

CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHES SET IN STATE WRESTLING TOURNAMENT

Written by Rick Strunk
Friday, 21 February 2014 21:17

The North Carolina High School Athletic Association state wrestling championships at the Greensboro Coliseum rolled through its second day of action on Friday, concluding Friday night with semifinal matches in all classifications.

Winston-Salem Parkland, which has won six team titles in the last seven years in this event, enters the final day with a big lead, rolling up 129 points ahead of second-place Fayetteville Jack Britt with 94.5. Parkland nipped Britt two weeks ago for the NCHSAA dual team championship.

Cary is third with 58.5 points and Southeast Guilford has moved into fourth with 41. A total of 74 4-A teams qualified wrestlers to the state event.

Parkland also has the most wrestlers still competing in the event, with five grapplers in the championship round and four more still in the consolations. Parkland wrestlers who will go for the state title include Paton Jenkins (106), Drew Turner (113), Kelvin Jackson (126), Taevon Hoskins (160) and Thomas Rodriguez (220).

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Eden Morehead, which captured the dual team championship two weeks ago, has also opened up a commanding lead in the 3-A classification. Morehead has almost doubled the team score of its nearest opposition and has more wrestlers still in the tournament than any other school in 3-A.

Morehead has 90 points to 48.5 for East Gaston. Two-time defending tournament champion Orange is in a tie for third with Sun Valley at 42.5 points. There are 80 3-A schools represented in the championships.

Morehead has three wrestlers in their respective championship matches: Jordan Jones at 120 pounds, Mike Jones at 126, and Ben Bullins at 145.

The 2-A team race is extremely tight, with several proven contenders in the hunt. Newport Croatan, winner of the tournament in three of the past four years and state dual team runners-up this year, has forged into first with 69 points. Thomasville is in second with 65.5 and Newton-Conover, the two-time 2-A dual team champion, has 55.5 points.

A total of 71 2-A schools have wrestlers in the tournament.

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Croatan and Thomasville have an edge, though, each with a pair of wrestlers in the championships. Croatan has three still alive in consolation competition and Thomasville two. Newton-Conover had 12 qualifiers to the state but no longer has a wrestler in the championship bracket to go with five in the consolations.

One key matchup Saturday evening will send Grant Hall of Croatan, who dealt Austin Klutz of Newton-Conover his only loss of the season after 65 straight wins in the semifinals, against Thomasville's Quahiygee Martin of Thomasville in the 113-pound championship match. Brody McGrath of Croatan will go for the 152 title while Thomasville's other wrestler in the finals is Ray-Shun Moore at 106 pounds.

In the 1-A classification, another close race is looming. Mitchell is in first place with 59 points, a single point ahead of Robbinsville and six ahead of Rosewood. Chatham Central is in fourth at 49.5. There are 34 1-A schools represented in the tournament.

All four teams have a host of wrestlers still competing, with Mitchell, Robbinsville and Rosewood each with three qualifying to the championship match. Chatham Central has 11 wrestlers remaining, two in the championship finals.

The 2-A, 3-A and 4-A competitors began wrestling on Thursday night, with the 1-A class starting

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on Friday afternoon since it has fewer wrestlers in the field.

Action will begin at nine o'clock Saturday morning with third round consolation matches in the 2-A, 3-A and 4-A classifications and the first consolations in 1-A, followed by several rounds of consolation matches in all classes.

After the fifth and third-place bouts, the championship matches in all classifications are scheduled for Saturday evening, starting at 5 p.m. with the Parade of Champions.