

# BRAVE BRAWWLERS



**BRAVE**  
KALISPEL MONTANA  
**BRAWLER**



# 2020 - 2021 STATE CHAMPIONS

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# **2020 - 2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING**

## **SEASON RECAP**

### **13 - 0 DUAL MEET RECORD**

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#### **BOYS**

Flathead 57 – Glacier 12  
Flathead 60 – Sentinel 9  
Flathead 60 – Big Sky 9  
Flathead 78 – Hellgate 0  
Flathead 44 – Butte 24  
Flathead 49 – Glacier 18  
Flathead 67 – Helena 3  
Flathead 43 – Helena Capital 21  
Flathead 45 – Helena Capital 28  
Flathead 66 – Helena 6  
Flathead 61 – Hellgate 12  
Flathead 53 – Sentinel 12  
Flathead 70 – Big Sky 0

#### **GIRLS**

Flathead 78 – Glacier 6

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### **SEEDING RESULTS**

23 Boys and 17 Girls Qualified for State

### **STATE TOURNAMENT RESULTS**

1st Place - AA Boys and Girls State Champions! (12 Boys / 6 Girls State Placers)

### **BOYS 2021 STATE RESULTS**

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1. Flathead .....	247.0
2. Billings Senior.....	239.5
3. Great Falls High .....	192.0

### **GIRLS 2021 STATE RESULTS**

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1. Flathead.....	142.0
2. Billings Senior .....	135.0
3. Cascade.....	68.0

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# **2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING**

## **“OPERATION HARDWARE”**

### **MANAGERS**

(Letter Winners)

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Alyssa Cadwalader  
Rylee Barnes

### **ACADEMIC ALL-STATE**

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William Barnes	Rylee Barnes
Payton Caudill	Isabella Brewer
Kyler Christy	Alyssa Cadwalader
Timothy Dicker	Cadence Denney
Wyatt Dugan	Hania Halverson
Ethan Freund	Lucie Libby
Gabe Lake	Alyssa Poe-Hatten
Logan Lang	Skye Shelmerdine
Fin Nadeau	Isabelle Shinn
Ryan Nelson	
Anders Thompson	
Gunnar Thompson	
Chase Youso	

# 2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING

## LETTER WINNERS

BRAVE WRESTLERS						BRAVETTE WRESTLERS		
Name	Grade	Letter	Name	Grade	Letter	Name	Grade	Letter
Raenan Allumbaugh	9	1	Ethan Freund	10	1	Isabella Brewer	9	1
Riley Atchinson	9	1	Cade Gardner	10	2	Cadence Denney	9	1
Braden AuClaire	9	1	Forest Howell	10	2	Boston Howell	9	1
Will Barnes	9	1	Dylan Kratofil	10	2	Lucie Libby	9	1
Kyler Christy	9	1	Gabe Lake	10	1	Trinity Boivin	10	1
Wyatt Dugan	9	1	Austin Olson	10	2	Hannah Embry	10	1
Aden Kleinhenz	9	1	Noah Poe-Hatten	10	2	Emma Gambino	10	2
Colton Kuka	9	1	Cade Troupe	10	2	Skye Shelmerdine	10	2
Emmett Ludahl	9	1	Rylee Barnes	11	3	Emmalee Yeadon	10	1
Ben McConnell	9	1	Mason Doran	11	3	Bella Arriaga	11	1
Davin Naldrett	9	1	Cole Eastwood	11	2	Alexus Cislo	11	1
Kobe Schlegel	9	1	Asher Kemppainen	11	3	Lily Conover	11	1
Logan Stansberry	9	1	Logan Lang	11	2	Mariah England	11	1
Gunnar Thompson	9	1	Brandon Manley	11	2	Hania Halverson	11	1
Anders Thompson	9	1	Fin Nadeau	11	3	Sara Harrison	11	1
Sawyer Troupe	9	1	Chase Youso	11	3	Anna Morrison	11	2
Koda Wieczorek	9	1	Alyssa Cadwalader	12	3	Bella Shinn	11	1
Xan Winter	9	1	Ryan Nelson	12	1	Aleeya Derlatka	12	2
Payton Caudill	10	2	Timber Richberg	12	3	Hannah Greene	12	1
Kayden Chuey	10	2	Gaige Winter	12	4	Alyssa Poe-Hatten	12	1
						Chloe Yeadon		1



# 2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING

## BRAVES STATS

	WINS	FALLS	TECH FALL	MAJOR DECISION	DECISION	TAKE DOWN	NEAR FALL/2	NEAR FALL/3	REVERSAL	ESCAPE	CAUTION	SW
Aden Kleinhenz	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Anders Thompson	13	9	1	0	2	14	4	5	4	1	0	0
Asher Kempainen	12	3	3	1	3	21	8	14	13	6	11	8
Austin Olson	2	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ben McConnell	3	2	0	0	1	7	0	1	3	1	0	0
Braden Auclair	5	5	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	0
Brandon Manley	7	7	0	0	0	8	0	1	0	0	0	0
Cade Gardner	10	5	0	0	0	5	1	0	1	2	0	0
Cade Troupe	13	9	0	2	1	18	2	8	2	3	1	0
Chase Youso	17	7	2	2	4	21	7	9	4	5	0	2
Chloe Yeadon	4	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	4	1	0
Cole Eastwood	11	8	0	1	0	11	3	2	4	1	1	0
Colton Kuka	6	5	0	0	1	5	0	1	3	2	1	1
Davin Naldrett	9	1	0	0	3	5	2	0	5	0	1	1
Dylan Kratofil	6	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Emmett Ludahl	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ethan Freund	17	10	0	1	3	22	2	4	2	5	3	2
Fin Nadeau	13	6	1	0	3	26	1	4	1	6	6	2
Forest Howell	5	5	0	0	0	4	1	1	1	0	0	0
Gabe Lake	17	13	0	1	0	17	4	5	6	1	0	0
Gaige Winter	12	6	0	0	1	12	1	1	2	7	1	2
Gunnar Thompson	10	5	0	1	3	12	2	2	2	5	3	4
Kaden Henshaw	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kayden Chuey	1	0	0	0	1	6	2	2	1	0	1	0
Kobe Schlegel	1	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	4	4	1	2
Kyler Christy	6	4	0	0	0	6	0	0	2	0	0	0
Lakoda Wiczorek	10	3	1	0	6	10	2	2	4	2	2	1
Logan Lang	10	8	0	0	0	7	0	0	1	2	0	0
Logan Stansberry	6	3	0	0	2	8	1	0	1	7	0	2
Mason Doran	11	7	0	2	2	13	1	2	2	4	0	1
Noah Poe-Hatten	14	7	1	1	3	19	1	4	6	3	0	2
Payton Caudill	2	1	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Raenan Allumbaugh	6	3	0	0	2	6	1	4	3	2	0	0
Riley Atchinson	6	3	0	1	2	13	2	0	0	1	0	1
Ryan Nelson	11	2	0	2	2	16	0	7	3	2	1	3
Sawyer Troupe	13	10	0	0	1	11	3	0	3	1	2	1
Tim Dicker	2	1	0	0	1	2	0	2	2	0	1	2
Timber Richberg	8	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	3	3	0	2
William Barnes	10	5	0	0	2	5	1	4	3	1	0	0
Wyatt Dugan	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Xander Winter	10	8	0	0	1	8	1	2	3	3	0	0

# 2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING

## BRAVETTE STATS

	Wins	Falls	TECH FALL	MAJOR DECISION	DECISION	TAKE DOWN	NEAR FALL/2	NEAR FALL/3	REVERSAL	ESCAPE	CAUTION	SW
Aleeyah Derlatka	9	8	0	0	0	9	1	2	3	0	0	2
Alexus Cislo	3	3	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	1
Alyssa Poe-Hatten	10	8	0	0	0	7	0	3	5	1	0	0
Anna Morrison	4	2	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	3	0	0
Bella Arriaga	9	8	0	0	1	10	3	0	0	1	1	0
Boston Howell	4	4	0	0	0	5	0	0	1	0	0	3
Cadence Denney	6	3	0	0	0	5	0	0	1	4	0	1
Chloe Yeadon	4	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	4	1	0
Emma Gambino	9	8	0	0	0	17	1	0	4	2	0	2
Emmalee Yeadon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hania Halverson	10	9	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	1	0
Hannah Embry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Hannah Greene	3	1	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	1	2	0
Isabelle Brewer	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	4
Isabelle Shinn	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	3	0	0
Lily Conover	8	8	0	0	0	13	1	1	0	0	3	0
Lucille Libby	8	6	0	0	0	12	0	0	3	0	2	4
Sara Harrison	2	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	0
Skye Shelmerdine	9	6	0	0	1	6	1	1	2	5	1	0
Trinity Bolvin	5	3	0	0	1	4	1	1	6	2	0	0

# 2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING

## DEPTH CHART - BRAVES

WEIGHT	NAME	GRADE	RECORD	2021 DIVISIONAL S	2021 STATE
103	Davin Naldret	9	9-5	3	DNP
	Will Barnes	9	10-3	5	DNP
113	Aden Kleinhenz	9	5-3	7	DNP
	Emmett Ludahl	9	0-2		
120	Logan Stansberry	9	6-4	6	6th
	Cade Gardner	10	10-3	4	4th
	Kobe Schlegel	9	1-3		
126	Ethan Freund	10	17-0	1	1st
	Cole Eastwood	11	11-2	5	DNP
	Wyatt Dugan	9	1-2		
	Riley Atchinson	9	6-0		
132	Asher Kempainen	11	12-2	1	2nd
	Gunnar Thompson	9	10-3	4	DNP
	Kyler Christy	9	6-2		
138	Anders Thompson	9	13-3	2	4th
	Raenan Allumbaugh	9	6-1		
	Koda Wiczorek	9	10-2		
	Braden AuClaire	9	5-0		
145	Cade Troupe	10	13-2	1	4th
	Gabe Lake	10	17-3	4	3rd
	Colton Kuka	9	6-2		
	Ben McConnell	9	3-4		
	Kayden Chuey	10	1-5		
152	Fin Nadeau	11	13-1	1	2nd
160	Noah Poe-Hatten	10	14-2	2	2nd
	Sawyer Troupe	9	13-3	5	DNP
170	Chase Youso	11	17-1	1	3rd
	Mason Doran	11	11-2	7	DNP
182	Ryan Nelson	12	11-3	1	6th
	Xan Winter	9	10-3	7	DNP
205	Gaige Winter	12	12-7	4	6th
	Brandon Manley	11	7-3	7	DNP
	Austin Olson	10	2-3		
	Forest Howell	10	5-4		
	Payton Caudill	10	2-4		
HWT	Timber Richberg	12	8-5	4	DNP
	Logan Lang	11	10-3	6	DNP

# **2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING**

## **DEPTH CHART - BRAVETTES**

WEIGHT	NAME	GRADE	RECORD	2021 STATE
<b>103</b>	Alyssa Poe-Hatten	12	11-2	3rd
	Anna Morrison	11	5-7	
	Emmalee Yeadon	10	1-1	
	Mariah England	11	0-0	
<b>113</b>	Hania Halverson	11	11-3	4th
	Skye Shelmerdine	10	10-2	
<b>120</b>	Cadence Denney	9	7-7	
	Trinity Boivin	9	5-6	6th
	Hannah Greene	12	3-3	
<b>126</b>	Bella Arriaga	11	11-5	
	Alexus Cislo	11	4-1	
	Chloe Yeadon	12	5-6	
<b>132</b>	Emma Gambino	10	10-4	
	Lily Conover	11	11-3	
	Hannah Embry	10	2-6	
<b>138</b>	Isabella Brewer	9	4-7	
	Bella Shinn	11	2-3	
	Sara Harrison	11	3-4	
<b>145</b>	Aleeya Derlatka	12	11-2	2nd
<b>170</b>	Boston Howell	9	5-3	6th
<b>205</b>	Lucie Libby	9	10-6	6th



# 2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING

## SCHEDULE

DATE		OPPONENT	RESULTS
JANUARY	2	GLACIER	57 – 12
	8	GLACIER / JV GLACIER / GIRLS	78 – 6
	8	BIG SKY SENTINEL	60 – 9 60 – 9
	16	BUTTE HELLGATE	44 – 24 78 – 0
	22	GLACIER	49 – 18
	23	FLATHEAD MIXER	---
	26	CASCADE MIXER	---
	29	HELENA HELENA CAPITAL	67 – 3 43 – 21
FEBRUARY	19	HELENA HELENA CAPITAL	66 – 6 45 – 28
	19- 20	GIRLS STATE TOURNAMENT	1 <sup>ST</sup> PLACE (6 STATE PLACERS)
	20	HELLGATE	61 – 12
	22	BIG SKY SENTINEL	70 – 0 53 – 12
MARCH	5-6	BOYS STATE TOURNAMENT	1 <sup>ST</sup> PLACE (12 STATE PLACERS)

# 2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING

## HUSTLE AWARD WINNERS

DATE		OPPONENT	BRAVES	BRAVETTES
JANUARY	2	Glacier	Koda Wieczorek Logan Stansberry Timber Richberg	Lily Conover Boston Howell
	8	Big Sky	Dylan Kratoofil Ethan Freund	Alyssa Poe-Hatten
		Sentinel	Gunnar Thompson Kyler Christy	Cadence Denney
	16	Butte	Gabe Lake Cole Eastwood Asher Kemppainen Ryan Nelson Gaige Winter	Aleeya Derlatka Bella Arriaga
		Hellgate	Chase Youso Anders Thompson	Hania Halverson
	22	Glacier	Asher Kemppainen Gaige Winter Mason Doran Riley Atchinson Forest Howell	Lexi Cislo Emma Gambino
	29	Helena Capital	Fin Nadeau Cade Troupe Brandon Manley	
		Helena High	Will Barnes Davin Naldret	
FEBRUARY	5	Big Sky	Noah Poe-Hatten Xan Winter	
		Sentinel	Logan Lang Asher Kemppainen Cade Gardner Cade Troupe Brandon Manley	
	12	Hellgate	Colton Kuka Cole Eastwood	
	19	Helena Capital	Aden Kleinhenz Forest Howell	
	19	Helena High	Sawyer Troupe Cole Eastwood	

# 2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING

## ALL-CONFERENCE

### ALL CONFERENCE

#### BOYS

103.....	Davin Naldrett
103.....	Will Barnes
113.....	Aden Kleinhenz
120.....	Logan Stansberry
120.....	Cade Gardner
126.....	Ethan Freund
126.....	Cole Eastwood
132.....	Asher Kemppainen
132.....	Gunnar Thompson
138.....	Anders Thompson
145.....	Cade Troupe
145.....	Gabe Lake
152.....	Fin Nadeau
160.....	Noah Poe-Hatten
160.....	Sawyer Troupe
170.....	Chase Youso
170.....	Mason Doran
182.....	Ryan Nelson
182.....	Xan Winter
205.....	Gaige Winter
205.....	Brandon Manley
285.....	Timber Richberg
285.....	Logan Lang

#### GIRLS

103.....	Alyssa Poe-Hatten
103.....	Anna Morrison
113.....	Hania Halverson
113.....	Skye Shelmerdine
120.....	Cadence Denney
120.....	Trinity Boivin
120.....	Hannah Greene
126.....	Bella Arriaga
126.....	Chloe Yeadon
132.....	Emma Gambino
132.....	Lily Conover
132.....	Hannah Embry
138.....	Isabella Brewer
138.....	Bella Shinn
145.....	Aleeya Derlatka
170.....	Boston Howell
205.....	Lucie Libby

# **2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING**

## **ALL-STATE**

### **ALL STATE**

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#### **BOYS**

120 .....	Logan Stansberry / 6 <sup>th</sup>
120 .....	Cade Gardner / 4 <sup>th</sup>
126 .....	Ethan Freund / 1 <sup>st</sup>
132 .....	Asher Kemppainen / 2 <sup>nd</sup>
138 .....	Anders Thompson / 4 <sup>th</sup>
145 .....	Cade Troupe / 4 <sup>th</sup>
145 .....	Gabe Lake / 3 <sup>rd</sup>
152 .....	Fin Nadeau / 2 <sup>nd</sup>
160 .....	Noah Poe-Hatten / 2 <sup>nd</sup>
170 .....	Chase Youso / 3 <sup>rd</sup>
182 .....	Ryan Nelson / 6 <sup>th</sup>
205 .....	Gaige Winter / 6 <sup>th</sup>

#### **GIRLS**

103 .....	Alyssa Poe-Hatten / 3 <sup>rd</sup>
113 .....	Hania Halverson / 4 <sup>th</sup>
120 .....	Trinity Boivin / 6 <sup>th</sup>
145 .....	Aleeya Derlatka / 2 <sup>nd</sup>
170 .....	Boston Howell / 6 <sup>th</sup>
205 .....	Lucie Libby / 6 <sup>th</sup>



# 2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING

## FLATHEAD WRESTLING RECORDS

CATEGORY	RECORD	NAME	YEAR
SEASON WINS	48	Brendan Barnes	2018
	48	Tucker Nadeau	2018
	47	Cade Troupe	2020
	45	Brendan Barnes	2020
	45	Tanner Russell	2019
	44	Tanner Beaman	2008
	44	Payton Hume	2018
	44	Asher Kempainen	2020
	44	Fin Nadeau	2020
	43	David Lau	2008
	42	Luke Fischer	2008
	42	Noah Poe-Hatten	2020
	42	Zaybin Stewart	2020
	41	Brian Ham	2008
	41	Tyler Thomas	2008
	40	Shawn Lau	2007
	40	Tucker Nadeau	2017
	40	Tyler Wells	2008
	39	Brian Ham	2005
	39	Mikey Kuehne	2005
	38	Brendan Barnes	2019
	38	Matt Gash-Gilder	2017
	38	Tiger Harris	2003
	38	Payton Hume	2017
	38	Michael Lee	2017
	38	Fin Nadeau	2019
	38	Chris Thompson	2005
PINS	36	Tanner Russell	2019
	35	Cade Troupe	2020
	31	Shawn Lau	2009
	30	Larry Johnson	2004
	29	Tyler Thomas	2008
	28	Devin Eystad	2002
	28	Michael Lee	2018

	28	Michael Lee	2017
	28	Chris Thompson	2005
	27	Caleb Allen-Schmid	2008
	27	Brendan Barnes	2018
	27	Payton Hume	2017
	27	Shawn Lau	2007
	26	Garett Rieke	2018
<b>CONSECUTIVE WINS</b>	74	Burke Tyree	1986-1988
	64	Trae Vasquez	2015-2016
	50	Tucker Nadeau	2018
	26	Luke Fischer	2008
	25	Tyler O'Meyer	2001
	24	Cade Troupe	2020
	19	Fin Nadeau	2020
	18	Mikey Kuehne	2005
	17	Brendan Barnes	2018
	17	Ethan Freund	2021
	15	Brendan Barnes	2020
	15	Shawn Lau	2007
	15	Tanner Russell	2020
	15	Chase Youso	2021
<b>CAREER WINS</b>	155	Tanner Russell	2016-2020
	154	Payton Hume	2015-2018
	151	Brendan Barnes	2016-2020
	138	Brian Ham	2005-2008
	138	Tucker Nadeau	2015-2018
	137	Shawn Lau	2007-2011
	132	David Lau	2005-2008
	126	Tyler Wells	2005-2008
	118	Burke Tyree	1985-88
	117	Devin Eystad	2001-2004
	115	Paxton Boyce	2016-2020
	113	Luke Fischer	2005-2008
	113	Brandon Mitchell	2002-2005
	111	Mikey Kuehne	2003-2006
	110	Scott Cassel	2003-2006
	108	TC Decker	2005-2008
<b>DIVISIONAL TITLES</b>	4	Shawn Lau	2007, 2008, 2009,2010
	3	Devin Eystad	2002, 2003, 2004
	3	Mikey Kuehne	2004, 2005, 2006

