

Record 40 Wrestlers Place at State AAU Tournament

On March 9th, the Pierre Youth Wrestling program hosted the Region 2 AAU wrestling tournament which coincided with competition at four other region tournaments held throughout the state. The top three wrestlers from each age division and weight class advance to the State Tournament held in Brookings this past weekend and the Pierre program advanced a record 63 wrestlers on to the state tournament. This included 30 region champions, 16 second place finishers, and 17 third/fourth place finishers.

This record number of state qualifiers helped propel the Pierre program to another record setting weekend at the

State AAU Wrestling Tournament on Saturday and Sunday, as 40 wrestlers advanced into the placing round. Brookings hosted the event which included more than 1300 wrestlers representing wrestling clubs from throughout the state. After competition concluded on Saturday, a total of 11 Pierre wrestlers had advanced into the championship matches for their respective weight classes. These 11 wrestlers and the remaining 29 club members then competed in the placing rounds round held on Sunday to finally award the top eight place winners in each weight class.

Pierre held a predominant place on the championship mat throughout the day on Sunday which resulted in seven individual state champions including Gavin Stotts, Gabe Turman, Blake Judson, Michael Lusk,



Pictured are the state place winners for the Pierre Youth Wrestling Program. Front Row: Alex Oedekoven, Ethan Martinmaas, Lincoln Dilges, Gabe Turman, Will Van Camp, Gavin Stotts, Jayden Wiebe, Noah Williams, Matthew Hostler, Jacoby Taylor, and Carson Stoesser. Second Row: Preston Dyk, Tyson Johnson, Jacob Larson, Jack Van Camp, William Turman, Austin Senger, Grey Zabel, Michael Lusk, Lincoln Turman, Maguire Raske, Matthew Lusk, Hayden Shaffer, and Cade Hinkle. Back Row: Gunner Gehring, Easton Swartz, Aric Williams, Jebben Keyes, Levi Stoltenburg, Lucas Stoltenburg, Kaden Buchholz, Spencer Sarringar, Lucas Kessler, and Pryce Dyk (Not pictured are Blake Judson, Rylan Shrake, Garrett Leesman, Wyatt Leesman, Jacob Mason, and Quinn Reimers).

Lucas Kessler, Jebben Keyes, and Spencer Sarringar. Finishing second at the tournament were Will Van Camp, Jacob Larson, Will Turman, and Wyatt Leesman. Of the eleven finalists competing in the championship rounds, only two had not seen action on the main stage in previous state AAU tournaments. Jebben Keyes finished his AAU career with his third straight title, and had earned a title in 2007 as well as numerous trips that resulted in runner-up finishes. Spencer Sarringar earned his second AAU title which resulted in his fourth trip to the championship match. Michael Lusk has won four state championships after being in the finals the past five years. Wyatt Leesman (three time finalist), Will Turman (four time finalist two time champion), Gavin Stotts (two time champions) and Blake Judson (two time finalist) have continually found ways to go undefeated in the opening day of action at this tournament.

Paul Turman, president of the Pierre Youth Wrestling program, noted “When we



Individual State AAU Champions this past weekend include: Front Row – Gavin Stotts & Gabe Turman. Back Row – Michael Lusk, Jebben Keyes, Spencer Sarringar & Lucas Kessler. (Not pictured is Blake Judson).

looked at the state qualifier picture that was taken last week it was impressive to note that of the 63 kids we advanced, 22 had been in the state finals at some point in their young career. That number has grown to 26 after some impressive finishes this year.”

Also placing at the event were Hayden Shaffer, Lincoln Turman, Austin Senger, Levi Stoltenburg (third), Jacoby Taylor, Carson Stoesser, Matthew Hostler, Maguire Raske, Grey Zabel, Gunnar Gehring, Aric Williams, Garrett Leesman, Cadin Buchholz (fourth), Jacob Mason, Lincoln Dilges, Ethan Martinmaas, Rylan Shrake, Cade Hinkle, Quinn Reimers (fifth), Noah Williams, Tyson Johnson, Preston Dyk (sixth), Alex Oedekoven, Jayden Wiebe, Lucas Stoltenburg, Easton Swartz (seventh), Matthew Lusk, Jack Van Camp, Pryce Dyk (eighth).

To provide a comparison of the success of the Pierre program, the next highest number of state place winners came from Watertown which advanced 52 wrestlers to the tournament. They placed 26 wrestlers at the event. The next highest were Sioux Falls (32) followed by Brookings (30), Sturgis (29), and Huron (28).

While the folkstyle wrestling season has concluded, a number of the club members will compete at the USA Freestyle/Greco State Tournament held in Pierre on April 20th. Additionally, the youth program hosts a variety of wrestling camps throughout the summer which are free to club members.

