wrestling tournament held last weekend in Indianapolis. Alderman, a senior, placed third in the state in the 119-pound weight class, while sophomore Michael Atwood, placed fourth in the 160-pound class. Photo provided

Burton is sectional swim champion

Delphi sophomore Andrew Burton won the 50 and 100 freestyle events at Saturday's West Lafayette swim sectional.

Burton beat five seniors in both events to be the meet's only double individual event winner. His times of 22.53 in the 50 and 48.89 in the 100 reset his school records.

The wins advance Burton to the state swim meet Friday evening, the first time in over 20 years a Delphi swimmer has competed at the state meet.

Teammate Kyle Price came up short on his bid to join Burton at the state meet. Price, a junior, was the number one



Burton

seed in the 100 backstroke, but was out touched to finish second.

The 200 freestyle relay team of Matt Keen, Jared Kelley, Jeremy Sterrett and Burton set a school record with a time of 1:35.94 for third place.

At Thursday's sectional preliminaries the team posted 13 personal best times: Sterrett, 200 free 1:58.16, 100 free

54.14; Brent Kremer 200 free 2:05.85; Keen 100 butterfly 1:00.36; Alex Price 50 free 25.56, 100 backstroke 1:06.79; K. Price 100 backstroke 56.81; Clint McLeland 100 breaststroke 1:10.16; Andy Flora 100 breaststroke 1:09.45; 200 free relay team of Keen, Kelley, Sterrett, Burton 1:36.06; Burton 50 free 22:60, 100 free 49.19; 400 freestyle relay team of Sterrett, Kelley, K. Price and Burton 3:33.01.

The boys' swim team finished their dual season 14-2 and placed sixth at the sectional.

Cougars win two conference battles

By Greg Hoffman

Contributing sportswriter

Carroll (8-11) won two hard-fought games last week, defeating conference foe Clinton Central there Wednesday, 64-61, and Frontier Saturday at CHS 62-58. Sandwiched between the victories was a loss Friday night at Taylor, 78-45. The Cougars are now 3-1 in conference play.

At Clinton Central, it was close

from the get go as neither team could get a handle on the game in the first quarter. Carroll committed 5 turnovers and Central had 4 miscues. Eleven fouls were called - 6 against the hosts and 5 against the Cougars. After two lead changes Central held a slim 3-point advantage after one, 9-6.

Three ties and three lead changes followed in the second quarter as Central built its biggest

lead of the night at 14-7. Baskets by Jacob Craig and Adam Spesard and Brad Benson's first trey of the year gave the Cougars a 7 to 0 run to tie the game at 14. The Cougars proceeded to outscore the Bulldogs 13 to 8 to open up a 5-point lead at 27-22, but the hosts had chipped away at that lead and had it down to one, 29-28, by half-time.

Neither team could get more than a 5-point lead in the second half. With Carroll up 33-28, Central outscored the Cougars 17-10 in the third quarter to go up 45-43. The Cougars committed 10 turnovers.

Central had a 4-point lead when back-to-back baskets by Spesard knotted the score at 48. With the score tied at 50, a trey by Kevin Ives gave Carroll the lead. Five unanswered points by Central had them up 55-53. Spesard again tied the score at 55. From here there were three lead changes and another tie at 61. Spesard had an old-fashion three-point play to give Carroll the 64-61 win with 3.6 seconds left.

Carroll went inside to Spesard in the fourth quarter and he responded with 13 big points. He had 15 points for the night. His cousin, Carson Spesard, had 14 points and handed out 6 assists. Ives added 8 points and Riley Eller and Primmer Zook split 14 points. Carroll's bench had an impressive night, outscoring Central's bench 37-5.

The Cougars out-rebounded Central 29 to 22 with C. Spesard leading the way with 7. Craig added 6 rebounds. Carroll was 23 of 45 (51%) from the field and 13

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Oracles lose another heartbreaker in 2 OTs

By John J. Dunn

Contributing sportswriter

For the second time in its last three outings, Delphi took its opponent to double-overtime on the road, this time coming up short Friday night at South Newton, 66-58.