	3	Fin Nadeau	2019, 2020, 2021
	3	Bryce Stacy	2008, 2009, 2010
	3	Trae Vasquez	2015, 2016, 2017
	2	Brendan Barnes	2019, 2020
	2	Luke Fischer	2007, 2008
	2	Brian Ham	2006, 2008
	2	Tiger Harris	2003, 2004
	2	Payton Hume	2017, 2018
	2	David Lau	2007, 2008
	2	Michael Lee	2017, 2018
	2	Zach Lorenz	2002, 2003
	2	Tucker Nadeau	2017, 2018
	2	Eric Richeson	2000, 2001
	2	Hunter Rush	2016, 2017
	2	Tanner Russell	2018, 2019
	2	Cade Troupe	2020, 2021
	2	Tyler Wells	2007, 2008
	2	Austin Zapata	2005, 2007
<b>STATE TITLES</b>	3	Shawn Lau	2007, 2009, 2010
	3	Burke Tyree	1986, 1987, 1988
	2	Bruce Ewing	1971, 1973
	2	Vic Green	1961, 1962
	2	Brian Ham	2007, 2008
	2	Tiger Harris	2003, 2004
	2	Ashley Keltner	1989, 1990
	2	John Lee	1962, 1963
	2	Jim Miller	1958, 1959
	2	Bryce Stacy	2008, 2010
	2	Trae Vasquez	2015, 2016
<b>TAKEDOWNS</b>	202	Greg Thompson	2004
	161	Mikey Kuehne	2005
	133	Trae Vasquez	2016
	131	Tucker Nadeau	2017
	126	Mikey Kuehne	2006
	126	Greg Thompson	2003
	124	Tucker Nadeau	2018
	116	Tyler Wells	2008
	115	Mikey Kuehne	2004
	111	Jeff Tafoya	2003

# 2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING

## STATE CHAMPS - INDIVIDUAL

YEAR	NAME	YEAR	NAME
1956	Jack Sanders	1990	Ashley Keltner
1958	Bill Lee	1993	Mike Ballard
1958	Jim Miller	1993	Steve Balla
1959	Jim Miller	1996	Trent Gardner
1961	Bill Olson	1998	Corbin Eystad
1961	Vic Green	2000	Eric Richeson
1962	Vic Green	2002	Tyler O'Myer
1962	John Lee	2003	Tiger Harris
1963	Allen Johnson	2004	Tiger Harris
1963	John Lee	2005	Brandon Hoffenbacker
1964	Bernie Olson	2005	TC Decker
1966	Rich Jacobson	2007	Shawn Lau
1967	Roger Fincher	2007	Bryce Stacy
1970	Bill Carr	2007	Brian Ham
1970	Dan Fischer	2008	Brian Ham
1971	Jim Mann	2008	Tanner Beaman
1971	Bruce Ewing	2008	David Lau
1973	Dave Crone	2008	Tyler Wells
1973	Bruce Hawk	2008	Luke Fischer
1973	Wayne Hall	2009	Shawn Lau
1973	Don Clapper	2009	Bryce Stacy
1973	Bruce Ewing	2009	Ryan Thiel
1980	Derek Tyree	2010	Bryce Stacy
1982	Jeff Anderson	2010	Shawn Lau
1982	Greg Pisk	2010	Caleb Allen-Schmidt
1986	Burke Tyree	2012	Larry Francis
1986	Jim Poe	2015	Trae Vasquez
1987	Burke Tyree	2016	Trae Vasquez
1987	TJ Campbell	2018	Payton Hume
1987	Tim Minghini	2018	Tucker Nadeau
1988	Burke Tyree	2018	Michael Lee
1989	Ashley Keltner	2021	Ethan Freund
1989	Dan Troupe		



# 2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING

## STATE CHAMPS - TEAM

TEAM	YEAR	TEAM	YEAR
Missoula	1962	Butte	1992
Missoula	1963	Billings Skyview	1993
Missoula	1964	Billings West	1994
Sentinel	1965	Butte	1995
Sentinel	1966	Billings Skyview	1996
Sentinel	1967	Butte	1997
Sentinel	1968	Billings Skyview	1998
Sentinel	1969	Great Falls High	1999
Great Falls	1970	Butte	2000
CM Russell	1971	Billings Skyview	2001
Great Falls	1972	Billings Skyview	2002
Flathead	1973	Butte	2003
Billings West	1974	Flathead	2004
CM Russell	1975	Billings Skyview	2005
CM Russell	1976	Flathead	2006
CM Russell	1977	Flathead	2007
Hellgate	1978	Flathead	2008
CM Russell	1979	Flathead	2009
Butte	1980	Flathead	2010
Butte	1981	Bozeman	2011
Butte	1982	Glacier	2012
Butte	1983	Great Falls High	2013
Butte	1984	Great Falls High	2014
Butte	1985	Great Falls High	2015
Butte	1986	Billings Senior	2016
Butte	1987	Flathead	2017
Butte	1988	Flathead	2018
Butte	1989	Bozeman	2019
Butte	1990	Great Falls High	2020
Butte	1991	Flathead	2021

# 2020-2021 FLATHEAD WRESTLING

## IN THE NEWS

### GLACIER, FLATHEAD GRAPPLERS TO START SEASON TODAY

By FRITZ NEIGHBOR

Daily Inter Lake | January 1, 2021 6:57 PM

And they're on the mats. The high school wrestling teams of Flathead and Glacier will get an early start on winter sports with a dual today at Glacier High School. The junior varsities wrestles at noon and the boys' and girls' varsity duals follows at about 1 p.m. Flathead's boys would be the varsity favorite on paper, based on its second-place finish at the State AA wrestling meet and a 24-4 dual record in 2019-20. Glacier was 13-9 in duals a year ago before finishing 10th at state.

The Brave Brawlers have a smallish senior class but found an advantage in the delay to the start of the season – two-time state placer Zaybin Stewart, injured during fall football camp, has had more time to get healthy, though he won't wrestle today. Glacier coach Ross Dankers' group is led by returning state champion Teegan Vasquez, who won at 113 pounds as a freshman. The Wolfpack's other state placer graduated, leaving a handful of state qualifiers and many underclassmen to pick up the slack.

Lance Fretwell (145), Kael Willis (182), Connor Crock (205) and Rocco Beccari (heavyweight) are the seniors. Juniors Royce Conklin (160) and Kyle McCollam (152) are juniors, as is 126-pounder Thomas Putnam. Freshmen Garrett Bosch (103), Kaleb Shine (138) and TJ Gannon (170) fill out the varsity roster, along with sophomores Vasquez, Seth Doolan (132) and Josh Melton (113). Melton had a strong freshman year and is among four Glacier athletes in the preseason rankings, along with Vasquez, Willis and Putnam..

Flathead is similarly young, and lost four state-placers off last year's squad. "There are a lot of underclassmen in our starting lineup for the Braves, but these wrestlers have grown up on the mat," Thompson said. Promising freshmen include Will Barnes and David Naldret at 103, Aden Kleinhenz and Wyatt Dugan at 113, Logan Stansbery at 120 and Gunnar Thomspon at 123 and his twin Anders Thompson at 138.

The sophomore class is dotted with state tournament wrestlers: Dylan Kratofil, Ethan Freund, Cade Gardner, Aaron Gatin, Gabe Lake and Zarek Lee, along with state-placers Cade Troupe, and Noah Poe-Hatten. Thompson also has liked the work of 205-pound sophomore Forest Howell. The juniors are led by two-time state finalist Fin Nadeau (152), while Chase Youso (170) and Asher Kemppainen (132) are returning placers.

That leaves the seniors: Stewart (182) placed twice at state, and Ryan Nelson (182) will push him. Heavyweight Timber Reihberg and 205-pounder Gaige Winter made it to state last year as well. "They have high goals for this team and want to bring home a state championship trophy," said Thompson, who has 13 wrestlers in the preseason rankings. "This team has the potential to win the championship but it might come down to our depth."

Defending state champion Great Falls High remains a favorite; Billings Senior, which finished a closed third to Flathead, also is a threat. Glacier turned in a roster of 21 for its girls' varsity team, none of which are seniors.

Thompson singled out junior Jania Halverson (113) and senior Aleeya Derlatka (152) as two of the leading's Bravettes (or Brave Brawlettes). This is the first year girls' wrestling is an MHSAA-sanctioned sport. Class AA, facing COVID-19 restrictions, is doing only in-conference duals during the regular season. The site of the state meet, which has been pushed back to March 5-6, has yet to be determined.

Attendance at today's dual is limited to two people per participant.

## **Wrestling Preseason Rankings Here are the Class AA preseason wrestling rankings compiled by Ken Stuker:**

103 - 1, Forshee, Billings Senior; 2, T. Whitlock, Butte; 3, R. Whitlock, Butte.

113 - 1, Ketchem, Skyview; 2, Van Pelt, West; 3, Howe, Billings Senior; 4, Melton, Glacier; 5, Gutenberger, Belgrade; 6, Kratofil, Flathead.

120 - 1, Vasquez, Glacier; 2, Vladic, Billings Senior; 3, Raiha, Butte;; 4, Rahn, Capital; 5, Gardner, Flathead; 6, Crawford, Gallatin.

126 - 1, Aarness, West; 2, Gransbery, Butte; 3, Liscum, Great Falls; 4, Ayers, Big Sky; 5, Putnam, Glacier; 6, Danzinger, Sentinel.

132 - 1, Schmidt, Belgrade; 2, Peak, Billings Senior; 3, Kemppainen, Flathead; 4, Moreno, Big Sky; 5, Thomas, Sentinel; 6, Throckmorton, Great Falls.

138 - 1, DesRosier, Capital; 2, Lowdog, West; 3, Huber, Great Falls; 4, Bakken, Sentinel; 5, Konda, Butte; 6, Roan, Billings Senior.

145 - 1, Allen, Bozeman; 2, Troupe, Flathead; 3, Furthmyre, Great Falls; 4, Stodtmeister, West; 5, Johnson, Big Sky; 6, Lake, Flathead.

152 - 1, Rhodes, West; 2, Nadeau, Flathead; 3, Hilliard, Great Falls; 4, Savaria, Skyview; 5, Peterson, Gallatin; 6, Jolma, Sentinel.

160 - 1, Meinzen, Big Sky; 2, Salminen, Skyview; 3, Poe-Hatten, Flathead; 4, Mahoney, Great Falls; 5, Murch, Billings Senior; 6, Kovick, Capital.

170 - 1, Klepps, Senior; 2, Lockart, Great Falls; 3, Graham, Capital; 4, Youso, Flathead; 5, Scown, Butte; 6, Kojetten, Skyview.

182 - 1, Morton, Billings Senior; 2, Swanson, Great Falls; 3, Nelson, Flathead; 4, Willis, Glacier; 5, Barrington, Skyview; 6, Isaacson, Capital.

205 - 1, Davis, Great Falls; 2, Kovick, Capital; 3, Stewart, Flathead; 4, Desmarais, Billings Senior; 5, Winter, Flathead; 6, Cunningham, Belgrade.

Heavyweight - 1, DeRoche, Great Falls; 2, Hoff, WEst; 3, Malcolm, West; 4, Spencer, Bozeman; 5, Tierney, Butte; 6, Richberg, Flathead.

Team rankings: Great Falls, Billings Senior, Flathead, Billings West, Butte, Capital

# BRAVETTES PIN DOWN PLACE IN HISTORY

By FRITZ NEIGHBOR

Daily Inter Lake | January 2, 2021 10:06 PM



Flathead's Hania Halversen works on a pin of Glacier's Emily Pedron in a crosstown dual on Saturday. This season is the first for high school girl's wrestling in Montana. (Photo courtesy Jeff Thompson/Flathead High School)

The Flathead Wrestling Bravettes are an emphatic 1 and oh.

OK, host Glacier didn't keep team scores and several matches were competed at 120 and 126 pounds. But what took place Saturday afternoon at the Wolf Den is unofficially the first girls' varsity wrestling dual in the state.

"It just gives you goosebumps to be a part of history in Montana," Flathead coach Jeff Thompson said. "These girls have been training so hard for the last month, and to be able to see them compete and see the hard work pay off — it was a blast."

Flathead would have rolled up a 78-6 advantage if the dual was scored. The Montana High School Association hasn't delineated what girls' weight classes will be used, and the score would have been different if the boys' classes were used — double forfeits at three weights — but the Bravettes won 13 of 14 matches Saturday.

"A great step for girls wrestling in the state of Montana," Ross Dankers, Glacier's coach, said. "I'm excited we were able to put together a bunch of girls' matches. I'm proud of our girls going out on the mat with just being introduced to the sport a month ago and wrestling fearlessly."

"We're excited to see their growth throughout the season."

Jessalyn Hewitt had Glacier's lone win, a pin of Cadence Dennehy in 1 minute, 37 seconds at 120 pounds. The dual started at that class; Alyssa Poe-Hatten, who could wrestle 103, scored a pin in 43 seconds to set the tone.

"She moved up a weight class," Thompson said of Poe-Hatten. "For her to come back as a senior and compete... She got the ball rolling for sure. She's been wrestling since she was a little girl."

At 138 Lily Conover scored a pin in 35 seconds.

"Lily sprained her ankle in practice this week," Thompson said. "She missed a couple days of practice, but there was no way she was going to miss this opportunity."

Only one match lasted into the second period — Lucille Libby's pin of Shannen Todd — and the Bravettes' made a winner of Sully Sullivan in his varsity coaching debut (Amber Downing is co-coach but was at a tournament in Colorado).

"He did such a good job today, coaching up the girls," Thompson said of Sullivan. "They were so into it. They're screaming, they're yelling. It's just fantastic to see this door open."

"It's been really neat to see how the boys (Flathead won that dual 57-12) have embraced the girls. They're just part of the family — the Flathead wrestling family."



## **Flathead-Glacier girls' dual**

- 113 - Skye Shelmerdine, flathead, pinned Madyson Gilbert, :42.
- 120 - Jessalyn Hewitt, Glacier, pinned Cadence Denney, 1:37.
- 120 - Alyssa Poe-Hatten, Flathead, pinned. Maya Smith, :43.
- 120 - Chloe Yeadon, Flathead, pinned Leila Major, :1:24.
- 126 - Emma Gambino, Flathead, pinned McKenna McCarthy, 1:02.
- 126 - Alexis Cislco, Flathead, pinned Nora Haliday, 1:56.
- 126 - Hania Halverson, Flathead, pinned Emily Pedron, :30.
- 132 - Isabelle Brewer, Flathead, pinned Tori Gragg, :42.
- 132 - Bella Arriaga, Flathead, pinned Avery Anderson, 1:27.
- 138 - Lily Conover, Flathead, pinned Kayla Peterson, :35.
- 145 - Aleeyah Derlatka, Flathead, pinned Audrey Goodsell, :13.
- 160 - Sara Harrison, Flathead, pinned Haely Payne, 1:23.
- 170 - Boston Howell, Flathead, pinned Delanie Schultz, 1:29.
- 205 - Lucille Libby, Flathead, pinned Shannen Todd, Glacier, 2:51.

# BRAVE BRAWLERS CRUISE TO CROSSTOWN WIN

By **Daily Inter Lake**

| January 2, 2021 10:05 PM

The Brave Brawlers hit the mat pinning Saturday and by the time the big fellas wrestled — Timber Richberg getting a third-period fall over Glacier's Rocco Beccari — the first dual of the season had been decided. Flathead ended several months of anticipation with a 57-12 victory at crosstown rival Glacier, losing just two matches.

"These guys," began Flathead coach Jeff Thompson. "Basically, they're mat rats. They've been waiting 8-9 months for this, and they really just wanted to wrestle. They wanted to compete with someone else outside of the practice room."

The dual started at 138 pounds, where freshman Anders Thompson scored a second-period pin of Hunter Magness. The Brawlers won the next eight matches as well, including one by default, before Glacier's Josh Melton broke through with a pin of Dylan Kratofil at 113.

Flathead's Logan Stansberry, another freshman, followed with an 8-0 decision over Glacier's Thomas Putnam.

Jeff Thompson was happy to see three freshmen, including David Naldret at 103, win their first varsity matches, and singled out Stansberry.

"To go against a junior that's a pretty tough kid, that's a big win for him," he said. "That's a ranked kid."

Richberg had to cut eight pounds to get down to the 285-pound limit at his class, and got the fall over Beccari in 5 minutes, 10 seconds.

"You're talking two big men out there, getting after it," Thompson said. "Two big, tough heavyweights."

Glacier's Melton got his pin in 3:14; teammate Teegan Vasquez, a defending state champion, got a fall in 2:42 over Gade Gardner at 126.

"We can work on winning more of those 50-50 positions and finishing the periods stronger." Glacier coach Ross Dankers said of his Wolfpack. "It was good to get that first competition out of the way for the guys. Flathead is definitely a title contender."

The Brawlers were already a factor before getting Ryan Nelson, who transferred from Vashon, Washington in the summer. Nelson was second at 170 pounds at last year's Washington Class 1A state tournament.

He won by default Saturday; in all Flathead dropped just five matches all day between junior varsity and the varsity teams, Thompson said.

Flathead boys 57, Glacier 12

103 - Davin Naldret, Flathead, d. Garrett Roach, 10-4.

113 - Josh Melton, Glacier, pinned Dylan Kratofil, 3:14.

120 - Logan Stansberry, Flathead, d. Thomas Putnam, 8-0.

126 - Teegan Vasquez, Glacier, pinned Cade Gardner, 2:42.

132 - Asher Kemppainen, Flathead, pinned Seth Doolan, 5:04.

138 - Anders Thompson, Flathead, pinned Hunter Magness, 3:53.

145 - Cade Troupe, Flathead, pinned Lance Fretwell, 0:57.

152 - Fin Nadeau, Flathead, pinned Kyle McCollam, Glacier, 3:32.

160 - Noah Poe-Hatten, Flathead, major dec. Royce Conklin, 13-2.

170 - Chase Youso, Flathead, tech. Fall T.J. Gannon, 17-2.

182 - Ryan Nelson, Flathead, won by default.

205 - Gaige Winter, Flathead, pinned Connor Crock, 3:53.

285 - Timber Richberg, Flathead, pinned Rocco Beccari, 5:10.

## FLATHEAD AND GLACIER GIRLS WRESTLING TEAMS MEET IN HISTORIC DUAL

Competition was first in the newly sanctioned sport

BY 406MTSPORTS.COM

JANUARY 6, 2021



A historic year in Montana wrestling began on Saturday with what is believed to be the first high school girls wrestling dual in state history as the Flathead High School girls tangled with the Glacier High School girls in a wrestling dual.

The action at the Glacier High gym occurred on the first day of the season in a year in which girls wrestling is being implemented as a two-year pilot program by the Montana High School Association.

No other results for an all-girls dual were reported to either The Billings Gazette or [406mtsports.com](https://406mtsports.com) on Saturday.

The match was made possible as there are 21 girls out for the team at Flathead and 21 at Glacier.

"It was really, really fun. The whole team's energy was super exciting and it was historic," said Flathead junior Hania Halverson, who won her match with a pin in 30 seconds at 126 pounds. "It was just a really fun time. I was glad Glacier had a lot of girls for us to wrestle. That's what really made it possible."

Glacier junior Delanie Schultz, one of three team captains for her team, said she had some butterflies entering the competition.

"I'd definitely say it was a little more nerve-racking than I thought it would be," said Schultz. "I thought it was enjoyable and I had a lot of fun while we were there. It was definitely something I had never been a part of, so I thought it was a lot of fun."

There are seven proposed weight classes for the girls wrestling season: 103, 113, 126, 138, 152, 170 and 205 pounds. The girls weight classes may change based on participation numbers after the weight certification process is completed on Jan. 20.

Flathead head boys wrestling coach Jeff Thompson, who also oversees the girls program at the school, and Glacier wrestling coach Ross Dankers both said unofficial weight classes were used in the dual to try and get as many matches as possible.

"We just matched them up," said Dankers. "Montana has a set of preliminary weights, but they will redo it when the certification sheets come in and then they'll try and evenly distribute it."

Overall, 14 matches were reported and Flathead came out on top, 78-6.

The Flathead boys also prevailed 57-12.

Following social distancing protocols, two spectators were allowed per student-athlete and coach said Dankers.

"It was the highlight of the dual," Thompson said of the girls matches. "I had goosebumps, just the energy, the enthusiasm, the girls, the fans. The moms were screaming. It was all positive energy. This is a big moment for Montana wrestling overall. The girls will be the next big hit. It's very, very exciting to see it."

"Our girls were very, very excited. They have been working very hard this last month. We have a handful that decided a year or a year-and-a-half ago wrestling would be their thing. We had seven girls out last year and they have done a good job of promoting it at Flathead High School."

Dankers said the sanctioning of girls wrestling by the MHSA has opened the door to competitors who may not have come out for the sport in the past.

"It was outstanding to see two full-sized varsity girls wrestling teams matched up there," he said. "It was pretty special to be able to introduce the sport of wrestling to a lot of girls who maybe wouldn't have tried it when it wasn't a sanctioned sport for them."

