

# THE INDEX-JOURNAL

Sports

## Vikings Finish 7th In Greenwood Invitational

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Emerald's Cody Ritenour, top, wrestles Saturday during the Greenwood Invitational. The Vikings finished seventh in the 14-team event, the highest place of any Lakelands wrestling team. (Staff photo by T.M. James.)

Earlier in the week, Emerald High School's wrestling team registered a win over Greenwood, its first over the Eagles in some years. Saturday, the Vikings proved the win was no fluke. Emerald finished seventh of 14 teams at the Greenwood Invitational on Saturday, top among the four area teams at the tournament and one spot ahead of Greenwood. Hillcrest won the tournament championship with 370 points, while Ninety Six placed 10th. Ware Shoals finished 14th. "We finished like I expected," Vikings coach Andy Wright said. "All my guys finished where I expected them to be and it's a great day."

Three Emerald wrestlers advanced to individual championship matches -- 140-pound champion Skylar Johnson, 152-pound runner-up Dillon Steifle and 160-pound champion Zane Newton. The individual finishes were a marked improvement from last season's Greenwood Invitational when only Newton, the 152-pound champion, finished in the top four and the Vikings finished 10th as a team. And even putting the team success aside, Wright said the tournament was beneficial in that all the wrestlers were able to log five bouts in one day. "This is great for my young kids," Wright said. "Every match for them, they're constantly getting better. They stopped doing the little stupid things."

Greenwood, meanwhile, slipped from last season's fourth-place finish when four wrestlers competed in championship matches; the Eagles had two wrestlers in championship matches Saturday. Michael Hellman defeated Woodruff's Richie Flynn 7-5 in sudden victory overtime to win the 135-pound title and Chris Abeyta dropped an 8-2 decision to Newton in the 160-pound championship bout. Cory Fain likely would have wrestled for a championship at 130 pounds, but he was forced to default in the semifinals after injuring his ankle. "We wrestled well in spots," Greenwood coach Greg Brewer said. "We didn't have our full lineup. Michael Hellman wrestled well, Chris Abeyta wrestled well today and I thought Cory Fain wrestled very well."

Saturday was the Eagles' final event before opening their Region 1-AAAA schedule Monday against Easley, when they will begin their campaign for a third straight region

championship. Judging from Saturday's results, continuing the region title streak could be difficult, as Greenwood finished behind region foes Westside (second place), Laurens (third) and Wren (fourth). "Easley is a very young team but they're going to be very scrappy," Brewer said. "And then on Thursday, we wrestle Wren; Wren is a very good team."

Coming off the loss of 10 seniors starters from last season's team, Ninety Six was unable to defend its 2008 Greenwood Invitational championship, when eight wrestlers finished in the top four. This season's youth-laden team didn't place any wrestlers into championship matches, but 103-pounder Austin Carson and 112-pounder Brody Bertolini each finished in third, while Taylor Nunamaker took fourth at 135. "The big thing for us today is we were able to come over here and wrestle five matches," first-year Wildcats coach Chris Liner said. "Each kid got a bunch of matches in and got kind of a taste of how the state individual tournament's going to be. "I think that does help because we've got a lot of kids that have never wrestled in those types of tournaments before. At least they have an idea of what the individual tournament's all about, so I think that was the big thing for us."

Liner's analysis was similar to what Ware Shoals coach Dale Gilbert said his team took from the event. The Hornets, in their second season with a varsity wrestling program, had only five wrestlers at the tournament and just one of them, 103-pounder Austin Carson, advanced to the placement matches. Carson finished fourth at 103. "I think this was a good tournament for them because it's similar to the individual state finals," Gilbert said. "They learned a lot what they need to do to prepare for the individual states. "We've got a lot of things to work on, like conditioning, because they're not used to wrestling five matches. They're used to wrestling three matches, so I think they really pushed themselves to the limits, wrestling five times."

#### TEAM RESULTS

Hillcrest 307

Westside 243

Laurens A 231

Wren 209

Woodruff 209

Gilbert 194

Emerald 173

Greenwood 170

Daniel 164

Ninety Six 128

Laurens B 119

Columbia 91

Christ Church 79

Ware Shoals 51

WEIGHT CLASS RESULTS

**103**

1st Brandon Johnson (Hillcrest)

2nd Adam Cathcart (Laurens)

3rd Austin Carson (Ninety Six)

4th Dustin Watts (Ware Shoals)

**112**

1st Anthony Aponte (Hillcrest)

2nd Luke Campbell (Laurens)

3rd Brody Bertolini (Ninety Six)

4th Randy Medina (Columbia)

**119**

1st Sam Parkinson (Westside)

2nd Austin Amick (Gilbert)

3rd Zach Perdun (Hillcrest)

4th Timmy Thompson (Woodruff)

**125**

1st Jeremy Phillips (Woodruff)

2nd Johnny Sanchez (Hillcrest)

3rd Josh D'Ornellas (Wren)

4th David Amick (Gilbert)

**130**

1st Colin Horgan (Hillcrest)

2nd Matt Risinger (Gilbert)

3rd Jared Greer (Westside)

4th Cory Fain (Greenwood)

**135**

1st Michael Hellman (Greenwood)

2nd Richie Flynn (Woodruff)

3rd Martin Taylor (Hillcrest)

4th Taylor Nunamaker (Ninety Six)

**140**

1st Skylar Johnson (Emerald)

2nd Colt Tolbert (Wren)

3rd Keith Koscher (Laurens)

4th Justin Miller (Gilbert)

**145**

1st Dalton Ledford (Hillcrest)

2nd Justin Pressley (Westside)

3rd Javier Ganoa (Daniel)

4th Daniel Hillman (Wren)

**152**

1st Zach McCormick (Westside)

2nd Dillon Steifle (Emerald)

3rd Chandler Fleck (Laurens)

4th Craig Pawlus (Wren)

**160**

1st Zane Newton (Emerald)

2nd Chris Abeyta (Greenwood)

3rd Matt Chapman (Gilbert)

4th Jon Sullivan (Hillcrest)

**171**

- 1st Jeff Hoover (Gilbert)
- 2nd Chris Henry (Woodruff)
- 3rd Trey Leonard (Columbia)
- 4th Trey Lightsey (Greenwood)

**189**

- 1st Hunter Smith (Laurens)
- 2nd Clint Smith (Woodruff)
- 3rd Cameron McCarley (Westside)
- 4th Zac Watkins (Gilbert)

**215**

- 1st Jacob Grandy (Woodruff)
- 2nd Wes Younts (Hillcrest)
- 3rd Alex Armstrong (Laurens)
- 4th John Michael Pritchett (Wren)

**285**

- 1st Jamal Ellis (Wren)
- 2nd Michael Stone (Daniel)
- 3rd Zack Pritchett (Wren)
- 4th Josh Kilgore (Hillcrest)