Just when you think the Oracles are about to turn the corner and put some of these closely-played games into the win column, some kind of extraordinary effort from the opposition gets in the way.

This was the case - although the Rebels are Class 1A's #9-ranked team and entered the game with nine consecutive wins and an impressive 14-2 record. It was another game that you thought Delphi played well enough to put itself in a position to come home with a much-needed victory.

But just as Lucy would tease Charlie Brown while trying to kick the football, it just wasn't to be - again.

The monumental stat to overcome came from the foul line where South Newton hit an astonishing 28-of-33 (.848 percent) free throws, a stat-line that any professional or college team would be proud of.

Not to be outdone, Delphi shot a season-second-best .792 percent (19-of-24) itself from the charity-thrower in a game that saw five-player disqualifications (including three Oracles) and 43 personal fouls called (26 against Delphi) from whistle-blowers that some Oracle faithful felt for certain hailed from southern Newton County.

But in the end, South Newton would use its accuracy from the line at crunch-time, nailing 22-of-25 foul shots (.880 percent) in the game's final two minutes of regulation and during both overtime periods, to win its tenth-in-a-row and improve to 15-2 on the season.

Good teams find a way to win, and the Rebels proved that they were the better team on this night, despite another

valiant and desperate Oracle comeback in the game's second half.

After falling behind 11-4 at the end of the first quarter and 20-12 at halftime, Delphi opened the third quarter with nine unanswered points in the first 2:30 to take a 21-20 lead and would close the third quarter down just 30-28.

South Newton then opened the fourth quarter with a 5-0 run to take a 35-28 lead with 6:00 remaining in the game before the Oracles began methodically chipping away at the margin. They finally tied it at 44 on a clutch Dustin Oliver three-point field goal with 2.4 seconds remaining to send the game into the first overtime period.

With the momentum now seemingly shifted toward Delphi in part due to the departure of the Rebels high-scoring senior guard Ben Welsh, who fouled out with 17.2 seconds left with 24 points, Oliver then drained two more treys in the first 1:50 of the OT. Delphi had its largest leads of the game at 47-44 and again at 50-47, but each time South Newton would find an answer to keep the game within a possession.

Oliver would then convert the second free throw of a double-bonus situation for his tenth straight point to put the Oracles in front 51-49 with 1:25 remaining. A quick bucket at the other end tied it back at 51.

Kyle Bender then nailed a 12-foot jumper to put Delphi back on top 53-51 with 50 seconds remaining, but the Rebels would quickly respond to tie it at 53 with 40 seconds left.

The Oracles could not find any last-second heroics this time as the game headed for the second overtime period.

The second OT started with a bang, literally, as South Newton head coach Chris Enyeart slammed his partially-full water bottle into the bleachers in protest of the tip-off, making a loud enough boom that the officials couldn't ignore and

drew a technical foul, sending Delphi to the free throw line for two freebies.

Michael Myers converted the second of the two, and then hit a 14-foot jumper from the wing on the ensuing possession for Delphi's last 3-point lead of the game, 56-53 with 3:25 remaining. This would prove to be the last Oracle basket as the final OT period would find Oliver, Myers and Matt Lewis on the bench after fouling out and 11 straight Rebel free throws en route to the eight-point victory.

Delphi's final points came on two Oliver free throws to close to within four at 62-58 with 25.8 seconds left.

Ironically, the Rebels made only three baskets the remainder of the game after taking a 37-30 lead with 4:00 to go in regulation, scoring 23 of their last 29 points in the fourth quarter and both OT periods from the free throw line.

The Oracles (6-13) have lost 6 of their last 7 games and three straight dating to the 2004-05 campaign to South Newton, which also needed an overtime period on Saturday night to defeat Benton Central 63-59.

A closer look shows that eight of Delphi's losses have been by nine points or less in a season that has been filled with its fair share of "what-ifs" and tantalizingly-close games.