"Of our 20 girls, all but one are completely brand new to the sport. And the one had only wrestled for a couple years in elementary school. It is a great opportunity to bring more people into the great sport of wrestling."

At Glacier there isn't a designated separate head coach for the girls program at this point and all the coaches work with the boys and girls as they rotate through their groups of boys wrestlers divided by weight and the girls.

At Flathead, Thompson said he has two volunteer co-head girls coaches in Amber Downing and Sully Sullivan. Thompson said the hope is that both Kalispell schools will have paid girls head wrestling coach positions in the future.

Downing wrestled with the East Helena Wrestling Club during elementary and middle school but stepped away from competition in high school and was a team manager at Helena High, a school she graduated from in 2003. She very much welcomes the move to sanction the sport of girls wrestling, saying, "as a former female wrestler, it is amazing. I would have done anything to see something like this when I was a kid giving the sport a shot."

Downing, the mother three boys ages 14, 12 and 9, also coaches at the middle school and youth levels. All three of her sons wrestle.

"Girls have been allowed to wrestle the boys for many years, but this year with the MHSA finally sanctioning it as a pilot program, it has inspired our ladies to come out," Downing said. "The ladies at Flathead have come out in force. Prior to the season, we had open mats with girls coming in and small girls camps."

This year, the AA boys teams are wrestling a conference schedule consisting of duals in a social-distancing effort.

The date for the state girls wrestling tournament is to be announced.

Downing said that Flathead is looking into possibly finding some mixers for its girls to compete in because "not all the AA schools have teams as large as ours, so we have to get creative in finding matches."

Thompson explained that the two teams hope to have another girls dual on Friday when Missoula Big Sky and Missoula Sentinel visit Kalispell for duals. Thompson said he'd like to have the dual at Flathead between the boys duals. Wrestling occurs under the spotlight at Flathead, which he said would provide a cool atmosphere for the competition.

According to Thompson, Butte has 10 girls on its roster and his team is looking forward to competing in Butte in two weeks.

Dankers also said he's working on ways to find matches for his girls wrestlers as he acknowledged some of the other Western AA teams don't have as many girls participants.

"We want to try and get as much experience as we can before we get to that state tournament," he said.

Wrestlers from both teams agreed that they learned valuable lessons while competing on Saturday and look forward to the next opportunity.

"I have a lot of fun with it," said Schultz, who also plays soccer. "It is cool to see the sparkle in a lot of the girls' eyes when we figure out new moves and overcome certain challenges we have in practice. It is fun to see how we've all grown from the first day to this past week in our practices."

"I definitely think our goal would be to grow as people. It would be cool to do super well at our state tournament at the end. Most of us want to grow as a team."

Halverson, moved to Kalispell from Oregon over the summer. Her father is Chip Halverson, who was a state champion wrestler at Glasgow in 1987. She said one of her first times wrestling was at a camp in Glasgow in 2017.

"I'm really excited. I can't wait to see what all the girls on my team will do against some different competition and also to see the next couple weeks of training and mat time," she said. "It will make a big difference and we'll keep training and getting stronger and become more of a solid team. I'm really excited. It will be a great season."

While the rest of the season is yet to play out, the Glacier and Flathead girls programs have already written a chapter in the Montana wrestling history books.

# FLATHEAD, GLACIER WRESTLERS HAVE TWO DUALS FRIDAY

By **Daily Inter Lake**

| January 7, 2021 9:34 PM

Missoula Big Sky and Missoula Sentinel are in Kalispell Friday for a pair of wrestling duals at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. Flathead High first takes on Big Sky, before Sentinel comes into the gym. Glacier gets Sentinel first, then Big Sky. The 4 p.m. dual at Flathead could feature an excellent matchup between the Brave Brawlers' Noah Poe-Hatten and Hunter Meinzen of Big Sky at 160 pounds.

The two last met in the 152 semifinals of the 2020 state wrestling tournament in Billings; Meinzen scored a major decision on the way to his second straight individual title. Poe-Hatten took third. Glacier has three wrestlers in the State AA rankings this week: Josh Melton, fourth at 113; Kael Willis, fourth at 182; and Teegan Vasquez, first at 120.

Flathead has 14 wrestlers ranked, including Poe-Hatten, who is third at 160. Fin Nadeau is No. 2 at 152 pounds.

Montana AA Wrestling Rankings | Jan. 6 Team Ranking (based on awarding points for each ranked wrestler): Great Falls High 95, Billings Senior 94, Flathead 90, Billings West 82, Butte 60, Helena Capital 47

## FEATURE DUALS OF THE WEEK

### FRIDAY

No. 2 Billings Senior at No. 1 Great Falls High No. 5 Butte at No. 6 Helena Capital

## FEATURE MATCHES OF THE WEEK:

170: No. 1 Thomas Klepps (Senior) vs No. 2 Brendan Lockart (Great Falls High), 182: No. 1 Peyton Morton (Senior) vs No. 2 Liam Swanson (Great Falls High)

## INDIVIDUAL RANKINGS

103: Daylon Forshee, Senior; Trey Whitlock (1-0), Butte; Reid Whitlock, Butte; Davin Naldrett (1-0), Flathead; Kaleb O'Shea (1-0), Helena High; Wyatt McCorkle (1-0), Big Sky/Loyola

113: Hunter Ketchum, Skyview; Jase Van Pelt, West; Holden Howe, Senior; Josh Melton (1-0), Glacier; Colton Gutenberger, Belgrade; Dylan Kratofil (0-1), Flathead

120: Teegan Vasquez (1-0), Glacier; Jaylen Vladic, Senior; Kyler Raiha (1-0), Butte; Hunter Rahn, Capital; Cade Gardner (0-1), Flathead; Logan Stansberry (1-0), Flathead

126: Jesse Aarness, West; Keagan Gransberry (1-0), Butte; Aaron Liscum, Great Falls High; Bryson Danzinger (1-0), Sentinel; Issac Ayers (0-1), Big Sky/Loyola; Nathan Elmore (1-0), Helena High

132: Carter Schmidt, Belgrade; Idren Peak, Senior; Asher Kemppainen (1-0), Flathead; Israel Moreno (1-0), Big Sky/Loyola; Novik Thomas (0-1), Sentinel; Kip Pumnea (1-0), Butte

138: Carson DesRosier (1-0), Capital; RJ Lowdog, West; Mason Huber, Great Falls; Jackson Bakken (1-0), Sentinel; Connor Konda (1-0), Butte; James Roan, Senior

145: Avery Allen, Bozeman; Colton Martello, CMR; Cade Troupe (1-0), Flathead; Irish Furthmyre, Great Falls; Gavin Stodtmeister, West; Jesse Horner (1-0), Sentinel

152: Drake Rhodes, West; Fin Nadeau (1-0), Flathead; Cache Hilliard, Great Falls; Cameron Savaria, Skyview; Felix Peterson, Gallatin; Blake Jolma (1-0), Sentinel

160: Hunter Meinzen (1-0), Big Sky/Loyola; Paolo Salminen, Skyview; Noah Poe-Hatten (1-0), Flathead; AJ Lafurge, CMR; Donovan Mahoney, Great Falls; Isaiah Murch, Senior

170: Thomas Klepps, Senior; Brendan Lockart, Great Falls; Dylan Graham (1-0), Capital; Chase Youso (1-0), Flathead; Dominik Scown (1-0), Butte; Nathan Kojetten, Skyview

182: Peyton Morton, Senior; Liam Swanson, Great Falls; Ryan Nelson (1-0), Flathead; Kael Willis, Glacier; Dilen Barrington, Skyview; Ian Isaacson (1-0), Capital

205: Elijah Davis, Great Falls; Noah Kovick (1-0), Capital; Zaybin Stewart, Flathead; Charlie Desmarais, Senior; Gaige Winter (1-0), Flathead; Xaden Cunningham, Belgrade

285: Ethan DeRoche, Great Falls; Jaydon Hoff, West; Zac Malcolm, West; Camren Spencer, Bozeman; Zack Tierney (1-0), Butte; Timber Richberg (1-0), Flathead

# BRAVE BRAWLERS PIN LOSSES ON EAGLES, SPARTANS

By Daily Inter Lake

| January 8, 2021 10:10 PM

Logan Stansberry and Timber Richberg each racked up a pair of pins Friday as Flathead swept a pair of wrestling duals by identical 60-9 scores. In the first dual, the highlight match was at 160 between Flathead's Noah Poe-Hatten and Hunter Meinzen of Big Sky. A four-point fireman's carry helped Meinzen score a 6-2 decision. "Noah wrestled really well against a two-time state champion and Oregon State signee," Flathead coach Jeff Thompson said. Poe-Hatten bounced back to score a pin against Sentinel.

Stansberry's pins came at 120; Richberg wrestles at 285. Ryan Nelson also won two contested matches for the Brave Brawlers (3-0) at 182, as did Chase Youso at 170. Freshman twins Gunnar and Anders Thompson both beat ranked opponents against Sentinel. "Chase Youso is really putting together a great season," Thompson said. "Chase is just so good at the chess game of the sport. "Ryan Nelson blew out his lungs in the first match (a 10-3 decision) and put in a great performance in his match versus Sentinel (a pin). The Brave Brawlers won 11 of 13 weight classes in each dual, including five forfeit victories.

Flathead's next scheduled dual is Friday at Missoula Hellgate. "I'm really impressed with our conditioning this early in the season," Thompson said. "Davin Naldret is going to be a force at 103." The Brave Brawlers (3-0) next head to Butte for duals with the Bulldogs and Missoula Hellgate Knights on Jan. 16.

## Flathead 60, Missoula Big Sky 9

103 - Davin Naldret, Flathead, pinned Wyatt McCorkle, 1:21.  
113 - Dylan Kratofil, Flathead, pinned Adam May, 1:51.  
120 - Logan Stansberry, Flathead, pinned Ladence Running Crane, 1:55.  
126 - Ethan Freund, Flathead, pinned Isaac Ayers, 4:53.  
132 - Izzy Moreno, Big Sky, pinned Raenan Allumbaugh, 4:35.  
138 - Asher Kempainen, Flathead, tech. fall over Daniel Peterson, 16-0.  
145 - Gabe Lake, Flathead, won by forfeit.  
152 - Cade Troupe, Flathead, pinned Chris Dill, 1:32.  
160 - Hunter Meinzen, Big Sky, dec. Noah Poe-Hatten, 6-2.  
170 - Chase Youso, Flathead, major dec. Cole Sandberg, 14-0.  
182 - Ryan Nelson, Flathead, dec. Hunter Curtis, 10-3.  
205 - Gaige Winter, Flathead, won by forfeit.  
285 - Timber Richberg, Flathead, pinned Sam Caras, :25.

## Flathead 60, Missoula Sentinel 9

103 - Naldret, Flathead, won by forfeit.  
113 - Kratofil, Flathead, won by forfeit.  
120 - Stansberry, Flathead, pinned Sam Hurteau, :25.  
126 - Freund, Flathead, won by forfeit  
132 - Gunnar Thompson, Flathead, dec. Novik Thomas, 10-6.  
138 - Anders Thompson, Flathead, pinned Jackson Bakken, 1:02.  
145 - Jesse Horner, Sentinel, pinned Lake, 3:08.  
152 - Fin Nadeau, Flathead, dec. Blake Jolma, 8-4.  
160 - Noah Poe-Hatten, Flathead, pinned Trevor Tucker, :57.  
170 - Youso, Flathead, pinned Alexander Beck, :36.  
182 - Nelson, Flathead, pinned Krisopher Musick, :52.  
205 - Zac Crews, Sentinel, dec. Winter, 6-3.  
285 - Richberg, Flathead, pinned Xander Sarbacher, 1:23.



By: [Jaurdyn Johnson](#)

*Posted at 2:00 PM, Jan 14, 2021*

*and last updated 10:45 PM, Jan 14, 2021*

KALISPELL — The Kalispell Glacier and Flathead high schools are set to open a new chapter for girls wrestling in the Flathead Valley. A year ago, on Jan. 20, 2020, the Montana High School Association announced it would be adding girls wrestling as a sport.

"Over the years we've had a couple of girls here and there try it out, and that's kind of a hard situation where we don't have girls for them to wrestle. They don't have girls to wrestle from other teams," said Ross Dankers, the Glacier wrestling head coach.



Dankers said that now with the option for the girls to wrestle other girls, it drew more athletes to the team. But the MHSAA allows for only seven weight classes for the girls wrestling teams, unlike the 13 weight classes for the boys teams.

"Some of the girls are having to wrestle up in weights, but they're excited for the opportunity to get out there and try something new and to be a part of making history in Montana as well as at our high school," said Amber Downing, a Flathead assistant wrestling coach.

While there are some early obstacles, Nelson said that the girls are still putting their best foot forward. Glacier junior Audrey Goodsell said that the wrestling teams don't see each other as any less or different. "It feels very encouraging as a woman -- like, it doesn't feel like there's any separation. They're there for us, we're there for them," said Goodsell.

Downing also feels that the boys and girls have become more united this season. "It isn't like a boys team and a girls team, it is Flathead wrestling," said Downing. Dankers said that this new opportunity for the athletes has brought out a new confidence in them as well.

"Seeing their love for a sport that's brand new to them, that's pretty special, and then you see that trickle down to their families and it just creates this awesome positive culture within the room," said Dankers. The Glacier and Flathead wrestling teams will compete in Butte on Saturday, Jan. 16.



# SCOREBOARD: CLASS AA WRESTLING RANKINGS (JAN. 20)

Jan 20, 2021 Updated Jan 20, 2021

## High School Wrestling Class AA rankings

### Teams (based on awarding points for each ranked wrestler)

1, Flathead 94 (5-0); 2, Great Falls 92 (3-1); 3, Billings Senior 90 (4-1); 4, Billings West 86 (4-0); 5, Butte 61 (4-1); 6, Helena Capital 51 (4-1).

### Individual

**103:** 1, Trey Whitlock (5-0), Butte; 2, Keyan Hernandez (4-0), West; 3, Junior Madrid (4-1), Senior; 4, Davin Naldrett (4-1), Flathead; 5, Cooper Samson (2-1), Great Falls; 6, Garrett Bosch (3-2), Glacier

**113:** 1, Jase Van Pelt (4-0), West; 2, Colton Gutenberger (3-1), Belgrade; 3, Maverick McEwen (5-0), Butte; 4, Holden Howe (3-0), Senior; 5, Josh Melton (4-1), Glacier; 6, Demetri Sallaris (2-2), Senior

**120:** 1, Teegan Vasquez (5-0), Glacier; 2, Mason Gutenberger (4-0), Belgrade; 3, Jaylen Vladoic (5-0), Senior; 4, Hunter Ketchum (3-1), Skyview; 5, Kyler Raiha (5-0), Butte; 6, Hunter Rahn (3-1), Capital

**126:** 1, Jesse Aarness (3-0), West; 2, Logan Cole (4-1), Senior; 3, Ethan Freund (4-0), Flathead; 4, Keagan Gransberry (4-1), Butte; 5, Bryson Danzinger (4-0), Sentinel; 6, Aaron Liscum (1-0), Great Falls

**132:** 1, Carter Schmidt (4-0), Belgrade; 2, Idren Peak (3-0), Senior; 3, Israel Moreno (5-0), Big Sky/Loyola; 4, Kip Pumnea (4-1), Butte; 5, Nathaniel Hoff (3-1), West; 6, Zach Ewalt (3-0), CMR

**138:** 1, Carson DesRosier (5-0), Capital; 2, Asher Kemppaninen (4-0), Flathead; 3, RJ Lowdog (4-0), West; 4, Mason Huber (1-1), Great Falls; 5, Anders Thompson (4-0), Flathead; 6, Dylan Emborg (3-0), Skyview

**145:** 1, Avery Allen (2-0), Bozeman High; 2, Colton Martello (1-0), CMR; 3, Cade Troupe (3-0), Flathead; 4, Irish Furthmyre (3-0), Great Falls; 5, Jesse Horner (5-0), Sentinel; 6, Jaron Roberts (2-1), Skyview

**152:** 1, Drake Rhodes (4-0), West; 2, Fin Nadeau (2-0), Flathead; 3, Paolo Salminen (4-0), Skyview; 4, Cache Hilliard (3-0), Great Falls; 5, Blake Jolma (3-1), Sentinel; 6, Anthony Liva (4-1), Butte

**160:** 1, Hunter Meinzen (5-0), Big Sky/Loyola; 2, Noah Poe-Hatten (4-1), Flathead; 3, AJ Lafurge (3-0), CMR; 4, Donovan Mahoney (3-0), Great Falls; 5, Cameron Savaria (4-0), Skyview; 6, Conner Kovick (4-1), Capital

**170:** 1, Thomas Klepps (2-0), Senior; 2, Brendan Lockhart (3-0), Great Falls; 3, Dylan Graham (5-0), Capital; 4, Chase Youso (5-0), Flathead; 5, Kaleb McKay (4-1), Helena High; 6, Isaiah Murch (2-1), Senior;

**182:** 1, Peyton Morton (3-0), Senior; 2, Liam Swanson (2-1), Great Falls; 3, Ryan Nelson (5-0), Flathead; 4, Dilen Barrington (2-1), Skyview; 5, Mason Chrisitan (3-1), Butte; 6, Ian Isaacson (4-1), Capital

**205:** 1, Elijah Davis (3-0), Great Falls; 2, Noah Kovick (5-0), Capital; 3, Xaden Cunningham (3-1), Belgrade; 4, Zac Crews (4-1), Sentinel; 5, Gaike Winter (4-1), Flathead; 6, Charlie Desmarais (3-2), Senior

**285:** 1, Ethan DeRoche (3-0), Great Falls; 2, Jaydon Hoff (4-0), West; 3, Zack Tierney (5-0), Butte; 4, Timber Richberg (4-1), Flathead; 5, Talon Marsh (2-1), Capital; 6, Idellio Michelotti (2-0), CMR

## POE-HATTEN SIBLINGS GIVE FLATHEAD WRESTLING A 1-2 PUNCH



By FRITZ NEIGHBOR

Daily Inter Lake | January 21, 2021

Flathead wrestlers and siblings Noah and Alyssa Poe-Hatten at wrestling practice at Flathead High School on Thursday. (Casey Kreider/Daily Inter Lake)

If one Poe-Hatten wasn't enough for Flathead wrestling foes to deal with, now there are two. At Friday's crosstown wrestling duals set for Flathead High, the Brave Brawlers will put talented sophomore Noah Poe-Hatten on the mat at 160 pounds against Glacier.

But before that, there's a girls' dual between the Bravettes and Wolfpack – and there might be no better grappler than 103-pound senior Alyssa Poe-Hatten. Back in the wrestling

room with the addition of girls' wrestling as a Montana High School Association-sanctioned sport, she has won her two matches this year. This should be no surprise: She competed in her younger years, both inside youth wrestling and out.

"I didn't have a sister for nine years," Alyssa Poe-Hatten said. "I had younger brothers. So we would kind of play around and wrestle at the house. I guess I would say my brothers really helped me in that aspect." Noah Poe-Hatten has one loss on the season, to two-time state champion Hunter Meinzen of Missoula Big Sky. He has wrestled for 10 years; it would be 11 but he suffered a broken leg in Kindergarten. Alyssa jumped from gymnastics into Little Guy Wrestling as a sixth grader, with impressive results over three years. She finished third at two tournaments and second at the 2017 Western Montana Little Guy championships, in a bracket filled with boys.

So we're talking some pretty tough kids, born to a wrestling dad (Jason competed at Flathead, graduating in 1992) and also having two wrestling uncles (Jeff and Jim Poe). "I've kind of been around the sport my whole life," Alyssa said. "I just wanted to change it up and try something new (as a sixth grader). Then I didn't want to wrestle boys anymore.

"Then when they instituted girls' wrestling I thought it'd be something fun to do my senior year." "I think it's pretty cool," said Noah. "She stopped those two years because she didn't want to wrestle guys, but she'd go to tournaments here and there. Yeah, she's pretty good." Jeff Thompson, the veteran wrestling coach at Flathead, knew her talent. Her brother, meanwhile, was third at 152 pounds at last year's state tournament as a freshman. "The one thing that stands out is how they never show fear," Thompson said. "They are always so calm, even during the toughest moments. They never freeze up during tough matches. That comes in handy, in this sport." Amber Downing, co-coach of the Flathead girls along with Sully Sullivan, notes that Alyssa's gymnastics background has helped her in tight spots, along with technique. It explains her success against male wrestlers in grades 6-8.

