

# Eagles finish fourth, Panthers ninth, Oilers 10th in CM Holiday Wrestling Tourney

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BETHALTO – It was an early-season tournament, and there were a lot of positive results for the wrestling teams at Civic Memorial, Jersey and East Alton-Wood River high schools.

The host Eagles finished fourth at the 39th Annual CM Holiday Wrestling Tournament held Saturday at the CM gym, with 137 points and two individual champions. The Panthers finished ninth with 90 points while the Oilers finished 10th with 70 points. The Eagles' JV team finished 16th with 43 points.

Mattoon won the tournament with 173 points, edging runner-up Vandalia with 168. East St. Louis took third with 148 points, Highland was fifth with 120.5, Champaign Central finished sixth with 104.5, Jacksonville was seventh with 98, nipping out Waterloo, who finished with 97 points. The rest of the field was Winfield, Mo., with 63.5, Benton and Clayton, Mo. tied with 58 each, then Centralia, who had 53, and Carlyle with 50. Rounding out the team standings were Breese Mater Dei, with 10, and Maplewood-Richmond Heights, Mo., who scored six.

The Eagles did get a lot of thing done during the tournament, but there's still plenty of work ahead for them.

“We've got a lot of things to work on,” said CM coach Jeremy Christeson during an interview during the finals, “Depending on where we finish, we'll see how it all ends, but we got quite a bit accomplished.”

The Eagles may not where they want to be right now, but there's plenty of optimism ahead for the team.

“We're not where we want to be,” Christeson said. “But, like I said, we came in a day with one open hole, and we started the tournament with four open holes. So that's a little disappointing. We had some kids, one had a family issue, and another one scratched his cornea after the first round. I hoped we would finish a little higher, but it is what is is and we'll just keep on going forward.

“Just keep on going forward, keep on grinding away,” Christeson added with a smile.

A young Jersey team did well, also.

“Not too bad,” said Panthers coach Allen Snyder. “We're a little bit young, yet. The young guys are coming along, so we're showing about .500, where we need to be.”

During the interview, conducted before the finals, Snyder felt the Panthers accomplished their objectives and are where they want to be.

“I think so,” Snyder said. “We've still got a couple of quality kids left, and it's going to be good to see where they came coming out.

“I think we're where we want to be,” Snyder continued. “Our conditioning's there, our (technique's) coming along. We just need more experience. Once we start getting that, as the season progresses with that, I think we're going to be a lot better.”

And the Oilers wrestled very well, also.

“We've looked fantastic, actually,” said EAWR assistant coach Kyle Lankford, who stood in for head coach Tim Donohoo, who was out with the flu. “We're wrestling hard, we're finishing our moves, and when we're putting a guy on his back, we're putting him away, and we're not giving up when we get put on our back,”

For the Oilers, the tournament was a way to see what kind of early progress the team has made, and what to work on as things progress toward the Holidays.



“Definitely,” Lankford said. “This is a nice little measuring stick for us to see where we're at so far in the season. I know it's still early, and we've got a lot of work left to do. But so far, it looks like everything that we've been working on has been working. So far, so good.”

Eagle wrestlers finished in the top three in the 106 pound class, with freshman Caine Tyus finishing second, losing to East Side's Anthony King 3-2 in the final, while JV wrestler Houston Armbruster won the third place bout, pinning Benton's Seth Padavic at 1:34. In the 113 pound division, CM's Caleb Tyus won the championship bout over the Flyers' Melvin Rodgers 8-3, Ashley Duncan of Jersey finished sixth, being defeated in the fifth-place bout by Brajion Brown of Champaign Central 7-4, and Jimmy Franklin of the Eagles' JV team finished seventh in a walkover.

In the 126 pound class, Hudson Brown of CM won the third-place contest with a pin of Jacksonville's Jocelyn Murphy at 1:52, and the Panthers' Caden Witt was pinned in the seventh-place match at 3:02 by Central's Santito Lindsey. At 138, the Eagles got their second champion in Dillon Dublo, a 9-5 winner over Winfield's Ben Provost. The Panthers' David Deist was defeated in the third-place bout by Vandalia's Bradyn Kaiser 12-2.

Meanwhile, at 145, Peyton Bechtold of the Eagles was defeated in the championship match, dropping a 9-6 decision to Dalton Viglasky of Waterloo. Brady Christeson of the Eagles' JV team lost his championship match at 155 when he was pinned by Edgar Jones of East St. Louis at 5:10, and EAWR's Josh Franklin ended up fourth, losing to Central's Jackson Skube 8-0 in the third-place bout. Zeke Waltz of the Panthers took third at 160, winning over Derek Owens of Mattoon 20-7, and CM's Briley Christeson was defeated for fifth place by East Side's James Young 7-5.

In the 170 division, EAWR's Jake Erslon was pinned in the final by Highland's Devin Wills at 56 seconds, while Jersey's Branyn Staples was also pinned in the fifth-place bout, East St. Louis' Montey Russell winning at 35 seconds. Jersey's Christopher Jackson fell to Vandalia's Garret Stewart in the 182 final, Stewart winning by pin at 3:59, and the Oilers' Gabe Grimes finished sixth at 195, being pinned by Highland's Alex Reed at 1:31.

In the final two weight classes, at 220, Zach Kincaide of EAWR finished second, being pinned by Mattoon's Garrette Branson at 2:59, while Ross Speidel of the Panthers was defeated by Carlyle's Dale Allen 4-0 for third place. At 285, the Oilers' Adam Newberry took seventh with a pin of Champaign Central's Max Russo at 2:52.

All three coaches have very ambitious goals for their teams as the season progresses into conference meets and tournaments, with the ultimate goal of sending as many wrestlers as possible into the IHSA individual state meets in February.

“You know what? Just as a team, we're looking to grow and move forward,' Lankford said. “I know in years past, I know that Wood River has kind of struggled with the team aspect. We're trying to bring that back to Wood River now. And as individuals, we just want to get as many kids as we can to state, and hopefully get as many on the podium as possible.”

For the Panthers, the New Year of 2018 will bring plenty of action and opportunity for the team to shine.

“January's jam packed,' Snyder said. “A lot of wrestling. December's usually a little bit slow once you get through your tournaments, start getting into your duals, and tournaments on the weekends. We've got a lot of wrestling to go, and we should learn a lot.

“You've got to keep a positive attitude,” Snyder also said. “Same thing we tell the kids.”

And for the Eagles' plans, Christeson has but one thing in mind.

“I'm hoping to rule the world,” Christeson said with a laugh. “We're going after the (Mississippi Valley Conference) title. You know, I know some people may think it's far-fetched, but you've got to set it up the way you want it. And we're shooting for the title, and getting multi state qualifiers, and a couple of placers. That's the goal.”

That many of the CM wrestlers have wrestled for many years helps tremendously.

“Most of our group here have wrestled for a lot of years,” Christeson said. “Their expectations are pretty high for us. The coaching staff's done a great job of getting these guys prepared. We definitely see things we've got to work on in the coming weeks, and get ready to go.”