Oliver led all scorers with a season-high 26 points, including 4-of-5 from behind the arc, while Myers posted a double-double with 11 points and a season-high 12 rebounds. Kory Banes finished with nine points, followed by Austin Hawn with five, Bender with four and Justin Snider with three.

JV also forces OT

The Delphi JV team also dropped a heartbreaker in overtime Friday night, losing to South Newton 51-47.

The Oracles led most of the way, including 11-6 at the end

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County rivalry to be renewed in Sectional

By John J. Dunn

Contributing sportswriter

Pairings are out for the 98th Annual IHSAA Boys' Basketball State Tournament for 389 participating teams throughout the state and for the first time since 1991 and the days of the old Lafayette Jefferson Sectional, Delphi and Carroll find themselves as opponents in the same sectional.

The county rivals will square off in the Class 2A Sectional at Fountain Central in the 6 p.m. game next Friday, Feb. 29, followed at 8 p.m. by Seeger and the winner of the Fountain Central-Clinton Central game played in the tourney opener on Tuesday night.

The sectional championship game, featuring the semi-final winners, will be March 1 at 7:30 p.m.

The Carroll-Delphi game will be a rematch of the contest played Feb. 1 at Carroll, which

was narrowly won by the Oracles 67-65 in a game that went down to the final buzzer.

Seeger will enter Sectional 37 play with the only winning record, currently 15-3 at press time, followed by Carroll (8-11), Clinton Central (7-11), and Delphi and the host team at 6-13.

The winner of the Fountain Central Sectional will advance to the Tipton Regional on March 8 and face the winner from the Cass Sectional.

Carroll moved up to Class 2A in basketball based on the most recent IHSAA classification enrollment figures released last spring.

This match-up will mark the first time that both Delphi and Carroll have played in the same basketball Sectional since the Oracles were reassigned from the Jeff Sectional for one at Twin Lakes in 1992. The Cougars and Oracles played the first round game, with Carroll winning the contest 83-73.

Lady Cougars go down fighting

By Jim McCarter

Contributing sportswriter

"Boy, did we battle for 32 minutes, or what?" Carroll's proud girls' basketball coach Mike McCroskey said after his team was eliminated in the Lewis Cass Regional 59-35 by Class 2A, No. 2 Oak Hill Saturday morning. "This is my 23rd year (coaching girls' basketball) and I told the kids in the locker room I can't remember being prouder of a team after a loss. For 32 minutes we played hard and never backed off."

The Lady Cougars (13-10) gave their best, but Oak Hill (25-0) had too much firepower. Led by point guard Courtney Moses (averaging 15.4 points and 6.5 assists) and 6-foot-4 center Ashley Pickering (14.1 pts., 10.5 rebounds and 3.6 blocks) the Eagles had steamrolled over all comers by a 65.8 - 38.6 average winning margin. Oak Hill defeated Fort Wayne Luers 51-43 in the Regional championship game and will face Garrett in the Elkhart semistate Saturday.

"We knew we had to take

away Moses," McCroskey said. "She scored 20 points on Madison Grant in the first half. We also wanted to go at Pickering to get her in foul trouble. Even Bill Russell, if he got 12 blocked shots, fouled once or twice, but we sure never got that call."

Carroll held Moses to just eight points, but stopping Pickering proved to be too much for the Lady Cougars whose tallest player is just 5-8. Pickering dominated the game, recording a triple-double with 19 points, 12 rebounds, 12 blocked shots and was whistled for just one foul.

"Carroll did a great job of taking away our guard penetration," Oak Hill coach Todd Law said. "And we didn't shoot the ball as well from the perimeter as we usually do."

"Obviously our size was an advantage. Ashley (Pickering) defends our guards to gamble defensively, knowing she is behind them to protect the basket. We wanted to take Carroll's perimeter shooters away and I think we did a pretty good job of that."

Carroll got off to a terrible

start, committing five turnovers in the first 4:00 to fall behind 11-0, then played its best 4:00 of the game.

McCroskey put Jess Yoder in the game and the freshman

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