"She has a lot of flexibility and is able to maneuver out of situations," Downing said. "Being a multi-sport athlete and having body knowledge is so beneficial. That's something that came rather naturally to her." Noah, meanwhile, is a combo of knowledge, strength and endurance. His father lost count of his youth wrestling titles.

"He's a heck of a technician," Jason Hatten said. "You can learn from somebody who's really good." "They both have gas tanks," Thompson added, noting their endurance. That may come in handy as the season winds down. The girls will compete in an all-class tournament at a yet to be determined site March 5-6; the State AA boys' championships haven't found a host site yet. More should be known by the end of this month.

Both Flathead teams are young and potent. Alyssa feels Sidney, Glendive and the Billings AA schools have the numbers to compete. Noah knows defending champion Great Falls and Billings Senior are formidable. "I think we're actually pretty good this year," said Noah. "Our varsity lineup is pretty solid, and our B team has 4-5 guys that I think can make it to state, and possibly place." In December Alyssa got her season off to an early start, competing at 102 pounds at the Covid Crush tournament in Utah. She won it.

"It was my first step back into the game," she said. "My first tournament back since my freshman year." It went swimmingly. Now she's aiming for a state title, and living room roll arounds paved the way. "I've been bugging her for years for many years to get on the mat," said Downing, a youth wrestler herself growing up in East Helena. "She knows so much about wrestling. I was really excited for her to make that decision."

## BRAVE BRAWLERS RUN DUAL RECORD TO 8-0

By **Daily Inter Lake**

| January 29, 2021 10:02 PM

HELENA — Four Flathead wrestlers won two on-mat matches Friday and the Brave Brawlers ran their dual record to 8-0 with wins over Helena High and Helena Capital.

Cade Troupe, Ryan Nelson, Noah Poe-Hatten and Gunnar Thompson all defeated two opponents while Flathead beat Helena 61-9 and Capital 43-21. Nelson scored two major decisions at 182 pounds and Youso had a 4-1 win over Helena's Justice Seamons and a major decision at 170. Troupe scored two pins, and Poe-Hatten had one.

"Youso and Nelson are wrestling at a different level than a month ago," Flathead coach Jeff Thompson said. "Super fun to watch. Fin (Nadeau, who scored a technical fall and won another match by forfeit) looked good today — great movement and super slick."

Capital proved challenging, surrendering just two pins (by Flathead's Ethan Freund at 126 and Troupe at 145) and getting wins at 205 and 285 over Gaige Winter and Timber Richberg. The Bruins' Carson DeRosier, a state champion, also handed Flathead freshman Anders Thompson his first loss. They were ranked 1-2 at 138.

"We had some battles today, especially in the upper weights with Capital," Thompson said. "They got some horses up top with their big boys (Talon Marsh and Keaton Pouliot; Capital's Noah Kovich didn't wrestle at 285).

Flathead's next action is Friday at Missoula. Both the Brawlers and the Glacier Wolfpack have duals with Big Sky and Sentinel. Glacier didn't wrestle in Helena because of a COVID-19 quarantine.

### **Flathead 61, Helena 9**

103 - Caleb O'Shea, Helena, dec. Davin Naldret, 70. 113 - Dylan Kratofil, Flathead, won by forfeit; 120 - Nathon Elmore, Helena, won by forfeit; 126 - Ethan Freund, Flathead, won by forfeit; 132 - Gunnar Thompson, Flathead, pinned JT Gehring, 1:20. 138 - Anders Thompson, Flathead, pinned David Kemp, 1:36. 145 - Cade Troupe, Flathead, pinned Cameron Wyant, :30. 152 - Fin Nadeau, Flathead, won by forfeit. 160 - Noah Poe-Hatten, Flathead, pinned Kaleb Kirklin, 1:29. 170 - Chase Youso, Flathead, dec. Justice Seamons, 4-1. 182 - Ryan Nelson, Flathead, major dec. Kaleb McKay, 15-4. 205 - Gaige Winter, Flathead, won by forfeit. 285 - Timber Richberg, Flathead, won by forfeit.

### **Flathead 43, Capital 21**

103 - Naldret, Flathead, won by forfeit. 113 - Hunter Rahn, Capital, pinned William Barnes, 1:02. 120 - Kratofil, Flathead, won by forfeit. 126 - Freund, Flathead, pinned Brandon Soule, 1:10. 132 - G. Thompson, Flathead, dec. Ayden Smelko, 4-0. 138 - Carson DeRosier, Capital, pinned A. Thompson, 3:42. 145 - Troupe, Flathead, pinned Spur Owens, 2:00. 152 - Fin Nadeau, Flathead, tech. fall over Wyatt Scheiner, 16-1. 160 - Poe-Hatten, Flathead, dec. Connor Kovick, 6-0. 170 - Youso, Flathead, major dec. Dylan Graham, 10-0. 182 - Nelson, Flathead, major dec. Ian Isaacson, 10-1. 205 - Talon Marsh, Capital, pinned Winter, 5:50. 285 - Keaton Pouliot, Capital, dec. Richberg, 4-2.



## FLATHEAD GIRLS IN FIRST AT STATE WRESTLING, SIX IN SEMIS

By Daily Inter Lake

| February 19, 2021 10:43 PM



LOCKWOOD — The first day of the All-Class girls' state wrestling tournament seemed to go off smoothly and with few surprises on Friday.

Flathead's girls, who were expected to make a run for a team state title, sit somewhat comfortably in first place with 112 points. Billings Senior trails by 28 points in second place. Glacier is

in fifth, with 32. "We've just got to take care of business," Flathead head wrestling coach Jeff Thompson said. "We're in the driver's seat right now. Overall we exceeded our expectations. So proud of each and every one of these girls."

Eleven Flathead wrestlers qualified for rounds today, including six in semifinals. Glacier has three wrestlers competing. "It was a unique experience for many of the girls cause it was their first actual tournament," Glacier head wrestling coach Ross Dankers said. "They left their hearts out on the mat and battled through adversity."

At 103 pounds, Flathead's Alyssa Poe-Hatten pinned Kaylee LaPier of Butte to move into the semifinals, where she'll face Kaylin Taylor of Great Falls. Also at 103, Anna Morrison fell to the consolation bracket after LeeAnn Hoch of Shepherd won by pin in a quarterfinal round. Flathead had strong showings from Hania Halverson and Skye Shelmerdine at 113. Halverson advanced to semifinals after winning three matches, all by pin. She'll wrestle Jazmin Gorder of Poplar today.

Shelmerdine won her first match against East Helena's Shelby Davis, but fell in the quarterfinal and moved to the consolation bracket, where she pinned Jordyn Wolf of Columbus/Absarokee/Park City. At 120 pounds, Flathead's Trinity Bolvin advanced to semifinals after pinning teammate Hannah Greene in quarterfinals. Cadence Denney, also from Flathead, was bumped to the consolation round after a



quarterfinal loss, but won two matches there (one against Glacier's Emily Pedron, by forfeit).

Flathead's Bella Arriaga pinned Glacier's Maya Smith in the first round but fell to the consolation round at 126 pounds and pinned both of her opponents. Arriaga will face Evija Cagle of Big Sky today. Smith won one match in consolation. The 132-pound bracket had two first round Flathead-Glacier matches: Flathead's Hannah Embry against Glacier's Temree Payne-Taylor and Glacier's Avery Anderson against Flathead's Lily Conover.

Payne-Taylor beat Embry before a quarterfinal loss, where she was pinned by Emma Gambino of Flathead in consolation.

Conover beat Anderson and lost in quarters but will wrestle in consolation today. Gambino pinned Anderson, then Payne-Taylor in consolation.



Glacier had three girls wrestling at 138: Jessalyn Hewitt, Kayla Peterson and Tori Gragg. All three were bumped to consolation where Hewitt beat Flathead's IsaBella Shinnn before her day ended.

Aleeya Derlatka of Flathead is in the semis today at 145 against Amilia Blackcrow of Harlem after pinning Billings Senior' Olivia Wilkinson in quarterfinals. Glacier's McKenna McCarthy is still alive in consolation after a win over Maddie Lippy of Florence-Carlton. Glacier's two competitors at 152 pounds were Audrey Goodsell and Madisyn Frazier, who ended up wrestling each other in the consolation round. Frazier won, and is still in the hunt for a state placing.

In the semis at 170 is Flathead's Boston Howell, who will wrestle Hayla Hoffman of Butte for a spot in the chipper. Delanie Schultz of Glacier fell to the consolation round before her day ended there. At 205, Lucille Libby of Flathead pinned Glacier's Shannen Todd and advanced to the semifinals. Todd is still alive in consolation. The second and final day of action kicks off with semifinals at 9 a.m. today at Lockwood High School.



## THE MAYOR OF MONTANA WRESTLING

Former Brave Brawlers coach Jeff Anderson joins the Legends Wall of Fame, honored for his lifetime contribution to the state's wrestling scene

BY MICAH DREW  
FEBRUARY 5, 2021



Wrestling coach Jeff Anderson pumps up the crowd at a Flathead High School pep rally on Nov. 15, 2018 as the football team departed for Billings for the Class AA State Football Championship against Billings West High School. Justin Franz | Flathead Beacon

In nine pages of records kept in the Montana High School Association wrestling online archives, Jeff Anderson's name doesn't appear once.

The closest association one can make with his name is the six years Flathead High School is listed winning Class AA state titles, or his protégé, Jeff Thompson, listed for his state championships as both an athlete and coach.

None of the associated feats would be possible without Anderson, which goes to show that archival records only reveal a modicum (or no part) of any story. His recent induction into the Legends Stadium Wall of Fame, however, pays tribute to a life dedicated to his passion for wrestling — first as a competitor, then for decades as a coach until his retirement in 2020.

Anderson does not cut an imposing figure. A head shorter than average, it's easy to believe him when he talks about being the smallest wrestler in the lowest weight class for the entirety of his athletic career. In junior high, Anderson remembers going to the gymnasium with his classmates and being told that they were going to be multi-sport athletes. Due to his diminutive stature, Anderson knew he really only had two options: running and wrestling. "As a freshman in high school I was 69 pounds, and my weight class was 98," Anderson said recently from his home in Whitefish. "By my junior year I was 92 pounds but managed to place second at state."

Anderson, 56, said his coach at the time, Chris Tyree, believed in him enough to set him on the path to success, a path that meant learning how to consistently beat competitors who always had a size advantage. "I had to become a true student of the sport, and one of my best attributes is technique," Anderson said. "If you have an idea of what you're doing and maximize the use of leverage and speed, it can help eliminate the burden of someone else's extra weight. That's what I specialized in."

In 1982, as a senior, Anderson won a state title on the back of an undefeated season and looked for competitive opportunities beyond high school. Anderson drew the attention of major universities, including the Griz and Bobcats, but demurred, opting to attend Northwest College in Powell, Wyoming instead. A main reason for his choice was that the lowest weight class in the NCAA was 118 pounds. Anderson tipped the scales at a generous 105, making him the smallest high school wrestler in the country to receive a college scholarship.

Nonetheless, Anderson transferred to the University of Montana in 1984 and spent four years wrestling for the Griz. "Going to that collegiate level is rough, because everyone in the wrestling room is a state champion," Anderson said. "Me being literally one of, if not the smallest wrestler in the country, it wasn't easy." College didn't bring a lot of

success for Anderson, but he continued to work on his technique, picking up any move or mental edge that could give him an extra inch of advantage over an opponent.

On the national and international stages, however, with a weight class slotted right at his natural weight of 105, Anderson began to make headlines. He won a gold medal at the Junior Pan-American games in Greco-Roman and took the silver in freestyle wrestling.

Over the course of 16 years, Anderson qualified for four consecutive Olympic Trials. "I will say I kind of considered myself a little bit of a bridesmaid," Anderson mused. "I was always in that position where I was competing well against the top opposition, but I was never the top guy. But I've lost to the best people in the country."

In his last Olympic Trials in 1996, Anderson was injured in his final match and lost to an opponent who went on to make the Olympic team. "I was there, but I was just never the very, very best," he said. Spending the better part of two decades as a competitive athlete on the national and international scene is impressive on its own, but Anderson was also a high school science teacher and wrestling coach at the same time. "Days would start at 5 a.m., getting in my conditioning runs and lifting weights, then I went through a day of teaching, got time on the mats while coaching, then do more cardio and come home and do paperwork until 11 or so," Anderson said. "To me it wasn't a sacrifice; it was just what I had to do."

Assistant coach Jeff Anderson demonstrates techniques with Payton Hume as Trae Vasquez watches during Flathead High School wrestling practice. Greg Lindstrom | Flathead Beacon Jeff Thompson, the current head wrestling coach for Flathead, remembers meeting Anderson for the first time as a high school athlete in Great Falls in 1989.

"I met Coach Anderson — and I still call him that after all these years — in [coach Bob] Zadick's garage," Thompson said. "I couldn't believe how tough he was, this little 105-pound guy taking down people twice his weight." The Great Falls wrestlers used to leave the school's wrestling room after practice and reconvene in Zadick's garage to continue working out. Coach Anderson never missed an extra workout.

"There wasn't much specializing in sport at that time, but he really opened that door for us," Thompson said. "We could spend 365 days a year wrestling in that garage and we did." "Coach Anderson taught me what it took to be a champion," Thompson continued. "Even though he was teaching and coaching, he also spent time wrestling with us, drilling with us, running with us and lifting with us."

After his stint in Great Falls, Anderson heard there was an opening for a science teacher at his alma mater and moved back to the Flathead. He became the wrestling coach for the Braves, serving as the head coach for seven years before stepping down and turning the reins over to Thompson. Anderson continued as the assistant, helping Flathead win six state championships and relishing a role that let him focus more on technique than logistics. Anderson was named the Montana assistant wrestling coach of the year six times, and the national assistant coach of the year once.

"My biggest takeaway from Coach A was to strive for perfection," Thompson said. "It could make him frustrating to work with sometimes, but he never actually expected to get perfection, but rather always emphasized striving for it — in pursuit of championships or as a teacher or in relationships with a spouse."

In his retirement, Anderson is capitalizing on his first winter absent from a wrestling room, spending his days skiing on Big Mountain and hiking in Glacier Park with his wife of 15 years.

While he's enjoying the respite after being "married to the sport" for decades, Anderson doesn't anticipate he'll be able to stay away from the sport for long — the people are too good to remain apart from. "I've been coaching for 33 years, and I've been able to develop relationships with hundreds of people," Anderson said. "Between the kids that come through the program, and the coaches I dealt with on the state and national level, that's been the best part of my career."

"He really walked the walk," Thompson said. "Even when it was our main competition, if a coach from another program needed help, Coach Anderson was there. That's why we gave him the name Mayor." "He really was a class act."



## CLASS AA BOYS WRESTLING RANKINGS, FEB 4: BRAVES REIGN IN WESTERN AA

FLATHEAD MAINTAINS BEST HEAD-TO-HEAD RECORD IN ALL CLASS AA; STILL TO BE TESTED AGAINST EASTERN SCHOOLS

BY MICAH DREW  
FEBRUARY 4, 2021

The 2020-21 AA wrestling rankings are based on season results through Feb. 2. The top teams are separated by mere points, meaning a single match can shift the rankings in favor of any school on a given week. Because of the east-west competitive split in Class AA, Flathead has yet to face off against three of the top-four ranked teams in the state.

### UPCOMING MATCH OF THE WEEK

160: No. 1 Hunter Meinzen (8-0), Big Sky; vs No. 3 Noah Poe-Hatten (7-1), Flathead;

Rankings are compiled by Ken Stuker in collaboration with the Class AA coaches. Team rankings are based on awarding points for each ranked wrestler.

### TEAM RANKINGS:

1. BILLINGS SENIOR — 99 (6-1)
2. FLATHEAD — 91 (8-0)
3. BILLINGS WEST — 88 (6-1)
4. GREAT FALLS — 84 (6-2)
5. BUTTE — 71 (6-1)

### INDIVIDUALS:

**103:** Kaleb O'Shea defeated number four Davin Naldrett to move up in the rankings. Junior Madrid defeated Cooper Samson 9-3 on Tuesday.

1. Trey Whitlock (7-0), Butte; 2. Keyan Hernandez (7-0), West; 3. Junior Madrid (6-1), Senior; 4. Kaleb O'Shea (5-2), Helena High; 5. Davin Naldrett (6-2), Flathead

### 113:

1, Jase Van Pelt (7-0), West; 2, Colton Gutenberger (6-1), Belgrade; 3, Maverick McEwen (7-0), Butte; 4, Holden Howe (4-0), Senior; 5, Josh Melton (5-1), Glacier

### 120:

1, Teegan Vasquez (6-0), Glacier; 2, Jaylen Vladic (7-0), Senior; 3, Hunter Ketchem (6-1), Skyview; 4, Kyler Raiha (5-0), Butte; 5, Nathan Elmore (4-1), Helena High

**126:** Mason Gutenberger scored two falls this week and moves from the 120 rankings to 126. 1, Jesse Aarness (6-0), West; 2, Logan Cole (6-1), Senior; 3, Mason Gutenberger (7-1), Belgrade; 4, Ethan Freund (7-0), Flathead; 5, Keagan Gransberry (6-1), Butte

**132:** Gunnar Thompson scored two falls and moved into the rankings at number six. 1, Idren Peak (5-0), Senior; 2, Carter Schmidt (6-1), Belgrade; 3, Israel Moreno (8-0), Big Sky/Loyola; 4, Kip Pumnea (5-2), Butte; 5, Talon Barrington (5-2), Skyview; 6, Gunnar Thompson (3-0), Flathead

**138:** Carson DesRosier defeated number five Anders Thompson this week. Idren Peak moved up and defeated Mason Huber on Tuesday.

1, Carson DesRosier (7-0), Capital; 2, Asher Kemppaninen (5-0), Flathead; 3, RJ Lowdog (7-0), West; 4, Mason Huber (2-2), Great Falls; 5, Anders Thompson (5-1), Flathead

**145:**

1, Avery Allen (3-0), Bozeman High; 2, Cade Troupe (6-0), Flathead; 3, Irish Furthmyre (7-0), Great Falls High; 4, Anthony Liva (6-1), Butte; 5, Jesse Horner (7-1), Sentinel

**152:** Fin Nadeau scored two wins this past week. Blake Jolma picked up two wins including a defeat of Gavin Vetter, who moved into the No. 6 spot with a win. Cache Hilliard scored two wins as well.

1, Drake Rhodes (7-0), West; 2, Fin Nadeau (5-0), Flathead; 3, Paolo Salminen (6-1); Skyview; 4, Blake Jolma (7-1), Sentinel; 5, Cache Hilliard (5-2), Great Falls High

**160:** Number three Noah Poe-Hatten defeated number five Connor Kovick. Shawn Miller defeated Donovan Mahoney and moved into the rankings at number six. AJ LaFurge won two matches including a 9-6 win over Mahoney.

1, Hunter Meinzen (8-0), Big Sky/Loyola; 2, Cameron Savaria (7-0), Skyview; 3, Noah Poe-Hatten (7-1), Flathead; 4, AJ Lafurge (6-1), CMR; 5, Conner Kovick (5-2), Capital

**170:** Chase Youso moved to 8-0 with wins over number four Justice Seamons and number five Dylan Graham.

1, Thomas Klepps (4-0), Senior; 2, Brendan Lockhart (6-1), Great Falls High; 3, Chase Youso (8-0), Flathead; 4, Justice Seamons (3-3), Helena High 5, Dylan Graham (5-2), Capital

**182:** Ryan Nelson scored two more wins including a defeat of number six Ian Isaacson.

1, Liam Swanson (6-1), Great Falls; 2, Peyton Morton (4-1), Senior; 3, Ryan Nelson (8-0), Flathead; 4, Chris Garcia (4-2), West; 5, Mason Chrisitan (5-1), Butte

**205:**

1, Elijah Davis (7-0), Great Falls; 2, Noah Kovick (6-0), Capital; 3, Charlie Desmarais (4-3), Senior; 4, Xaden Cunningham (4-2), Belgrade; 5, Zac Crews (7-1), Sentinel

**285:** Keaton Pouliot moved into the number four spot after defeating Timber Richberg 4-2.

1, Ethan DeRoche (7-0), Great Falls; 2, Jaydon Hoff (6-1), West; 3, Zack Tierney (5-0), Butte; 4, Keaton Pouliot (3-0), Capital; 5, Timber Richberg (5-2), Flathead

## WRESTLING

### FLATHEAD TO HOST CLASS AA STATE WRESTLING MEET

Billings will not host tournament for first time since 2011; MHSAA also approves basketball and swimming state locations

BY MICAH DREW | FEBRUARY 5, 2021



*FLATHEAD HIGH SCHOOL FACES GLACIER  
HIGH SCHOOL AT FLATHEAD HIGH IN  
KALISPELL FOR THE ANNUAL CROSSTOWN  
WRESTLING MATCH ON JAN. 10, 2020.  
HUNTER D'ANTUONO | FLATHEAD  
BEACON*

THE MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (MHSAA) EXECUTIVE BOARD ANNOUNCED ON FRIDAY THAT FLATHEAD HIGH SCHOOL WILL HOST THE CLASS AA STATE WRESTLING TOURNAMENT ON MARCH 5-6.

