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Dutch wrestling reserves end season at Last Chance Invitational

PELLA — At Saturday’s Last Chance Invitational, the Central College wrestling team had one individual champion in the home finale for the Dutch.

No team scores were kept at the meet designed for underclassmen and reserve wrestlers.

“I thought it was a tremendous day overall,” coach Eric Van Kley said. “I couldn’t be any more proud of the guys who wrestled. They showed great effort and were really supporting each other. It was a great way to wrap up our home season.”

At 285 pounds, freshman **Samuel Zook (Oak Harbor, Wash.)** had two pins and a 4-1 decision over teammate **Christopher Murino (senior, Lockport, Ill., Lockport Township HS)** in the semifinals en route to his first collegiate tournament title. Zook and Murino were two of five Dutch wrestlers in the heaviest division.

“Zook’s got a lot of potential,” Van Kley said. “The depth we have at heavyweight and the competitiveness they bring to the room makes them all better.”

Also bagging top-three finishes, **Cooper Stigsell (freshman, Litchfield Park, Ariz, Verrado HS)** was runner-up at 197 pounds and **Colin Baldwin (sophomore, San Diego, Calif., Mira Mesa HS)** was third at 157 pounds.

In addition to Murino, **Devin Dilley (senior, 157 pounds, Ill., Springfield, Lanphier HS)** and **Steven Tuggle (senior, 197 pounds, Arlington, Texas, Martin HS)** wrestled for the last time in a Central singlet.

“We talk all the time about Central wrestling being a family and those two epitomize it,” Van Kley said. “When they walked off the mat, I think it sunk in for them what this experience has meant to them and what they have meant to the program. I’m so proud of them.”

Focus turns towards the NCAA Division III Lower Midwest Regional on February 23-24 in Dubuque. The regional meet serves as the qualifier for the NCAA Division III Championships.

“We’ve got to work hard,” Van Kley said. “We’ve got to be ready and have fun. We’re committed to doing it.”

committed to being a

LARRY HAPPEL | JOE FLAHERTY

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