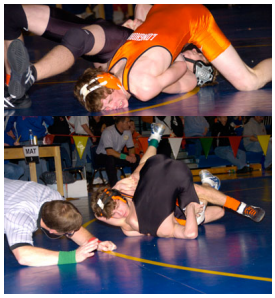

Omaha Qwest Center site for big event starting this Thursday

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

All three of Chase County's senior wrestlers are headed to the state tournament in Omaha this week.

Justin Lueth at 135 lbs., Sean Langin, 160 lbs., and Jeremy Mathews at 171 lbs., will represent Chase County in the Class C tournament set for this Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Omaha Qwest Center.

Lueth and Mathews both finished third, while Langin was fourth. The top four district finishers in each class advanced to state.

This will be a fourth state appearance for Lueth, who qualified last year as a Longhorn and the two previous years in Colorado.

Mathews and Langin will be making their first state appearances.

The three advanced out of a very tough Class C4 district tournament in Gordon last week. Some have said it was one of the toughest district in the state, said Chase County Coach Matt Vlasin.

"The C4 district certainly held up to its reputation," Vlasin said this week.

Had Chase County been in another Class C district tourney, or even one in Class B or A, the Longhorns may have qualified even more than three wrestlers, Vlasin said.

He bases that on wrestlers his team has faced and beaten from other districts earlier this season.

It was so competitive, just one match determined the district team champion.

Kearney Catholic edged Mitchell for the C4 district title by a slim nine-point margin.

Mathews has the best record from Chase County, 33-5, entering state this week. His only loss at districts came in the quarter-finals to the eventual 171 lb. champion, Jordan Debus of Mitchell.

Mathews won his other three matches that day by pin, and didn't have much trouble with his wrestle-back opponents enroute to a third place finish, Vlasin said.

Justin Lueth comes into state with a 32-7 record at 135 lbs. He lost in the semi-finals to Caleb Hoyt of Ainsworth, but got into the consolation finals with a pin then took third with a major decision.

Langin is 17-13 heading into state, and easily wrestled his best tournament of the season last week, Vlasin said.

"He was probably an underdog with his record coming in," Vlasin said, "and was maybe looked over some."

Langin lost his first match in the quarter-finals, then advanced into the consolation round and finished fourth.

Overall, Vlasin said his team wrestled very well but it was just a very tough district this year. While five of the younger Longhorns lost two straight, Tyler Roenfeldt and Nathan Hinojosa made their opponents work hard for the wins.

Jeremiah Lueth was just one match, actually 30 seconds away, from state qualification. He was leading his Ainsworth opponent in the consolation semi-finals with about 30 seconds left in the match and suffered a reversal, and didn't have time to recover. Lueth lost the round 6-5. A win would have put him in the match for third and fourth.

Coach Vlasin said his 103 lb. wrestler Keithan Cochran was a good possibility for an additional state qualifier from Chase County, but did not wrestle last week.

Cochran had pulled a hamstring a couple weeks earlier, and his doctor's recommended he not wrestle to avoid further injury.

Team scoring at districts went as follows: Kearney Catholic 165, Mitchell 156, Sargent/Burwell 127.5, Valentine 117.5, Ainsworth 113.5, Kimball 110, Loomis/Bertrand 100, Wauneta-Palisade/Hitchcock County 74.5, Morrill 60, Gordon-Rushville 57, Southern Valley 56, Chase County 54, Bayard 47, West Holt 44, Bridgeport 27 and Hershey 20.

Here are Chase County's individual results at districts:

125 Cody Cravey pinned by Pfortmiller (Mit) 0:40, pinned by Vojta (Loo/B) 1:090.
135 Justin Lueth bye first round, dec. Olson (WestH) 9-4, pinned by Hoyt (Ains) 1:28, pinned Leahy (WP/HCo.) 2:45, dec. Olson (WestH) 12-2 for 3rd place.
145 Jeremiah Lueth dec. Balfour (S/B) 10-4, pinned by Gregory (Kim) 5:04, pinned Shaw (So.V) 2:12, dec. Haase (Val) 6-2, dec. by Hollenbeck (Ains) 6-5.
152 Joel Fisher pinned by Leonard (Val) 2:26, dec. by West (WP/HCo.) 17-0.
160 Sean Langin pinned Rentschler (WestH) 1:08, pinned Covalt (Bri) 2:54, pinned by Klinginsmith (KCath) 1:47, pinned Stoelting (So.V) 1:44, dec. by Garza (Mit) 10-8 for 4th place.
171 Jeremy Mathews bye first round, pinned Gambill (Ains) 3:15, dec. by Debus (Mit) 13-7, pinned Loy (G/R) 4:16, pinned Callahan (WP/HCo.) 2:27 for 3rd place.
189 Trevor Fuehrer pinned by Hoxworth (Bri) 1:40, pinned by Rice (Bay) 2:15.
215 Tyler Roenfeldt dec. by Willey (Bay) 9-4 in OT, pinned by Mercure (Val) 0:25.
Hwt Nathan Hinojosa bye first round, pinned by Willey (Bay) 5:05, dec. by Fochtman (G/R) 10-2.

Wrestlers, coaches left Wed.

The Chase County wrestlers and coaches left at noon Wednesday after a morning send-off at school.

This week, the rest of the team continued to practice with the state qualifiers to keep things "normal," Vlasin said as the three get ready for state.

Vlasin believes his wrestlers have a good chance of bringing home some hardware, despite being in some tough brackets.

"There are no easy matches down there, but if we wrestle like we did at districts, we have a shot," he said.

First round matches for Class C get underway today (Thursday) at 4:30 p.m. (CT)

Here are the Longhorns' first round opponents:

135 Justin Lueth, 32-7, vs. Alex Stepanek, St. Paul, 31-8.
160 Sean Langin, 17-13, vs. Jared Treat, North Bend, 34-0.
171 Jeremy Mathews, 33-5, vs. Keaton Bucholtz, Norfolk Catholic, 29-9.