"THIS IS A HUGE WRESTLING COMMUNITY AND WHAT A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR KALISPELL," JEFF THOMPSON, HEAD COACH FOR THE BRAVE BRAWLERS, SAID. "WE ARE NOT GOING TO MISS THE EIGHT-HOUR BUS RIDE TO BILLINGS THIS YEAR."

DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS, THE BOYS WRESTLING TOURNAMENT WILL CHANGE FROM ITS USUAL ALL-CLASSIFICATION EVENT TO SPLIT TOURNAMENTS. CLASS A WILL TAKE PLACE IN MILES CITY AND CLASS B-C WILL BE HOSTED BY SHELBY HIGH SCHOOL.

THIS MARKS THE FIRST YEAR IN A DECADE THAT A SPLIT TOURNAMENT SYSTEM HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED, AND THE FIRST TIME METRAPARK IN BILLINGS WILL NOT PLAY HOST SINCE 2011, WHEN THE ARENA SUFFERED DAMAGE FROM A TORNADO.

"OUR BOYS GET TO SLEEP IN THEIR OWN BEDS AND GET TO EAT MAMA'S COOKING," THOMPSON SAID. "HOPEFULLY WE CAN GET A LITTLE HOME MAT ADVANTAGE."

FLATHEAD HAS WON NINE STATE WRESTLING TITLES, INCLUDING A FIVE-YEAR STREAK FROM 2006-2010, AND BACK-TO-BACK TITLES IN 2017 AND 2018. THE BRAVES ARE CURRENTLY RANKED NO. 2 IN THE STATEWIDE WRESTLING RANKINGS.

THE FIRST GIRLS STATE WRESTLING TOURNAMENT WILL BE HELD FEB. 19-20 AT LOCKWOOD HIGH SCHOOL IN BILLINGS AS AN ALL-CLASS TOURNAMENT.

MHSAA ALSO APPROVED A REQUEST THAT THE CLASS AA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT MOVE FROM A PLAYOFF TO A TOURNAMENT FORMAT. THE STATE TOURNAMENT WILL BE HELD IN GREAT FALLS AT FOUR SEASONS ARENA MARCH 10-13.

IN ADDITION, MHSAA VOTED FOR POLSON HIGH SCHOOL TO HOST THE CLASS A-B STATE SWIM MEET ON MARCH 6. TICKETS FOR ONE-DAY SWIM MEETS WILL BE SET AT \$10.

# CLASS AA GIRLS WRESTLING RANKINGS, FEB 9: FLATHEAD VALLEY WRESTLERS REMAIN ON TOP

A THIRD OF ALL RANKED WRESTLERS IN THE STATE ARE FROM EITHER FLATHEAD OR GLACIER HIGH SCHOOLS  
BY MICAH DREW | FEBRUARY 10, 2021

GIRLS WRESTLING RANKINGS INCLUDE ALL CLASSIFICATIONS. THE ALL-CLASSIFICATION STATE TOURNAMENT IS OFFICIALLY SET TO BE HELD IN BILLINGS FEB. 19-20. MHSA RECENTLY ADDED AN 11TH WEIGHT CLASS TO THE STATE TOURNAMENT. BECAUSE OF THE NEW ADDITION, SOME OF THE NEW WEIGHT CLASSES DO NOT HAVE A FULL COMPLEMENT OF RANKED WRESTLERS. RECORDS ARE LISTED ONLY AGAINST OTHER GIRL WRESTLERS THROUGH FEB 4.

RANKINGS ARE COMPILED BY KEN STUKER IN COLLABORATION WITH MHSA COACHES.

## INDIVIDUALS

103: 1, KAYLIN TAYLOR (3-0), GREAT FALLS; 2, ALYSSA POE-HATTEN (6-1), FLATHEAD; 3, RYLINN MULLANEY (7-2), BUTTE; 4, KAYLEE LAPIER (3-1), BUTTE; 5, LEEANN HOCH (2-0), SHEPHERD; 6, ASPEN MURPHY (1-1), MISSOULA HELLGATE

113: 1, REBECCA STROH (11-2), CHINOOK; 2, HANIA HALVERSON (4-1), FLATHEAD; 3, SKYE SHELMEERDINE (6-0), FLATHEAD; 4, JAZMIN GORDER (5-1), POPULAR; 5, RUSTE TORRES (4-1), BILLINGS SKYVIEW; 6, AYDIN GONZALES (4-2), BUTTE

120: 1, HANNAH HURST (3-0), HAMILTON; 2, JESSICA GUBLER (6-0), PARK/SWEET GRASS; 3, KELLA KARY (4-1), SIDNEY

126: 1, LILY GRISMER (2-0), CASCADE; 2, AMIA KERN (6-1), SIDNEY; 3, BELLA ARRIAGA (6-1), FLATHEAD; 4, EVIJA CAGLE (6-2), BILLINGS SKYVIEW; 5, JACEY GORDER (5-1), BAKER; 6, BELLA HERNANDEZ (5-2), BILLINGS LOCKWOOD

132: 1, SKYLAR CONNELLY (7-1), VALIER; 2, LILY BENNUM (3-1), HELENA CAPITAL; 3, LILY SCHUBARTH (2-1), SIMMS; 4, JESSALYN HEWITT (4-1), GLACIER; 5, CHEYENE A'AIGNEAU (5-1), BILLINGS SENIOR; 6, TEMREE PAYNE-TAYLOR (4-1), GLACIER

138: 1, MARIAH WAHL (5-0), CUT BANK; 2, PAIGE GERSHMEL (4-1), BILLINGS SENIOR; 3, LILY CONOVER (5-1), FLATHEAD; 4, EMMA GAMBINO (7-1), FLATHEAD; 5, NORA HOLIDAY (3-2), GLACIER; 6, ADDISON ENDY (4-4), BUTTE

152: 1, ANNA STUTZ (2-0), CHOTEAU; 2, JJ CARTER (4-0), CUT BANK; 3, ALEEYA DERLATKA (8-1), FLATHEAD; 4, KENDAL TUCKER (6-1), BILLINGS SENIOR; 5, KYLA GILMORE (3-1), MILES CITY; 6, KERA MORENO (3-2), BUTTE

160: 1, SOPHIA DULIN (2-0), BAKER

170: 1, HAYLA HOFFMAN (5-0), BUTTE; 2, BOSTON HOWELL (2-0), FLATHEAD; 3, TRISTY DEASON (2-0), MILES CITY; 4, AUDREY GOODSSELL (2-2), GLACIER; 5, SARA HARRISON (2-2), FLATHEAD; 6, HAELY PAYNE (1-1), GLACIER

205: 1, KASSIDEE SAVARIA (7-0), BILLINGS SKYVIEW; 2, LUCY LIBBY (5-3), FLATHEAD; 3, SYKE SMITH (1-1), CASCADE; 4, HAYLEE FETTERS (2-0), CUT BANK; 5, SHANNON TODD (2-2), GLACIER

## FLATHEAD, GLACIER WRESTLERS ROLL OUT THE WELCOME MATS

Fritz Neighbor, Daily Inter Lake, Kalispell, Mont.  
Fri, March 5, 2021, 7:01 AM·4 min read

Mar. 5—It's the first time the State AA wrestling championships have been in Kalispell since 1982, and it's going to be a little different this time around. COVID-19 considerations mean Friday's first and second rounds at Flathead High School will be split into, well, two rounds. The 103-pound to 145 weight classes start at 9:30 a.m. with their "pigtail round," before the first round begins in earnest at approximately 10:15 a.m. The quarterfinals begin around 11:45. By 2 p.m. or so the Flathead gym will be cleared ahead of the first two rounds for weight classes 152 to 285, who start wrestling at 3.

Within this framework the host Brave Brawlers will try to take down defending champion Great Falls along with Billings West and Billings Senior, if not Butte. All of those teams put a lot of high-seeded competitors into this meet. Flathead coach Jeff Thompson has six No. 1 seeds, and eight wrestlers seeded 1 or 2 out of the Western AA.

"It's tight," Thompson said. "West has seven top-2 seeds, Butte also has seven. Great Falls has five and Billings Senior, four. "Then when you look at top-three, it's Butte 10, Flathead nine, Great Falls nine, Senior and West eight." Saturday is more of the usual day, like you might find at the all-class meet at the Billings Metra; semifinals for all weight classes begin at 10 a.m. and the championship round at 3 p.m.

By 5:30 or so Saturday we should have a team champion. "Right now on paper, Senior is top dog," Thompson said. "The first session, Senior most likely is going to have a pretty big lead on the rest of the pack. Meanwhile Great Falls is really strong in its upper weights so you could see a big comeback when they wrestle.

"We just have guys that are going to compete at every single weight. West is like us, balanced top-to-bottom. It makes it a very exciting tournament.. I'd say it's one of the closest since I got here to coach in 2001."

The Montana High School Association went to an all-class format in Billings in 1989. This is the second year the MHSAA split it back up: in 2011 they had to because a tornado took the roof off the Metra the summer before.

Count Glacier coach Ross Dankers among those pleased to have this year's AA here in Kalispell. "It's just felt a lot different this week, compared to any other year," Dankers said. "Not prepping for a Wednesday leave time.. It seems like the guys are extremely focused and feeling fresh and feeling good. "I also think it helps our young guys that have wrestled in that gym. They won't be wrestling in a new, big space they're not familiar with. I think that's an advantage for the new guys."

Glacier brings in 17 wrestlers, including top-three seeds Teegan Vasquez (defending champion and No. 1 at 120), Josh Melton (No. 3 at 113) and Kael Willis (No. 3 at 182). If things go to plan, Dankers' crew is looking for a middle-tier finish. But it's anyone's guess given this season was limited to conference duals only for AA. "It'll be interesting to see the east and west matching up. We haven't seen each other at all," Dankers said. "Preparation-wise it's tough because we haven't seen those guys, so that's exciting."

At that 1982 state meet Flathead's own Jeff Anderson capped an unbeaten season with a state title. The Brawlers had no champions last year while edging out Senior for second at state. It figures that Ethan Freund (126), Asher Kemppainen (132) Cade Troupe (145), Fin Nadeau (152), Chase Youso (170), and Ryan Nelson (182) have shots. As should Noah Poe-Hatten (160), who handed two-time state champion Hunter Meinzen of Missoula Big Sky a rare loss this season.

"It's so exciting for the fans and for the teams," Thompson said. "It's not like we're sitting here knowing who's going to win the state title. Our kids know it's going to be a war and we just have to concentrate on what we can control and that's the match that's in front of us."



# A BANNER FIRST YEAR OF GIRLS' WRESTLING IN MONTANA AND THE FLATHEAD VALLEY

By KATIE BROWN

Daily Inter Lake | February 17, 2021 10:05 PM



Glacier's McKenna McCarthy and Flathead's Sara Harrison shake hands before their match at 152 lbs. at Flathead High School on Friday. (Casey Kreider/Daily Inter Lake)

Flathead assistant wrestling coach Sully Sullivan has a saying. "When you're here, you're not just a girl. You're a wrestler." The philosophy is that everyone is on equal ground once they step into the wrestling room and get on the mat.

That will never be more true than Friday, the first day of the first-ever state girls' wrestling tournament in Montana, the finale of the sport's historic inaugural season. Something to the tune of 187 wrestlers will converge on Lockwood High School outside Billings for two days, all the while making history as the first girls' champions to be crowned.

A sixth of those wrestlers will be from the Flathead Valley. Between Glacier and Flathead High Schools, that makes approximately 32 athletes heading to Lockwood. It's the culmination of months, and in some cases years, of hard work. When the Montana High School Association announced last year that girls' wrestling would be on the slate for winter sports, things kicked into high gear for both schools.

"Well, it's kind of a massive undertaking," Glacier wrestling coach Ross Dankers said. "Because we knew we wanted to do it the right way. We wanted to put all our full energy into it and make sure we started right from the beginning."

And turnout was good — there were around 20 girls who showed up for the first practice. Some brought a friend. For Flathead assistant Amber Dowling, it was a chance to give these athletes something she didn't have growing up — a program just for them.

"It was pretty exciting to have the opportunity to put it together," Dowling said of the program. "Last year, we saw great success in interest with the girls, as they found out that there was a female coach on staff." Dankers said he and his team started doing research on successful girls' wrestling programs across the country and got his coaching staff up to speed with how he wanted things to look.

Then it was just a matter of teaching the new wrestlers, well, almost everything they needed to know about the sport. But the girls were game. Aside from freshman Brady Boll, no one else had any wrestling experience. Junior Delanie Schultz said it took about a month for her to learn most of the terminology. She's hooked, though. Schultz said she wants to wrestle "as long as I can."

"They have just a great mindset towards it, they just love the sport and they've embraced every part of it," Dankers said. "It's a lot of fun to watch them. They bring a lot of intensity, and they're kind of fearless and the fact that they're not afraid to make mistakes, because they're not protecting an ego."

Flathead's girls are considered contenders for a state title, and with good reason – they're 5-0 in duals this season. The boys' program has won six state titles, including back-to-back wins in 2017 and 2018. They finished second last year and are expected to be among contenders again this year.

"It's taken off like a forest fire," Flathead head wrestling coach Jeff Thompson said. "It's just insane how immediate popularity has happened with this." "Twenty years ago when I started coaching here at Flathead, if you would've told me that we would have a girls' state tournament and the first year would be a lot of 32-girl brackets, I would've said no way." There's something unique about wrestling. It seems to bring people together in different ways than other sports. One thing you'll hear from athletes from either school is the word "family."

The people make it great, said Flathead senior Hannah Greene. "I've never felt more love from the coaches and the girls in any other activity," Greene said. "It feels like I'm supported and appreciated and loved by everybody in that room." That camaraderie translates to competition, too. Flathead sophomore Emma Gambino said she'll get texts from her opponents after matches, something she didn't experience while wrestling boys last year.

"The guys would be embarrassed that they had to wrestle a girl and things like that," she said. "And this year, it's so cool. 'Cause you help each other up and you're like, 'good job'." Parents have also gotten into the hype. Last year, Gambino said her parents weren't so sure about it when she said she wanted to try wrestling. It took one practice.

"I came home and was like, 'I think I love this'," she said. "And my dad, he was so into it. He bought all the clothes and wore his Flathead wrestling shirt everywhere. "I'm actually so grateful that he's so involved with it. I think if he didn't help me out that much, I don't think I would have done it."

It's tough to learn how to wrestle. And Flathead's program might be more rigorous than most. "What people miss is that total body workout. When you're on the mat, you're using every muscle in your body all the time, including your brain," Sullivan said. Some people aren't prepared for that – but Sullivan adds that Flathead hasn't had anyone drop out of the girls program. Four girls out of the 21 were lost to injury, but so far everyone has stuck with it.

"We've set goals for the team and for each girl set individual goals, and encouraged them to set realistic goals for themselves," Sullivan added. There are only a small number of Class AA schools that have girls wrestling teams, so finding matches has been a challenge. Flathead and Glacier have wrestled each other quite a bit, so the state tournament will open up a whole new world for both teams.

The tournament is all-class and wrestlers will compete with upper or lower classes. Things will be run much like the boys' tourney, except there's no limit on how many athletes each team can bring. Scores from the top two wrestlers on each team will count toward the team score. The MHSA added two weight classes in advance of the state tournament.

"It'll be nice for us because we do have that depth where we have a lot of weight classes where we have at minimum two girls in that weight class," Dowling said. Glacier is coming off a two-week quarantine, which threw a wrench into preparation for state. Dankers lamented that the girls probably wouldn't have time to learn a couple of techniques that he wanted to get to because of that, but he's happy they are cleared in time to compete. "We just feel really grateful to be able to get out on the mat and let our girls showcase what they've done," he said. Dowling, along with Sullivan and Thompson will be accompanying the Flathead girls to Lockwood this weekend. It's a huge milestone for the sport of wrestling in Montana.

"I absolutely love getting an opportunity to have that relationship and grow the sport," Dowling said. "It's something that I didn't have at that age and to see them find success and the camaraderie, and to see how these gentlemen have also supported them, it's pretty amazing."



## 'TIME TO GO!': HISTORIC GIRLS WRESTLING STATE TOURNAMENT BEGINS

By [John Letasky](#) | Feb 19, 2021

BILLINGS — The buildup was definitely worth the wait for 148 wrestlers at the inaugural girls wrestling state tournament on Friday at Lockwood High School. At 4:30 a.m., Shepherd wrestler LeeAnn Hoch was ready for the historic day. The junior, who is 10-0 at 103 pounds after two pins and has advanced to the semifinals, couldn't wait for the big moment.

"I woke up really early to my alarm and sat straight up and was ready to wrestle," she said. "I was like 'Time to go!'" Hoch, who competed at the State B-C tourney last year at First Interstate Arena at MetraPark, said she had an immediate goal entering her first match against Gracelyn Hanson of Billings Senior.

"I pinned the Senior girl in 31 seconds the last time I wrestled her," she said. "I told everyone I'd pin her faster. It took me 25 seconds." In the team race, Kalispell Flathead leads the competition with 112 points. Billings Senior is second with 84.



After the top two teams, there is a separation with Cascade in third with 41, Butte in fourth with 34 and Kalispell Glacier in fifth with 32. Billings Skyview is in sixth with 31 points. After the Falcons, Miles City leads a group of 11 teams scoring at least 20 points with 29. "We need to just keep our foot on the gas and keep attacking and win those close battles," said Flathead coach Jeff Thompson. "It's a two-horse race and when we match up with Senior, we have to go to war."

"We are exceeding our expectations but don't want to stop yet. In the morning session, our lightweights got the momentum going for the entire team. We're super excited for tomorrow." Senior coach Mickey Mahlmeister said the Broncs are still in the hunt for the state title.

"We've had a great afternoon," he said. "The morning was a little bit rough. We could have wrestled better in our lighter weight classes. There is plenty of work to do and we'll see how things shake out. We have some ground to make up. We have tomorrow to do it. Flathead wrestled really well in the morning." The semifinals are scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday at Lockwood High and the finals are set for 3:30 p.m.

Skyview sophomore Rustie Torres won her first two matches by pin at 113 pounds and will be in the semifinals. Torres won her first match by pin in 24 seconds and her second in 56 seconds. Her quarterfinal win versus Skye Shelmerdine avenged an earlier-season loss to the Flathead wrestler, Torres' only setback in a 9-1 campaign.

"I wrestled Skye from Flathead and she was my one loss this season and I pinned her in a crossface in 56 seconds," Torres said. "I got my redemption." Torres, who wrestled for East Helena last season, said she just missed out on qualifying for state then, finishing ninth at divisionals.

So, having this opportunity this year is extra special for Torres. "I almost started crying a few times in both my matches," she said. "I have the support of my mom (Brittany) and she is pushing me to do better and supporting me."

Torres will be paired with Chinook senior [Rebecca Stroh](#) in the semifinals.

In the large bracket, Stroh won by fall in three straight matches to advance. Stroh placed sixth at the State B-C tourney as a freshman to become the first girls state placer in the classification.

"Just take one match at a time and not be nervous and just be patient," Stroh said of what she needs to do on Saturday.

Stroh was glad to be a part of the historic tourney. "I got to be the first match of the day and the first match of the all-class girls," she said. "It's nice to see how much it's grown and how much it will grow in the future."

Flathead Brave Brawler Trinity Boivin is also a semifinalist at 120 pounds, winning by fall twice. The sophomore is a first-year wrestler. "In all honesty, when I got here I decided to wrestle and didn't think about placing at all," she said. While individual accomplishments are nice, Boivin explained the wrestling team at Flathead is like a family and she is treasuring her time cheering on her teammates.

