



By Tim Linscott

Managing Editor

Perkins County High School senior Garrett Toner concluded his wrestling career in fine fashion by coming home with a fifth place medal from the state wrestling 138-pound, Class D tournament in Omaha, Feb. 20-22.

"It was a relief to come home with a medal after all of the hard work I put in this year. It was great to see it all pay off in the end," Toner said

Toner started the tournament off with a pinfall victory over Brett Kinney of Elgin/Pope John in 3:20.

PCHS head wrestling coach Dean Friedel noted that Toner used his wits to gain an advantage in the tournament.

"Garrett wrestled well. He was patient in his approach to the matches," Friedel said.

With the top 16 wrestlers in the state in Class D at 138-pounds, Toner did not underestimate any opponent.

"I knew it would be tough. I was nervous more than anything (in that first match)," Toner said, adding that after getting his first victory, was able to relax a bit.

In the quarterfinals Toner, 38-9 in the regular season, faced Cale Bolton of High Plains (47-4) and was pinned in 4:45.

Toner would start the second round of consolation matches in dominating fashion against Jamie Lange of Thayer Central (26-17). Toner took little time in dispatching Lange via pinfall in 1:20.

In the third round of consolations, Toner would again win by pinfall, this time against Garrett Fries (34-15) of Southwest in 2:54.

A 7-3 decision in the consolation semi-finals took Toner out of third place contention as he lost the decision over Jaydon Elge (40-6) of Nebraska Christian.

In the fifth place match, Toner faced Tanner Stec of North Central (37-12). Toner would put on an intelligent show of skills by edging Stec 4-1 to earn the fifth place medal.

With a minute to go in the third period Toner explained that he felt confident that he could finish the match and gain the victory.

Toner brings home medal from state tournament

Immediately after winning the match, Toner went and hugged his entire family.

Seeing the thousands of faces in the crowd and being one of the elite wrestlers in the state to make the biggest tournament of the year was a phenomenal feeling for Toner.

“It was wild,” Toner said. “I felt really good to represent Perkins County.”

Toner is a coach for the youth wrestling club in the county and brought his medal to practice earlier this week to show the elementary-age youngsters that dedication and hard work will help them reach their dreams.

He also hopes that the other wrestlers on the PCHS squad see the last several years of wrestling at the school have been successful and can continue to be with hard work.

“You get out what you put in. Put in hard work and it will all pay off in the end. Be dedicated to the sport and you will come out on top,” Toner said.

Starting the season at 145-pounds, Friedel felt Toner may be a more natural 138-pound grappler.

Toner gives credit to Friedel for his success this season, which led to him living a dream: medaling at state wrestling.

Toner plans to attend Wayne State next year majoring in education and be a part of an up-and-coming Wildcat wrestling club.

