

Kentridge wrestlers seek higher ground



Kentridge's Derek Freitag, left, returns as one of the top wrestlers this season in the state after taking fourth at the Mat Classic last year at 106 pounds. — *Image Credit: Ross Coyle, Kent Reporter*

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by [ROSS COYLE](#), Kent Reporter Reporter, Schools, Education, Sports
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Kentridge High wrestlers are looking to buck their current mid-pack placement that's left them with an equal smattering of wins and losses in the season openers.

"We're still pretty young," said fifth-year coach Todd Lantz.

The team has picked up a narrow seven-point victory over Kentlake but lost a crushing 50-15 match against Tahoma. Part of the problem, Lantz says, is that the team isn't filled out yet and loses a number of weight classes to forfeits in the 182, 195 and 220-pound classes. While Lantz has yet to fill the 182 and 195 slots, he's looking to JT Meyer to help out at 220.

"I see big things from him (Meyer) this year," Lantz says, "but he's still a little raw. He needs more

experience, more mat time."

Experience is the key factor that Lantz feels is holding the team back, with many wrestlers showing potential but lacking hard mat experience, he says.

This isn't to say he doesn't have a small culling of experienced talent that he's optimistic will make it out of the South Puget Sound League, with a little elbow grease and luck.

First on his list is junior Derek Freitag, who finished fourth at last year's Mat Classic. Freitag has also had his share of wins and losses, and is planning to compete at 106 after the regular season ends. At the dual meets, Freitag has wrestled at 113 and 120.

Sophomore Nathan Hobbes is also a contender at 106, says Lantz. Hobbes took second place at the Decatur Invitational Tournament but lost his second match at the Tri-State Wrestling tournament in Coeur D'alene, Idaho.

Others on Lantz's radar are junior Savone Chham (120) who made regionals during his freshman year; junior Jian Chen (126); and junior Jesse Covey (152) who made regionals last year.

Lantz wants to keep his team fresh each week and make gradual improvements so that the Chargers are at their finest during the end of the season, instead of coming in hard midseason and tapering off.

"Kids are progressing well, we're doing well on our feet," he says. "I guess a little bit more mat wrestling bottom to top we'll need to get stronger with that."

Several weight classes Lantz has doubled up wrestlers to hedge his bets at a regional and state berth, but he also recognizes that with the new organization of the SPSL, the competition is stiffer and will be harder to beat.

"Todd Beamer, Decatur, those are really tough schools and good wrestlers," he says, "It's gonna be tough just getting out of league."

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