"Just to make it out together and make memories as long as we go and to keep positive mindsets," she said. "Sometimes we don't call it a team, we call it a family. It's awesome we're all so close."

Butte 103-pound senior Rylinn Mullaney improved to 10-2 with a quarterfinal pin and will face Hoch in the semifinals.

"It's exciting but it's also nerve-racking," she said. "I just try to keep my body moving and my mind off the match."

Mullaney served as a team manager the last two years and is glad she decided to give the sport a try. "It's definitely really cool," she said of the tourney. "It's a little more nerve-racking for me. I've never been part of such a big competition before and this is my first year wrestling." Harlem sophomore Amilia Blackcrow advanced to the semifinals at 145 pounds with two pins. She is wrestling in honor of her grandmother Nora, who the family called "Grandma Eagle" she said.

"I prayed a lot before I wrestled these two matches," she said. "My grandmother recently passed away." Blackcrow said she was dedicating the wins to her grandmother. She has placed at Montana Open wrestling tourneys at First Interstate Arena at MetraPark in the past, but being a part of the inaugural Montana High School Association state tournament was thrilling for Blackcrow, who was so happy to advance she had a tear in her eyes.

"It is really cool," she said. "I was really nervous at the beginning. I just feel like crying." Senior freshman Kendal Tucker won by fall in 3:36 against Dakota Peterson of East Helena to reach the 152-pound semifinals. After the quarterfinal win, Tucker gave credit to her opponent. "Tiring, hard," Tucker said when describing the match. "I feel like we were pretty equally matched in strength."

Tucker, who improved to 11-2, said the key for her to reach the finals will be to "just work my butt off and give it everything I've got."

Tucker said the Broncos were wrestling "really good" and "just working our butts off and not giving up and pushing." Frenchtown senior Shelby Miotke had pins in 1:51 and 1:02 to reach the semifinal round at 138 pounds. She was very satisfied with her performance and thankful she had decided to try wrestling this year. At first Miotke wasn't going to wrestle, but later decided to.



"I'm pretty excited," she said. "I came two weeks late into the season and decided I wanted to do it a little later than the other girls. I'd never wrestled before. To be here is a good feeling." With hard work, Miotke was able to make up for the lost time. "Putting in the work at practice and make sure I'm always listening to the coaches, and make sure I understand," she said of what was key. "I have some really awesome coaches who are super supportive."



The hard work has been worth it, Miotke said. "It definitely wasn't easy, wrestling isn't an easy sport," she said. "But it's an individual sport and when you win you've done something and feel like you did it." Butte coach Cory Johnston was a two-time state champion at Glasgow and is in his sixth year guiding the Bulldogs. Seven Bulldogs are entered in the tourney. Johnston was appreciative of the significance of the

ourney.

"It's really special," he said. "Like we told our girls yesterday, was before the meet they've already made history. Now they have to go get their prize." Johnston had nine girls wrestlers out this year. Two are injured and couldn't compete this weekend. "What makes us most proud is wrestling is a tough sport to jump into," he said. "I'm proud from day one they bought into what we were saying to them and wanted to learn. To get here from Dec. 7 is a huge accomplishment and they can't wait until next year."

Kalispell Glacier coach Ross Dankers said it was "awesome" to be part of the event. Glacier has 15 girls entered. "It's awesome for the girls to have an event that is completely theirs," he said. "This is a really good setting for it. It's big enough to hold everything, but not too big." Glacier is one of the larger teams at the event. Dankers said his team has worked extremely hard this season and he was happy for them to have the opportunity to compete in the historic event.

"We are super proud of them for all the work they put in," he said. "They are all brand new to the sport. We told them we are proud of them and to give their best effort and that's all we can expect."



## STATE GIRLS WRESTLING: KALISPELL FLATHEAD OPENS EARLY TEAM LEAD

By: [Scott Breen](#)

*Posted at 1:20 PM, Feb 19, 2021*

*and last updated 8:20 PM, Feb 19, 2021*

LOCKWOOD -- Kalispell Flathead had nearly doubled the point total of second-place Billings Senior after the early rounds at Montana's first-ever all-class girls wrestling state tournament on Friday at Lockwood.

The Bravettes put up 70 points to Senior's 36 during Friday's first session, and they upped their point total to 112 in the second session. Senior is still second with 84 points, followed by Cascade with 41, Butte with 34 and Kalispell Glacier with 32 to round out the top five.

Please click [here](#) for results from this weekend's tournament. Fans can also livestream the event online [here](#).

Wrestlers in the 103-, 113-, 120- and 126-pound weight classes took the mats in the early session.

Chinook senior Rebecca Stroh is favored to win the 113-pound bracket. She opened the tournament with three straight pins advancing to Saturday's semifinals against Billings Skyview's Ruste Torres.

Great Falls freshman Kaylin Taylor continued her unbeaten streak against girls this season. She earned a bye in the opening round at 103 pounds, then pinned Justa Curtiss of Missoula Big Sky in 3:57 of their quarterfinal match.

Wrestlers were given a 15-minute break after the quarterfinal round while staff at Lockwood High School sanitized mats and bleachers. There was also a break of approximately 90 minutes after early weight classes were completed as fans and wrestlers were asked to exit the gym for additional cleaning.

The action picked up after the break with the 132-, 138-, 145-, 152-, 170- and 205-pound brackets. The 285-pound bracket, which includes only three wrestlers, won't kick off until Saturday.

Chinook's Ryley Hofeldt notched a big win in the 132-pound bracket, pinning top-ranked Lily Conover of Flathead in the quarterfinal round. Hofeldt will face Valier's Skylar Connelly in Saturday's semifinal round.

Skyview's Kassidee Savaria kept her unbeaten record intact, advancing to the semifinals in the 205-pound bracket. She opened with a bye and then pinned Jenavieve Lynch of Bozeman High in the quarterfinals.

Weigh-ins for Saturday's action begin at 7 a.m. The semifinals are scheduled for 9 a.m., and action will continue throughout the day until the championship matches begin at 3:30 p.m.

# FLATHEAD GIRLS CROWNED STATE CHAMPIONS

By Daily Inter Lake

| February 20, 2021 10:54 PM



Flathead girls pose for pictures with the MHSAA girls wrestling team state championship trophy after the finals of the MHSAA Girl's Wrestling State Tournament at Lockwood High School in Lockwood on Saturday. (Mike Clark/Billings Gazette)

LOCKWOOD — Flathead cemented its place in history by winning the team title at the first-ever state girls' wrestling tournament with 142 points, edging out Billings Senior by eight points Saturday. When the team found out they won, the girls wrapped their arms around each other and jumped up and down. "It was a very special moment, something all of us coaches and these girls will remember the rest of our lives," Flathead head wrestling coach Jeff Thompson said.

Glacier, with 42 points, finished 15th. Out of 11 wrestlers competing Saturday in wrestle backs and semifinals, six earned state placings and racked up the points for the team win. "It was a team effort," Flathead assistant Amber Dowling said. "We didn't have two or three that stood out, every girl on the team helped win the title."

Aleeyah Derlatka was the Bravettes's top finisher, placing second after Gallatin's Lily Schultz pinned her in the 145-pound final. "She was wrestling a very tough girl who had extensive experience," Flathead assistant Sully Sullivan said. "But she gave her a run for her money." Alyssa Poe-Hatten (103) placed third. She pinned Kiera Davis of Corvallis in the consolation semifinals and Rylinn Mullaney of Butte in the third place match. At 113, Hania Halverson ended up fourth after a semifinal loss and then had two pins in the consolation bracket, before Plains/Hot Springs' Taylor pinned her in the third-place match.

Trinity Bolvin surprised Flathead's coaches by making it to the 120 pound semis and ultimately taking sixth place. "She wrestled and never quit," Sullivan said. "She won a couple matches that were upsets, quite frankly."

As did Boston Howell, who made it to the 170 semis and finished sixth, and Lucille Libby (205), who also made it to semifinals and placed sixth. "It was a rollercoaster ride the entire tournament," Thompson said. "Didn't know exactly what we were getting into ... That's what made it exciting. Just to be part of history, we truly embraced this."

McKenna McCarthy was Glacier's only state placer, earning a 5th place medal at 145 lbs. "McKenna did both basketball and wrestling this year which I think is an incredible feat, and to come out of it with the 5th place medal is pretty awesome," Glacier head wrestling coach Ross Dankers said. "She has had a lot of adversity in this past year, so I couldn't ask for it to go to a better girl."

Dowling complimented the tournament organizers, calling the weekend "seamless." Events started early and finished on time both days, according to Dowling. "It went off absolutely perfectly," she said. "We had a game plan and were able to stick with it because of [the tournament running smoothly]."

"It was an awful good time," Sullivan added. "Girls wrestling in Montana has a very bright future from what I've seen this year."

**MHSA All-Class State Girls' Wrestling**  
**Friday-Saturday**  
**At Lockwood High School**  
**Saturday's Results**

**103**

Consolation Semi

Alyssa Poe-Hatten (Flathead) 9-2, pinned Kiera Davis (Corvallis) 15-12, 2:01.

3rd Place Match

Poe-Hatten (Flathead) 9-2, pinned Rylinn Mullaney (Butte) 11-4, 1:44.

Consolation Round 3

Kiera Davis (Corvallis) 15-12, pinned Anna Morrison (Flathead) 6-3, 1:35.

**113**

Semifinal

Jazmin Gorder (Poplar) 16-3, pinned Hania Halverson (Flathead) 10-3, 0:49.

Consolation Semi

Halverson (Flathead) 10-3, pinned Mayse Fox (Miles City) 9-9, 0:34.

3rd Place Match

Taylor Angle (Plains/Hot Springs) 11-5, pinned Halverson (Flathead) 10-3, 2:29.

Consolation Round 5

Mayse Fox (Miles City) 9-9, pinned Skye Shelmerdine (Flathead) 8-2, 2:06.

**120**

Semifinal

Hannah Hurst (Hamilton) 17-9, pinned Trinity Bolvin (Flathead) 5-5, 0:33.

Consolation Semi

Bella Hernandez (Lockwood) 12-4, pinned Bolvin (Flathead) 5-5, 0:40.

5th Place Match

Keela Kary (Sidney/Fairview) 17-15, pinned Bolvin (Flathead) 5-5, 2:32.

**126**

Consolation Round 5

Evija Cagle (Billings Skyview) 9-5, pinned Bella Arriaga (Flathead) 11-3, 2:10.

### **132**

#### **Consolation Round 3**

Ryleigh Warner (Anaconda) 4-7, pinned Emma Gambino (Flathead) 8-3, 2:03.

Paige Gershmel (Billings Senior High School) 13-3, pinned Lily Conover (Flathead) 9-3, 2:11.

### **145**

#### **Semifinal**

Aleeyah Derlatka (Flathead) 10-2, pinned Amilia Blackcrow (Harlem) 5-3, 1:34.

#### **1st Place Match**

Lily Schultz (Gallatin HS) 8-0, pinned Derlatka (Flathead) 10-2, 1:20.

### **170**

#### **Semifinal**

Hayla Hoffman (Butte) 11-2, pinned Boston Howell (Flathead) 4-3, 7:24.

#### **Consolation Semi**

Juna Ashby (Frenchtown) 8-3, pinned Howell (Flathead) 4-3, 1:35.

#### **5th Place Match**

Chi Gushi (Belgrade) 5-5, pinned Howell (Flathead) 4-3, 0:55.

### **205**

#### **Semifinal**

Kassidee Savaria (Billings Skyview) 11-0, pinned Lucille Libby (Flathead) 6-5, 1:51.

#### **Consolation Semi**

Aaliyah Stiffarm (Havre) 6-4, pinned Libby (Flathead) 6-5, 1:44.

#### **5th Place Match**

Jenavieve Lynch (Bozeman) 4-3, dec. Lucille Libby (Flathead) 6-5, 13-9.

### **State placers**

#### **Flathead**

Poe-Hatten 3rd place (103)

Halverson 4th place (113)

Bolvin 6th place (120)

Derlatka 2nd place (145)

Howell 6th place (170)

Libby 6th place (205)

### **Team scores**

1. Flathead 142;
2. Billings Senior 135;
3. Cascade 68;
4. Butte 61;
5. Billings Skyview 60;
6. Belgrade 54 (tied);
6. Gallatin HS 54 (tied);
8. Frenchtown 48 (tied);
8. Plains/Hot Springs 48 (tied);
8. Sidney/Fairview 48 (tied);
11. Baker 47;
12. Miles City 46;
13. Chinook 44;
14. Whitehall 43;
15. Glacier 42.



## 'WE HAVE TOUGH GIRLS IN MONTANA': KALISPELL FLATHEAD GIRLS CAPTURE ALL-CLASS STATE WRESTLING TITLE

BILLINGS SENIOR FINISHES 2ND, CLASS C CASCADE 3RD

By: [Alec Bofinger](#)

Posted at 9:33 PM, Feb 20, 2021

and last updated 9:40 PM, Feb 20, 2021

Kalispell Flathead held off Billings Senior to win the inaugural all-class girls wrestling state title on Saturday in Lockwood.

The Bravettes didn't win a championship match on Saturday, as their only top-two finish came from Aleeyah Derlatka, who lost by pinfall to Bozeman Gallatin's Lily Schultz.



Flathead had depth this weekend, though, as that propelled them to 142 points, seven more than the second-place Broncs.

"I just love the energy of girls and being part of history," Flathead head coach Jeff Thompson said. "To be part of a such an incredible program this first year, this is up there with all the other achievements that we've seen with Flathead wrestling." Flathead had a a third-place finish by Alyssa Poe-Hatten at 103 pounds, a fourth-place finish at 113 pounds by Hania Halverson and sixth-place finishes at 120 pounds (Trinity Bolvin), 170 pounds (Boston Howell) and 205 pounds (Lucille Libby).

The Bravettes had seven female wrestlers grappling with the boys last season but saw that number triple to 21 female wrestlers this year. "It was a roller-coaster ride for us as a team this weekend. You really don't know what to expect," Thompson said. "I don't think anybody would have expected to see the numbers, the quality of wrestling, the support, the energy in one year. It's time. ... Girls wrestling is made for Montana. We have tough girls in Montana. I think we're going to see a lot of our girls on that national stage a lot more because of this opportunity. This door has been opened wide and the girls are just going to flow through it."

Runner-up Billings Senior had one champion on Saturday afternoon. Kendal Tucker pinned Plains-Hot Springs' Lillian MacDonald 1:07 into the match to win a title at 152 pounds. The Broncs had a pair of third-place finishers, as well, in Paige Gershmel at 132 and Gracy Jones at 145.

Cascade's Lily Grismer finished second to Sidney's Amaiya Kirn at 126 pounds, falling to the freshman by 5-3 decision. The Class C Badgers got a fourth-place finish from Lindsey Faldzinski at 152 pounds and a fourth-place finish by Skye Smith at 205 pounds to finish with 68 points, seven clear of fourth-place Butte.

## TIME FOR A CELEBRATION!: INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM CHAMPIONS CROWNED AT INAUGURAL GIRLS WRESTLING STATE TOURNAMENT

[John Letasky](#) | Feb 20, 2021 Updated Feb 28, 2021

BILLINGS — It was time for a celebration!

For the 11 individual state champions, and all 148 girls who competed in the inaugural state girls wrestling tournament, there was reason to mark the historic occasion. Mariah Wahl said she was “looking forward to those dinner rolls” during a celebratory meal after clinching the 138-pound girls state wrestling championship Saturday at Lockwood High School.

Wahl won the championship with a pin of Bozeman Gallatin’s Maria Matosich in 56 seconds. The Cut Bank junior also won the tourney’s Quick-Pin award with four falls in 1:39. “It’s exciting, it’s really exciting,” she said. “I’m glad I could be a part of it.” While girls wrestling is in its first season as a sanctioned sport by the Montana High School Association, Wahl has been wrestling for four seasons.

And at the end of the event, Wahl said she was going to treat herself to a nice meal and forget about staying in wrestling shape, just for a little bit, as “it’s the offseason now.” However, the celebration won’t drag out for Wahl as she does have the goal of “improving myself as an athlete,” for next year.



Overall, there were 11 state champions crowned: Kaylin Taylor, Great Falls, 103; Jazmin Gorder, Poplar, 113; Jessica Gubler, Livingston-Big Timber, 120; Amaiya Kim, Sidney, 126; Skylar Connelly, Valier, 132; Wahl, Cut Bank, 138; Lily Schultz, Bozeman Gallatin, 145; Kendal Tucker, Billings Senior, 152; Sophia Dulin, Baker, 170; Kassidee Savaria, Billings Skyview, 205; O'Maste Foster, Florence-Carlton, 285.

The team champion was Kalispell Flathead with 142 points. Senior was second with 135 and Cascade third with 68.

“I feel fortunate to be surrounded by great coaches and girls who wanted to put the time in and came to battle,” said Flathead coach Jeff Thompson. “We won it as a team. We didn’t have any individual state champions and every point counted. Flathead is a team-first wrestling program.”

Flathead volunteer co-head girls coach Amber Downing was thrilled for the Brave Brawlers. "This is surreal and has been an amazing journey with these young ladies and what they accomplished as a team," she said. "They left everything out there on the mat and trained hard." Senior coach Mickey Mahlmeister will forever be proud of this first-year Broncs team and what they accomplished.

"I really thought about this last night and I'm so proud of these girls," he said. "None of them wrestled prior to this year, and they all wrestled hard and stuck it out. ... They are pretty special." Every one of the initial state champions are now part of the Montana wrestling history lore. Capturing the title at 103 pounds, was Taylor a freshman for the Bison. She won by fall over LeeAnn Hoch of Shepherd in 3:29.

"I was nervous at first, but also really excited," Taylor said. "I didn't know how I'd do, honestly, I'd never wrestled her before." Taylor has goals for next season as well, saying, "I can't wait to get better and do this again next year." Gorder, a junior who has been wrestling for four years, won by fall in 3:08 over Rebecca Stroh of Chinook in the 113-pound title tilt.

Gorder said she joins her father, Chris, in the individual state champion's club. She was happy to be bringing a title home to Poplar, saying, "it's good to bring this back for everyone." The two-day state championship weekend will be something Gorder always remembers. "It honestly feels amazing to have been here and experienced it with my friends," she said. "It feels good to be in the No. 1 spot. It takes so much work to get there. I wouldn't have changed it for a thing."

Gubler, a sophomore, was all smiles after winning the 120-pound crown with a pin in 30 seconds over Hannah Hurst of Hamilton. "The fact we even had a girls state was amazing," she said. "It was a great opportunity for all the girls to come together and see who is the best of the best." A fishing trip to the Yellowstone River is how Gubler plans to celebrate her championship.

"We're probably going to dinner," she said. "My coach said he was taking me fishing if I won." What was the most memorable part of the tourney for Gubler? "Winning of course," she said with a smile. At 126 pounds, Kirn joins a large group of boys who have captured state championships for the Sidney Eagles.

The freshman said improvement over the season was key to her victory. She scored a 5-3 decision over Lily Grismer of Cascade for the championship. "It feels very exciting," she said. "I got better on my legs and shots and defending."

Originally from Havre, Kirn has been wrestling for nine years and said she wanted to thank her mom and dad for all their support. Connelly claimed a victory with a pin in 2:13 over Joli Beston of Wolf Point for the 132-pound bracket.

While originally the girls state tourney was to be held at First Interstate Arena at MetraPark along with the boys tournaments, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic changed those plans. The boys tourneys will now be held at three different sites March 5-6.

"It's been really fun," the senior from Valier said. "I was hoping for the Metra, but this works and is a nice facility. Everything was in a good order. I loved it." Connelly said she overcame two ACL surgeries in the past year-and-a-half. "It was really hard," she said of the last surgical procedure. "I had my knee surgery before the state got shut down. I did my physical therapy by myself."

While dinner was planned at a Billings restaurant, where Connelly planned to "eat a lot," she said she would soon start to focus and "prepare for my offseason tournaments." Schultz, a junior for the Raptors, won the first individual state championship in school history when she defeated Aleeyah Derlatka of Flathead by fall in 1:20 at 145. "It feels amazing," said Schultz. "I'm excited to create history for the school and help create a culture for everybody."

