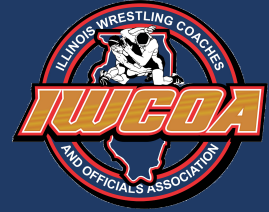


## Barrington's grit earns a Moore-Prettyman team title

### IWCOA Feature Story

*By Gary Larsen*

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In explaining how Barrington edged Lockport to win its first Moore-Prettyman team title since 2011, Broncos senior Luke Rasmussen pointed to one of wrestling's most valuable commodities.



"We have a lot of kids that just kind of grit their teeth and go," Barrington senior Luke Rasmussen said. "They might not be as good as some of the guys on other teams but they'll fight through everything."

'Grit your teeth and go' could be Barrington's team motto this season. The host Broncos showed plenty of guts during this year's 29-team, two-day tournament, particularly

during the blood round.

Rasmussen won the title at 170 but the Broncos won the team title by advancing six wrestlers to the third-place mat for coach Dave Udchik. Barrington's seven wrestlers finishing in the top four in each weight was the most by any team.

"We told them it wouldn't be won in the championship (round), it would be won in the backside," Udchik said. "The heart and the fire is there and I'm really proud of the boys. A lot of guys contributed."

Brian Beers (113), Trey Cysewski (145), Marko Hennin (152), Kai Conway (160), Jack Hartman (182), and heavyweight Farouk Shaaban all reached the third-place mat, with Beers and Conway placing third.

Barrington finished atop the team standings in a field that included seven 3A and two 2A teams ranked in Rob Sherrill's IWCOA top 25. Barrington edged second-place Lockport by a mere half-point, 181-180.5. Joliet Catholic finished third, followed by Libertyville and Marmion.

Lockport's second-place finish was spearheaded by an individual title from Mike Kaminski at 126 and a second-place finish from Keegan Roberson at 132. Andrew Blackburn-Forst placed third at 195 and the Porters' nine finishers in the top eight were the most by any team.

Lockport graduated a trio of state champions from last year's team in Matt Ramos, Baylor Fernandes, and Anthony Molton, plus four other multiple-year starters in coach Josh Oster's lineup from last season.

"I was happy for the most part," Oster said. "I knew what we have in the room so I knew we would be okay theoretically. But it still has to happen.



"This was a test for a lot of kids and we had 16 kids in 13 weight classes get to the blood round or the semi's, and more than twenty kids win matches. We might not have the (returning state champions) but I knew we'd be pretty good everywhere. It's a very deep team."

The bracket at 106 was all about Prospect freshman Will Baysinger, who used two pins and two major decisions to win the title. Second-seeded Baysinger won 9-1 over top-seeded Libertyville sophomore Caelan Riley on the title mat.

At 113, seventh-seeded freshman Lorenzo Frezza won a 1-0 semifinal decision over Barrington's second-seeded Beers, before taking a 3-1 win on the title mat against fourth-seeded Joey Chirillo of Andrew.

Chirillo beat top-seeded senior Miguel Garcia of Glenbard East 4-0 in his semifinal match.



In posting four pins over two days to win the title at 120, Marmion's top-ranked Diego Sotelo showed that one year after he won a state title at 106, he's hungry for more. Sotelo also knows that the plight of a returning state champion entails no shortage of opponents who want to come after him and make a name for themselves.

“There’s a bigger target on my back this year, coming back as a state champ, compared to being a runner-up the year before,” Sotelo said. “I know there are still people who will have to look out for me, and they’ll have to wrestle me, and I have to be ready for it.”

Sotelo pinned third-seeded Andres Russi of Joliet West in his semifinal before pinning fourth-seeded Cole Rhemrev of Stevenson for the title.

Fifth-place Marmion also got a third-place finish from Jacob Tinajero at 138 pounds. Top-seeded Kaminski had a dominant day at 126, with two pins and two major decision wins. Kaminski topped second-seeded Charlie Fifield of Fremd by major decision on the title mat.

“I came in here to win and I wanted to wrestle every kid like he was a state champ, and that’s the way I wrestled,” Kaminski said.

As one of Lockport’s senior leaders, Kaminski plans on showing a young team the exact lessons he learned as an underclassmen.

“Last year’s seniors who are in college now — when they were in the room, everyone looked up to them,” Kaminski said. “Everyone tried to beat them, work as hard as them, and do as good as they did. Now I’m one of those seniors and I’m working as hard as I can. I’m beating up on the younger guys to make sure they’re trying to work as hard as they need to be working.”

Top-seeded Jack Milos of Prospect won the next individual title, via 10-3 decision over Lockport’s third-seeded Roberson at 132 pounds. Milos posted two pins and a tech fall before winning a 7-2 semifinal decision over Plainfield Central’s Nick Minnito.

One of the day’s marquee matches came at 138, when top-seeded and top-ranked Danny Pucino of Libertyville met second-seeded and sixth-ranked Jake Harrier of Jacobs on the title mat.

Pucino was a state runner-up last year and Harrier placed fifth







“He’s a big guy and he’s tough,” Hamiti said of Heard. “I knew he was going to come in strong in the first period and that I’d have to weather the storm and try to get him tired. That’s what happened and I was able to pin him.”

As a two-time returning state champion, Hamiti’s mindset is locked in for his junior year.

“I like the challenge. I know everyone’s going to come at me so I’ll wrestle every match like it’s a state final, like they’re number one in the country,” Hamiti said. “I like being the number one dog and having everyone coming to try and get me. I want everyone chasing me.”



Second-seeded Caden Ernd of Crystal Lake Central won the title at 160 with a major decision win over fourth-seeded Terrance Snapp of Joliet Catholic, setting up top-seeded Rasmussen’s major decision win at 170 over Waubonsie Valley’s Antonio Torres.

“He’s one of our ponies,” Udchik said of Rasmussen. “He’s a year-round wrestler, he wants to wrestle Division One, and he’s a little salty that he didn’t walk away with a (state finals) medal last year. He’s got his sights set this year. He’s been the leader of the team.”

After posting two major decisions and a pin during the tournament, Rasmussen was asked to assess his performance.

“So-so,” he said. “I have to work on pushing for six minutes and I need to work on my setups.”

Hononegah’s Tony Figueroa won by fall on the title mat at 182 against Cary-Grove’s Isaac Rands, after entering the tournament seeded sixth. Figueroa beat the second and third seeds to reach the title mat; fifth-seeded Rands beat top-seeded Hartman by decision in their semifinal match.

If their tournament performances at 195 and 220 are any indication, Yorkville brothers Nick and Ben Stemmet may be poised to go on a rampage through their respective weight classes.

Nick Stemmet posted three tech falls and a pin at 195, while Ben Stemmet pinned all four of his opponents at 220. Both are ranked No. 1 in Illinois.

Nick Stemmet placed second downstate at 182 two years ago and fourth at 182 last season, although making weight last season was a hard road to travel.



“Last year I went 195 at this tournament but I went 182 the rest of the year,” Stemmet said. “I was cutting a lot of weight and that was tough. So I think this tournament set a precedent for the rest of my season, because I’ll be staying at 195. I’m hoping the dominance I felt at this tournament carries over through the rest of the year.”

None of Ben Stemmet’s opponents at 220 survived to the third period against him, and Bradley-Bourbonnais heavyweight Brady Schumer also completed a four-pin tournament effort in which he stuck three of his four opponents in the first minute of the match.