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Kentridge's Freitag tries for second state title at Mat Classic



Derek Freitag will compete this weekend in Tacoma for the Class 4A state championship at 113 pounds. — Image Credit: Heidi Sanders, Kent Reporter



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by [HEIDI SANDERS](#), Kent Reporter Reporter, Schools, Education, Sports
Today at 4:01PM

Kentridge High's Derek Freitag made school history becoming the first wrestler to make four state appearances. Now he hopes to leave his mark as the first to win two state titles.

Freitag, a senior, took first in the 4A state 106-pound class last year and will vie for the 113-pound championship at the Mat Classic this weekend at the Tacoma Dome.

"It was exciting just to know that's going to be in the books," Freitag of his record-setting number of state appearances.

Freitag won his third regional title on Saturday in Camas.

"I was expecting my matches in regionals to be one of my tougher ones," he said. "Now seeing who is at state this year, I don't know if that was the case."

Freitag lost one match this season in mid-December at the Tri-State tournament in Idaho. The loss was a wake-up call for Freitag, who didn't let an opponent score on him again until his final match at regionals.

"I think that was a great thing to have because going into a season after winning a state title you are a little bit cocky," he said. "I was going through the season nonchalantly, going to practice. Then Tri-State was tough. Then when I lost I was like, 'Wow, I need to get my priorities straight.'"

Freitag looks forward to his return to state.

"I feel a little bit of pressure because I want to do what I did last year," he said. "It is scary because it is a new year and anything can happen. I am always thinking about the what-ifs, so that helps me get motivated to work harder."

The state meet will likely be Freitag's last wrestling competition. He opted to give up wrestling to pursue a nursing degree in college.

"I didn't want to try to battle nursing and wrestling at the same time," he said.

He said he might coach wrestling or find a club team.

"I am trying to tell myself it isn't completely over," he said of his wrestling career.

Freitag started wrestling in seventh grade at his father's recommendation because of his small stature.

"I was strong even as a little kid so since wrestling was size-oriented I thought it was a good opportunity," said the 5-foot-3 Freitag.

On the mat, Freitag said he feels empowered despite his size.

"It puts you in a position where you are equal," he said. "To win in a situation like that, it brings you up."

Freitag will be in good company at this year's state competition. Kentridge qualified seven wrestlers and two alternates for the meet.

"It is the best we've done since 1972," coach Todd Lantz said. "It is a good sign for the program."

Lantz said he hopes his team can place in the top 10 overall, which would be a first since the early 1970s.

"Some of the kids are going to have to wrestle pretty well to make that happen," he said. "Our closest was a couple of years ago. We were 12th."

Other state participants:

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120

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- Tyler Lantz, senior, Kentridge
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• Joella Vi, jr., Kentridge

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• Sabrina Perez, sophomore, Kentwood

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