Schultz said earning the school's first state title at the first girls state wrestling tourney was a goal of hers. "I wanted it bad enough," she said. "It felt amazing. The tournament was really good for the girls. It felt good to have our own state tournament. It's amazing how far we've come." In a 9-0 season, Schultz said dedication was a critical piece of the puzzle. "I just work hard and show up every day. Consistency is key," she said.

Tucker, a freshman for Senior, won by pin in 1:07 against Lillian MacDonald of Plains-Hot Springs in the 152-pound championship. “Staying calm, working as hard as I can and being smart,” were what led her to victory Tucker said. Tucker said her bracket — all of the champions were awarded large poster brackets detailing the action in their division — will be placed on a wall at her house and her medal will go “somewhere where my cat can’t grab at it.”

The Broncs second-place finish is something she’ll always remember. “Awesome, I’m really proud,” Tucker said when describing what she felt about the team’s accomplishments. “We all worked really hard as a team. It’s amazing.” Dulin scored an 11-10 decision over Butte’s Hayla Hoffman to earn the 170-pound championship.

“I knew she was a difficult competitor,” said Dulin, a senior for Baker. “We work hard every day, so I knew I could beat her.” Dulin said it was her first year of wrestling and she “loves it.” She’d recommend others to try the sport. “You work your butt off and practice every day and go 110%,” Dulin said. “Anyone can do it. I hope a lot more girls come out and compete. Wrestling is a good sport and teaches you a lot.”

Savaria finished a 13-0 campaign with all 13 wins coming by pin when she stapled Norah Larson of Belgrade in 32 seconds for the 205-pound title. “It feels really good. I feel like I made my dream come true for the year and I’m right back at it again next year,” she said. All three of Savaria’s wins at state were by pin, with times of 3:03, 1:51 and 0:32.

“It feels really good,” she said. “Like I’m dominating. That’s really cool.” Foster defeated Kali Hood of Columbus-Absarokee-Park City 5-3 for the 285-pound title. The win was especially satisfying to Foster, who said she didn’t wrestle at the beginning of the season as there wasn’t originally a heavyweight class offered and because her parents hadn’t received their COVID-19 vaccinations at that point.

“It’s like a dream come true,” Foster said while wiping back tears of joy. “I never thought I’d stand on this mat with all these girls here.” Foster said she began wrestling in the fourth grade and to win the match was a dream come true. Foster said her family and all her teammates and supporters were extremely helpful to her achieving the title. “This is seriously unreal,” said Foster. “I’m so proud of all the girls who came out here today and wrestled.”



## JOHN LETASKY: STATE TOURNAMENT CONCLUDES EXCITING FIRST YEAR OF GIRLS WRESTLING

[John Letasky](#) | Feb 21, 2021 Updated Feb 23, 2021

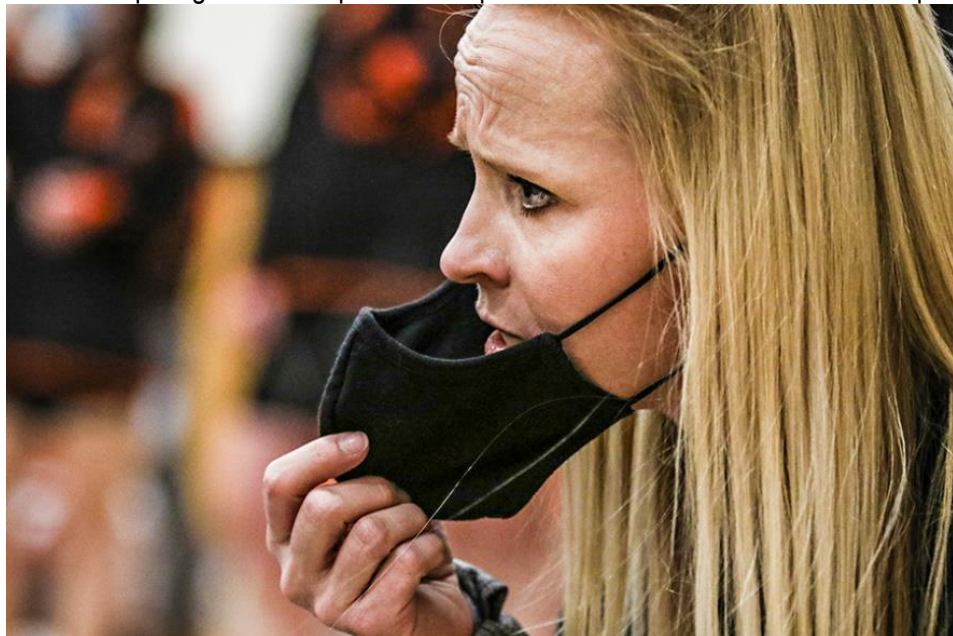
BILLINGS — These girls wanted to wrestle. The drive for success was evident all season. Starting with the first practices of the year and ending with the state tournament in this inaugural season of girls wrestling in the Treasure State, the dedication, enthusiasm, talent and skill of the athletes was on display.

It was a year that will long be remembered by Montana sports enthusiasts. Some of the girls were wrestling rookies, drawn to the chance to compete and bond through the addition of a new sport to the lineup. Others had wrestled at the high school level previously, as girls who wrestled in grades 9 through 12 before this season competed against the boys and girls in the regular and postseason. And, there were some who were either current club level wrestlers, or who had competed in the sport at the youth level in the past.

On Friday and Saturday at Lockwood High School 148 girls wrestlers from 47 different teams, including classes AA, A and B-C, competed in the first girls wrestling state championships sanctioned by the Montana High School Association.

Entering the state meet, tournament director Brian Michelotti of the MHSA had said “we expect to see some great wrestling.” Billings Skyview coach Ben Sulser, agreed, saying, “It will be really exciting to watch. The girls events I’ve been to have been really competitive as a whole. I think it will live up to the billing.”

Those competing did indeed put on an impressive show — both for the limited spectators in the gym due to the ongoing



coronavirus pandemic, to those watching at home on the NFHS Network — throughout the two days. In the championship round Saturday, Great Falls freshman Kaylin Taylor won the 103-pound weight class to become the very first Montana girls wrestling individual champion.

“It feels really good,” Taylor said of becoming the first girls state champion in Montana history, noting she was ready to put in more hard work to prepare for future matches. Taylor was one of three freshmen champions, with Amaiya Kirn (126) of Sidney and

Kendal Tucker (152) of Billings Senior.

Tucker, who used the words “cool” and “awesome” to describe the action over the two days, claimed the championship at 152 pounds. Tucker was a wrestling rookie when she had started the season. She earlier had told The Billings Gazette and 406mtsports.com, she had thought about playing basketball but decided that “I just wanted to try something new and I like wrestling more than basketball.”

Tucker’s mom had also been encouraging her for quite some time to try wrestling. It turns out, Tucker, who finished the season 13-2, was pretty good at the sport and with the “hard work” she put in during the season made the right choice between basketball and wrestling. Like all wrestling tournaments, there were also good luck charms.

Livingston-Big Timber sophomore Jessica Gubler claimed the 120-pound bracket and said she sported the singlet former Livingston state champion wrestler Shane Gibson, now competing at Minnesota State University-Mankato, wore while wrestling for the school.

For some, the inaugural girls state wrestling tournament will be the only one they compete in. That's true for senior state titlists Skylar Connelly (132) of Valier, Sophia Dulin (170) of Baker and O'Maste Foster (285) of Florence-Carlton.

It's also true of Chinook trail blazer Rebecca Stroh. Poplar junior Jazmin Gorder bested Stroh for the 113-pound state title. Stroh, a senior, qualified for state the three years prior and in 2018 she became the first female state placer in Class B-C history, finishing sixth at 103 pounds. Stroh had thought about wrestling beyond this year, but "I couldn't find a college with the degree program I wanted" that also offered wrestling.

Instead, she's focused on attending Miles Community College, where she'll rodeo and study natural resource and range management. While Stroh will be studying at college and competing in team roping and breakaway roping, many of those competing at Lockwood over the weekend will continue to study wrestling moves and matches in preparation for more action next year.

Billings Skyview sophomore Kassidee Savaria finished an outstanding season of 13-0 by winning the 205 pound championship. All of Savaria's wins were by pin. An honors student with a weighted 4.17 cumulative GPA, Savaria said wrestling "is her main hobby." Sulser said like many good wrestlers, Savaria can be found studying matches on the internet.

"She's consumed with women's wrestling," he said. "She breathes wrestling. She's all about wrestling." The Kalispell Flathead Brave Brawlers were the team champions with 142 points, while Billings Senior was second with 135 and Cascade third with 68. Flathead sophomore Trinity Boivin was a semifinalist at 120 pounds, winning by fall twice, to reach the round. The first-year wrestler explained that the Braves were also students of the game.

"Just eat, sleep and talk to the team about how we can improve," Boivin, who would place sixth, said Friday of what she would be doing leading up to the semifinals on Saturday. Longtime Flathead coach Jeff Thompson has led the Braves to six State AA championships and wrestled to three State AA individual championships at Great Falls.

He was thrilled to be coaching at the historic tournament, and for the Brave Brawlers to win the initial girls championship was the cherry on top on the cake. "Being the old-timer this is right at the top of the list," he said. "Overall I don't think there was a secret sauce to winning. It boils down to we had so much support from the administration, the coaches and our boys embraced our girls. We learned a lot on the go."

At times this year it could be hard to have girls-only matches with some schools having several girls wrestlers, and others not having many, along with altered schedules because of the virus. "We had to get creative with the girls to get matches," explained Flathead volunteer co-head girls coach Amber Downing. To the end, the girls wrestled through it all.

"Every day we have showed up to practice with the goal to get better," said Senior coach Mickey Mahlmeister before the state tourney. "We hope our best day is this weekend." For many of the girls wrestlers, the realization of a dream occurred at Lockwood over the weekend with the state wrestling tournament. After winning the 138-pound title, Cut Bank junior Mariah Wahl said she enjoyed the electricity of the weekend, saying, "just the atmosphere in general is insane."

What was insane was the talent Wahl displayed in earning the Quick-Pin award with four falls in 1:39. While all the wrestlers were helping to shape the growth of the sport, Lily Schultz won the first individual state championship in Bozeman Gallatin school history. With the bracket at 145, the junior can now chase a second state crown next season and establish more history for the Raptors.

Schultz noted "consistency is key" and with her 9-0 record it's hard to believe she won't be a consistent winner again next season. Undoubtedly next year the growth of the sport will continue. "Absolutely," said Boivin when asked if she would wrestle again next year. "I would never go back. I wouldn't do anything else." You can bet for many of the girls wrestlers, if the offseason training hasn't started yet it will in the near future.

# Flathead's First

THE INAUGURAL GIRLS WRESTLING STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS WERE AN 'ELECTRIFYING' CELEBRATION OF A NEWLY SANCTIONED SPORT THAT ENDED WITH THE BRAVE BRAWLERS CELEBRATING A TITLE

BY ANDY VIANO FEBRUARY 23, 2021



Banners for every sport hang from the rafters of the Flathead High School gymnasium, ticking off all the state championships the school has ever won, some of them going back more than 100 years.

There are dozens of years up there, but only one team ever gets to be first, situated at the top with the rest of the

champions beneath it. It's an opportunity that has long passed for most students, already seized by an earlier generation.

This year, however, that opportunity was staring Flathead's burgeoning girls wrestling program directly in the face, and with an added bonus. The Brave Brawlers could be more than just the first group at Flathead to stamp their year on that banner; they could be [the first school in Montana to call themselves state champs](#).

And it was an opportunity they wouldn't let slip away. Flathead held off Billings Senior and won the inaugural girls wrestling state championship at Lockwood High School on Feb. 20, bringing home the first trophy in the sport's history and setting the standard for generations of girls wrestlers to come.

"Only they get to say that they were part of the first state championship team in Montana," Flathead coach Amber Downing said. Flathead finished with 142 points, just seven clear of runner-up Billings Senior in what ended up being a tightly contested two-team race. Cascade (68) was third at the all-class event, which included grapplers from 47 teams around the state. Glacier (42) was 15th, led by fifth-place finisher McKenna McCarthy at 145 pounds.

The Brave Brawlers claimed the title despite not having a single state champion and advancing just one wrestler to a championship match. That was senior Aleeya Derlatka, who won twice at 145 pounds before falling to Gallatin's Lily Schultz in the final. Derlatka, one of a handful of Flathead





wrestlers who previously wrestled with the boys team, said any sting from coming up just short of an individual title was more than tempered by the team's triumph.

"It was always just for the team," Derlatka said. "That's for everyone. We all can celebrate that. The championship (match) was, honestly, just for me."

Derlatka also celebrated the significance of even having a tournament just for girls, something that was not lost on any of the participants. Last year, on a team of primarily boys who had been wrestling for years, Derlatka said she never considered she could wrestle at a state tournament. Now that she has, she appreciated the chance to play a role in a barrier-breaking bit of history.

"Wrestling's never been viewed as a women's sport, really, so the fact that it has finally become its own sport gives us recognition as women," she said. "Winning the first state title is really nice. It feels good." Downing, too, said being part of the first state tournament for girls wrestling was special, a feeling enhanced by the "electrifying" atmosphere inside Lockwood's brand new gymnasium.

"You would have thought that you were at a much higher level of event. The energy was something quite exceptional," Downing said. "The enthusiasm that all of these teams had for the girls was unique and through the roof ... Everyone was there to make history." Thirteen Flathead wrestlers scored points en route to the team's win, including six state placers (top six). Alyssa Poe-Hatten was third at 103 pounds, Hania Halverson was fourth at 113, and Boston Howell (170) and Lucille Libby (205) both finished sixth.

But the most surprising and significant result came from Trinity Boivin at 120 pounds, who came from way behind to stun Billings Senior's Isabelle Dillon in her first match of the tournament. Downing said Boivin trailed by double-digits in points before pinning Dillon at 3:00, a result that, had it gone the other way, would likely have given the Broncs the title. Boivin won her next match, too, beating her teammate Hannah Greene to secure a sixth-place finish.

Greene is herself a fitting portrait of the way girls wrestling exploded in popularity at Flathead this year, where more than 20 wrestlers made up the squad, most of whom had never participated in the sport before. Greene was a cheerleader at a wrestling match earlier this year when she saw the girls team for the first time and asked to join. She did in mid-January, wrestled twice in the regular season, and won her first bout at state before an arm injury in her third match ended her season.

A senior, Greene was drawn to the team after she saw the way they supported each other during the match she watched, and she said she felt that support personally as soon as she showed up for her first practice, even if the learning process was "excruciatingly slow."

"I was not expecting to be welcomed as quickly as I was," Greene said.

"They didn't care that I was learning slow. I kept apologizing, but all of the girls on the wrestling team, even the boys, everybody was super supportive."



Greene didn't have a chance to score for Flathead because of her injury, but she was able to contribute something else in a rather unexpected way. During the second day, a tournament organizer left scrambling at the last minute for a

national anthem singer asked the Brave Brawlers for ideas. They recommended Greene, who has sung the anthem at a handful of Flathead sporting events, and she accepted, after a little prodding from her teammates.

“They told me, ‘Hannah, you’re singing,’” she recalled. “I was so happy that I could do something else for the team.”

The moment Greene will remember even more fondly, of course, was what happened at the end of that day. Downing said the girls stayed up until after midnight reminiscing about the season and celebrating their victory, while also trying to appreciate the significance of the win. Greene, for her part, tried her best to sum up the moment as she and her teammates tabulated points in the stands with the final result coming into focus.

“I told the girls, ‘We’re the first ever girls wrestling team that has won state,’” she said. “We have these banners in the gym and there’s all of the years that those activities have won state and I told them, ‘Guys, we’re the first year on that banner.’”

## POE-HATTEN SCORES BIG WIN, BRAWLERS UNBEATEN

By The Daily Inter Lake  
| February 22, 2021 10:30 PM

MISSOULA -- Five Flathead wrestlers won two on-mat matches Monday and the Brave Brawlers ended their dual season 14-0 with wins at Missoula Big Sky and Missoula Sentinel.

Fin Nadeau, Noah Poe-Hatten, Ethan Freund, Asher Kemppainen and Logan Lang all had two wins, while Brawlers picked up five forfeits in a 70-0 win at Big Sky.

Highlighting that dual was 160-pound sophomore Noah Poe-Hatten's 5-4 decision over the Eagles' Hunter Meinzen, a two-time state champion who has signed with Oregon State.

"Noah just gutted it out, really pushed the pace and ended up getting a real nice win over... probably one of the top wrestlers in the Northwestern United States," Flathead coach Jeff Thompson said. Poe-Hatten avenged an early-season loss to Meinzen.

Another highlight was Asher Kemppainen's 4-2 decision over Big Sky's Izzy Moreno, in a battle of unbeaten at 132. Kemppainen and Moreno were ranked 3-4 in their class.

Lang took just 24 seconds to pin two opponents at heavyweight.

The Western AA seeding meeting is Thursday. The State AA meet will be March 3-6 at Flathead.

Flathead def. Missoula Big Sky 70-0.

103: Davin Naldret, Flathead, won by forfeit. 113: Aden Kleinhenz, Flathead, won by forfeit. 120: Cade Gardner, Flathead, won by forfeit. 126: Ethan Freund, Flathead, major dec. Isaac Ayers, 10-1. 132: Asher Kemppainen, Flathead, dec. Izzy Moreno, 4-2. 138: Anders Thompson, Flathead, pinned Daniel Peterson, :49. 145: Gabe Lake, Flathead, pinned Aiden Macceau, :49. 152: Fin Nadeau, Flathead, pinned Shaun Billingsley, 1:09. 160: Noah Poe-Hatten, Flathead, dec. Hunter Meinzen, 5-4. 170: Chase Youso, Flathead, pinned Cole Sandberg, 3:49. 182: Xander Winter, Flathead, won by forfeit. 205: Gaige Winter, Flathead, won by forfeit. 285: Logan Lang, Flathead, pinned Sam Caras, :10.

Flathead def. Missoula Sentinel 53-12

103: William Barnes, Flathead, pinned Bryton Lenz, 1:44. 113: Keagan Crosby, Sentinel, pinned Kleinhenz, 3:09. 120: Gardner, Flathead, pinned Sam Hurteau, :17. 126: Freund, Flathead, dec. Bryson Danzinger, 7-2. 132: Kemppainen, Flathead, dec. Novik Thomas, 13-7. 138: Thompson, Flathead, pinned Jackson Bakken, :44. 145: Cade Troupe, Flathead, pinned Jesse Horner, 5:24. 152: Nadeau, Flathead, dec. Blake Jolma, 11-5. 160: Sawyer Troupe, Flathead, pinned Trevor Tucker, 1:29. 171: Mason Doran, Flathead, pinned Juelz Beck, :49. 182: Youso, Flathead, tech. Fall Kristopher Musick, 15-0. 205: Zac Crews, Sentinel, pinned Winter, 2:36. 285: Lang, Flathead, pinned Xander Sarbacher, :14.

## FLATHEAD, GLACIER FILL UP STATE AA BRACKET WITH 40 WRESTLERS

by [The Daily Inter Lake](#)

| February 26, 2021 10:45 PM

Flathead has six No. 1 seeds, Glacier has one, and both Kalispell wrestling teams loaded up at Thursday's seeding meeting ahead of next week's State AA championships at Flathead High School.

Flathead, ranked No. 3 in the latest Class AA power poll, is bringing 23 wrestlers to the party, which begins next Friday. The list includes unbeaten wrestlers Ethan Freund (126 pounds), Cole Eastwood (126), Cade Troupe (145), Fin Nadeau (152), Chase Youso (170), Mason Doran (170) and Ryan Nelson (182).

Only Doran, who is seeded seventh, and Eastwood, fifth, are not No. 1 seeds out of the Western AA. Asher Kempainen, who is 8-1 at 132, is also a top seed.

Nadeau, a junior, was second at 145 pounds last year; Nelson, a senior who transferred to Flathead over the summer, was second at 170 pounds for Class 1A in Washington.

Kempainen and Poe-Hatten were third at State AA a year ago, and Cade Troupe (fourth) and Chase Youso (fifth) also placed at state in 2020.

"We put ourselves in a good spot," Flathead coach Jeff Thompson said. "The kids are ready, man. They're so excited to have the meet here at Flathead High School. We're tapering right now, in hopes we have fresh minds and fresh legs for next week." Thompson noted he'd much prefer a seeding tournament, which was shelved this year due to COVID-19 concerns. He hopes this was the last seeding meeting he attends.

"There's a couple JV guys that didn't match up with anybody," Thompson said. "We would have loved to have them at the tournament, and have them win a match or two. It's a lot easier to let them wrestle it out, for sure.

"I don't know if I could do this every year. They had a few tears and so did I, yesterday." Flathead brings just three seniors to state, along with eight freshmen and five sophomores. Glacier is similarly young, and of course led by 120-pounder Teegan Vasquez, who has a 14-0 record in this duals-only season. Vasquez lost once all of last year on the way to the 113-pound state title.

He is one of seven sophomores on the Wolfpack, along with four freshmen. "We come into the state tournament with a really young crew of guys, with only five of the 17 being juniors or seniors," Glacier coach Ross Dankers said. "So we are going to have to rely heavily on our guys that do have experience to set the tone mindset-wise. "I think overall we will need some points from our guys that are not seeded to place and get to the placing rounds for the guys that are seeded in the top 3 for us to get above that middle of the pack region."

Josh Melton is seeded second and Connor Johnson fourth at 113; Gararrett Bosch is fourth at 103, as is fellow freshman T.J. Gannon at 160. Senior Kael Willis seeded third out of the West at 182.

"I am proud of the resilience our crew has shown through shutdowns and schedule changes," Dankers said. "This group is a tight-knit team and they are poised to wrestle their best when it matters the most."

# Flathead

103 - David Naldret, 7-3 (3); Will Barnes, 5-1 (5).

113 - Aden Kleinhenz, 4-1 (70)

120 - Logan Stansberry, 3-1 (4); Cade Gardner, 5-1 (6).

126 - Ethan Freund, 12-0 (1); Cole Eastwood, 8-0 (5)

132 - Asher Kemppainen, 8-1 (1); Gunnard Thompson, 7-1 (4)

138 - Anders Thompson, 9-1 (2)

145 - Cade Troupe, 8-0 (10); Gabe Lake, 10-2 (4)

152 - Fin Nadeau, 9-0 (1)

160 - Noah Poe-Hattn, 10-1 (2); Sawyer Troupe, 11-1 (5)

170 - Chase Youso, 12-0 (1); Mason Doran, 9-0 (7)

182 - Ryan Nelson, 8-0 (1); Xan Winter, 9-1 (7)

205 - Gaige Winter, 8-4 (4); Brandon Manley, 6-1 (7)

285 - Timber Richberg, 6-3 (4); Logan Lang, 7-1 (6)



## STATE AA WRESTLING: TEAM RACE PROMISES TO BE 'ABSOLUTE BATTLE'

By: [Slim Kimmel](#)

Posted at 4:27 PM, Mar 04, 2021

and last updated 4:27 PM, Mar 04, 2021



Class AA wrestling coaches have spent the past week crunching numbers and trying to project outcomes at the state tournament to determine which team might hoist the championship trophy on Saturday in Kalispell. If they're stressing now, it's likely only going to get worse this weekend as a tight team race is expected to unfold over the two-day tournament. "I think this is probably going to be one of the closer state tournaments that we've had in a really long time," said Luis Carranza, the head coach at reigning state champion Great Falls High.

"It'll be a dogfight," added Billings West coach Jeremy Hernandez. Kalispell Flathead coach Jeff Thompson echoed: "It's going to be a war. ... It's going to be an absolute battle." Great Falls High, West and Flathead figure to be among the teams contending for that team title, but Billings Senior might be "the front runner on paper," according to Thompson, and Butte qualified 25 wrestlers, the most of any team at the state tournament.

It's an unusually wide-open team race. Typically, coaches can predict which team or two will contend for the title. Last year, champion Great Falls High scored 242.5 points to second-place Flathead's 197. The 45.5-point difference was the closest team race since 2016 when Billings Senior claimed the title by the same margin.

"It could go one of four different ways. We could end up fourth, we could end up first. It just depends, and that's what's exciting about it, is nobody knows, so you just got to go in prepared and trust your training and be ready to wrestle," said Hernandez, who is bringing in arguably the best Billings West team in his 13 years as the program's head coach.

The Golden Bears are bringing 23 wrestlers to the state tournament, including five kids seeded No. 1 in the





Eastern AA and two seeded No. 2. Jase Van Pelt, Jesse Aarness and Drake Rhodes are the state's top-ranked wrestlers at 113, 126 and 152 pounds, respectively. Aarness was a 2020 state champion at 120 pounds, while Van Pelt and Rhodes both wrestled to runner-up finishes last year.

[Keyan Hernandez](#), the coach's son, is also an East top seed at 103 pounds, and RJ Lowdog is the East's No. 1 wrestler at 138. Chris Garcia is seeded second at 182 pounds and Jadyn Hoff is second at 285 for the Golden Bears.

"We just expect them to show up and do what they've been training to do all season and perform and just wrestle," Hernandez said. "They've been working their butts off, all 23 of them have, the whole team has. We've had over 50-some kids in the room all season long. They all work hard at trying to achieve those goals of being a state champ, some of them placing at state."

Rhodes, who won the 113-pound title as a freshman in 2019 before placing second at 126 last year, seems destined for a bout with Flathead's Fin Nadeau in the 152 final. Nadeau finished runner-up each of the past two seasons and, like Rhodes, brings an undefeated record into this year's 152-pound bracket.

Nadeau is one of 23 Braves qualified for the state tournament and one of six to receive a No. 1 seed out of the Western AA. Flathead's other No. 1-seeded wrestlers are Ethan Freund (126 pounds), Asher Kemppainen (132), Cade Troupe (145), Chase Youso (170) and Ryan Nelson (182).

"We're really excited about the Brave brawlers that made it in the state," Thompson said. "Having six No. 1 seeds really helps out and eight in the top two, we had nine in the top three. Typically those are the guys that are going to score you a lot of points and possibly place at state. We're hoping to get a few other wild cards in there."

As the West's second seed at 160 pounds, Noah Poe-Hatten doesn't qualify as a wild card, but he's come on strong late. In the final match of the regular season, Poe-Hatten defeated [Hunter Meinzen](#), a two-time state champion from Missoula Big Sky.

Meinzen and the previously mentioned Aarness are among the nine returning state champions in the bracket. Billings Skyview's Hunter Ketchem and [KalisPELL Glacier's Teegan Vasquez](#) both won titles last year and are slotted in





this year's 120-pound bracket, which also includes East No. 1 seed Jalen Vladic of Billings Senior. Vladic placed third at 113 pounds last year.

Another Bronc, Thomas Klepps, is a returning state champion. Klepps won the 160-pound title last year and is in the 170-pound bracket this year as a senior. Avery Allen, a 145-pound sophomore from Bozeman High, will be looking for another state title, as well.

Then there's the big guys, where Great Falls High figures to make hay. The Bison ended the regular season with Liam Swanson, [Elijah Davis](#) and [Ethan DeRoche](#) the top-ranked guys at 182, 205 and 285 pounds, respectively.

"They just push each other. They're so competitive," Carranza said. "We try to split them up every once in a while in the room, and then there's days that we just say, 'Hey, go have fun and beat each other up.' And that's exactly what they do. I mean, they'll go 10, 15, 20 minutes without scoring a takedown or any points on each other, because they're so competitive."

While they might enter as the favorites, it won't be smooth sailing for any of the Bison standouts. Swanson has to deal with Flathead's Nelson, West's Garcia and Butte's Mason Christian at 182, and Davis has Noah Kovick of Helena Capital, Xaden Cunningham of Belgrade and Zac Crews of Missoula Sentinel in the 205 bracket. Kovick won a state title for the Bruins at 182 pounds last year. The heavyweight bracket includes Zack Tierney of Butte, West's Hoff and Capital's Talon Marsh in addition to DeRoche.

"Our lighter weights have gotten better and we've seen some improvement there," Carranza said, mentioning guys like Cooper Samson at 103 pounds and Mason Huber and Dylan Block at 138. "But if they don't get things going for us, even with all that horsepower up top, it's going to make things a little difficult. We're counting on our young kids, those lighter weights to step up."

The lighter weights, which will wrestle in the early session on Friday, could benefit Billings Senior. The Broncos have No. 1 seeds Vladic (120 pounds) and Peak (132) and No. 2 seed Junior Madrid (103 pounds). Butte, meanwhile, will have more wrestlers than anybody in Kalispell. Of the 25 Bulldogs to qualify, Trey Whitlock (103 pounds), Maverick McEwen (113) and Tierney (285) earned No. 1 seeds in the West. "Butte's right in there. They're very, very solid," Thompson said, also pointing to the strengths of Great Falls High, Senior, West and his own squad at Flathead.

"The coaches, even the athletes, that are really looking at that scoreboard, the stress is going to be a little bit higher," Thompson added, "because you really don't know exactly where you're at until the end of the day."

## FLATHEAD'S RICHBERG FINDS HIMSELF BACK ON THE MAT

by FRITZ NEIGHBOR

Daily Inter Lake | March 6, 2021 11:00 PM



A tough week for Flathead senior wrestler Timber Richberg ticked up a little bit Friday, when the heavyweight dispatched his first-round opponent at the State AA meet in 55 seconds. It was quite a couple minutes for the Brave Brawlers — their other heavyweight, Logan Lang, got a pin in 13 seconds soon after — but especially for Richberg, who lost his mother on Monday.

“Probably the hardest thing I’ve went through in my life,” said the 17-year-

old, who was living with Leah Davis and his younger brother Sterling Walker when Davis, just 45, passed away. Richberg said his mother had suffered from a variety of ailments, including a bout with COVID-19 months ago and diabetes. A heart attack sent her to the hospital Friday. Faced with this loss, Richberg kept going. “I just knew she’d want me to keep coming to school and keep wrestling,” he said. “I tried to win state for her, tried to at least place. Sometimes it doesn’t happen.”

Richberg bowed out with a 4-2 overtime loss to Glacier’s Rocco Beccari in the consolation rounds Saturday. He ended up 7-4 in just his third season of wrestling. “My buddy Gaige Winter (Flathead’s 205-pounder placed sixth Saturday), who’s been wrestling since freshman year, said, ‘Oh, you’re a big kid, You should come out, you’ll win every match,’ ” Richberg recalled. “I was like, I’m going to have to work up to that.”

He made state as a junior, in a stacked weight class. It wasn’t much easier this year — Ethan Deroche of Great Falls High is still roaming the mats — but Richberg had more success. “It took him a while to get there,” Flathead assistant Alex Cummings said. “That’s what I love about Timber, man, he bought in. Showed up every day and worked his tail off.” Cummings mentioned he knew Richberg from before high school. “I had him in ninth grade English class, I coached him in football and wrestling,” he added. “He’s a great kid. Almost like a son to me.”

Which brings us to that first match Friday. “It was amazing,” Richberg said. “I just knew she was right by my side that whole match. It felt so great.” Richberg would like to take his big frame to a college football program, but doesn’t have a firm plan. He mentioned Muskingum (Ohio) University (Go Muskies), but also had thoughts of staying closer to Kalispell, perhaps in the Frontier Conference.

“He wants to play football,” Cummings said. “He found a couple places in the Midwest which wanted him, which would be huge for him — an opportunity to move forward with his football career and with his school, more importantly.” A gofundme.com account has been set up, organized by family friends Jake and Ryan-Kay Berkey, to help with potential costs. “That was insane,” said Richberg, who is staying with the Berkeys. “I was so glad I had people that cared about me around me. It’s just amazing.”

Richberg moved with his mom and older brother River Davis to the area at age 2. Leah Davis’ parents and grandparents were here, so she moved back from Allentown, Pennsylvania. Now Kalispell and his high school teammates have created softer landing after a wallop like this. “I know she’s happy, that she’s in a better place now,” Richberg said of his mom. “And that she’s proud of me.”

## STATE AA WRESTLING

### STATE AA WRESTLING: KALISPELL FLATHEAD JUMPS OUT TO TEAM LEAD AFTER DAY 1

FRANK GOGOLA Missoulian  
Mar 5, 2021



Flathead's Asher Kemppainen, right, grapples with Billings West's Kade Vatnsdal, left, during their 138 pound bout during the MHSAA wrestling state championships at Flathead High School, Friday, March 5, 2021 in Kalispell. Kemppainen defeated Vatnsdal by tech fall.

BEN ALLAN SMITH, Missoula

**KALISPELL** — Wrestling on its home mats, Kalispell Flathead jumped out to the team lead at the State AA wrestling tournament Friday.

The Braves amassed 135 points through the quarterfinal round on the first day of the two-day tournament. They have a team-best eight semifinalists and hold a 21-point lead over Billings Senior (114) after leading by just 5.5 points when the morning session was finished.

"I think we put ourselves in a really good spot," Flathead coach Jeff Thompson said after the morning session. "We predicted Senior to be up by 15 or 20 after this round. We're very fortunate to be in the lead because we won some really close matches and had some toss-up matches. I'm proud of our young guys. They battled it out."

Great Falls came on strong in the night session to rank third with 103 points and six semifinalists. Butte also has six semifinalists and is fourth with 96 points. Billings West is fifth with 89.5 points and seven semifinalists. "It's our first tournament of the year for all these guys, but they know to take it one match at a time and focus on the now," Butte coach Cory Johnston said. "Our kids are showing they're wrestling hard and want to go as far as they can go. You want to win them all, but it's not super realistic."

Billings Senior has qualified five wrestlers to the semifinals. Helena Capital has four, while Billings Skyview and Belgrade have three apiece. Missoula Big Sky and Missoula Sentinel have qualified two, while Bozeman Gallatin, Bozeman High, Great Falls CMR and Kalispell Glacier each have one.

"Everybody's fighting. We're just doing our best that we can. That's all we can ask out of them," Billings Senior coach Josh Beeman said. "It's a weird year, so asking everybody to come out here and wrestle as hard as they can, it's a







challenge, but it is what it is. Just like everybody, we're left in a fight and a tight race, that's exactly what it is."

## QUARTERFINAL UPSETS

There were six upsets in the quarterfinals as 52 wrestlers qualified for the semifinals. Flathead freshman Logan Stansberry was the only wrestler to put together back-to-back upsets in the first session, making the semifinals as a No. 6 seed. In the quarterfinals, he scored an 8-7 win over Butte's Kyler Raiha, the West's No. 2 seed, by

scoring a takedown with 55 seconds left to complete his comeback from a 6-4 deficit.

Stansberry had separated his left shoulder in a loss to Raiha earlier in the season, forcing him to sit out over a month. He wrestled only four regular-season matches and hadn't wrestled since that injury until the first round at state, when he opened with a pin in 3:24 against Great Falls High's Peyton Scofield, the East's No. 3 seed, for the lone 6-3 upset in the first session.

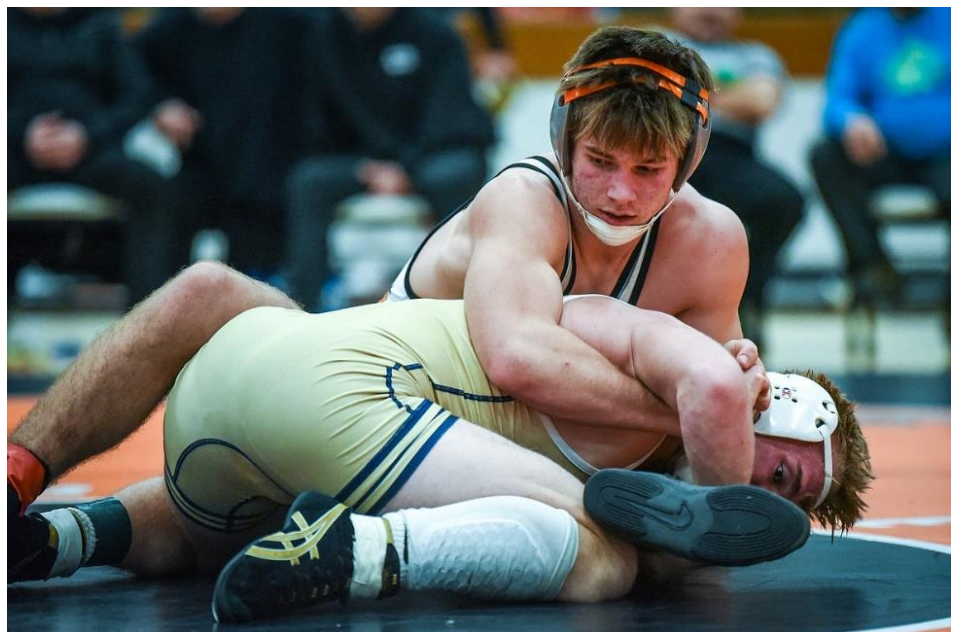
"I kind of surprised myself," Stansberry said. "I didn't know if I could win this, but I knew I had to go for it. I think he got gassed and I just had better cardio than him. Definitely the crowd helped. I think we have quite an advantage just because we're here. Tomorrow's going to be tough, but it helps me a lot to get these wins today."

Bozeman Gallatin junior Felix Petersen matched Stansberry in the late session, making the semifinals as a No. 6 seed at 152. He scored pins over No. 3 Gavin Vetter of Butte in the first round and No. 2 Blake Jolma of Missoula Sentinel in the second round.

Two quarterfinal upsets came in the 145-pound bracket. Missoula Sentinel junior Jesse Horner, a No. 3 seed, scored a pin in 3:10 against No. 2 Jaron Roberts of Billings Skyview to advance to the semifinals for the first time in his third trip to state. "I was feeling pretty energetic," said Horner, whose teammate Zac Crews made the 205 semifinals as a No. 2 seed in his first high school wrestling season. "My first match, I was really excited to go out there and had that anxiety a little bit. I was really able to just calm down and focus my second match. My mentality is something I've been working on, trying to keep my mind right."

Horner will face Great Falls High's Irish Furthmyre, who pulled off the first session's lone upset of a No. 1 wrestler, Flathead's Cade Troupe, by scoring all five third-quarter points for an 8-7 decision. Another No. 1 fell when Billings Senior's Caleb Murch (160), a No. 5 seed, scored a 6-1 decision against No. 1 seed Cameron Savaria of Billings Skyview.

Helena Capital's Hunter Rahn (113) made it through as a No.





3 seed with a quarterfinal win over No. 2 Josh Melton of Kalispell Glacier. "He's wrestled that kid five times, and this is his second win," Capital coach Jeff Mahan said of Rahn. "It was another really good match, and he wrestled really well. For Hunter, it's good for him to win it. Now the pressure is off because he knows he's going to be a state placer, and now he can just go out and let it go where it goes." Billings Skyview's Dillen Barrington also scored a 3-over-2 upset win over Belgrade's Xaden Cunningham in a chippy quarterfinal, 13-9.

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## STATE CHAMPS STILL ALIVE

Eleven of the 12 wrestlers who've won a state championship are still in contention for another title. Missoula Big Sky senior Hunter Meinzen (160) is two wins away from his third consecutive championship. He's one of two Big Sky qualifiers along with sophomore Izzy Moreno, who took fifth last year and is seeking his first title.

Great Falls High senior Ethan Deroche (285) is also into the semifinals as he chases title No. 3, as is fellow senior Elijah Davis (205). Davis and Helena Capital's Noah Kovick, a prior champ at 182, could meet in the finals. At 120, Kalispell Glacier's Teegan Vasquez and Billings Skyview's Hunter Ketchem will face off in one semifinal.

Billings West's Jesse Aarness (126), Helena Capital's Carson DesRosier (138), Bozeman's Avery Allen (145), Billings West's Drake Rhodes (152) and Billings Senior's Thomas Klepps (17) all made the semifinals looking for title No. 2. The lone champ to not qualify was Great Falls CMR's Colton Martello, a No. 7 seed at 145. He lost to Butte's Anthony Liva, a No. 2 seed, in the most entertaining 2-vs-7 match in the first round. Liva scored a 4-2 sudden victory and then beat Belgrade's Oden Currier, a prior state runner-up in Class A, by a major decision in the quarterfinals. "There's not a tougher route you can go than that," Johnston said.





## BRAVE BRAWLERS SITTING ON FIRST-DAY LEAD

By FRITZ NEIGHBOR  
Daily Inter Lake | March 5, 2021 11:27 PM



Flathead's Chase Youso wrestles Great Falls CMR's Gabe Price at 170 lbs. at the State AA wrestling championships at Flathead High School on Friday. (Casey Kreider/Daily Inter Lake)

Flathead's Brave Brawlers are enjoying their home court, or mats, if getting eight wrestlers into the semifinals of the State AA wrestling tournament means anything.

Towards the end of a long Friday — there were still wrestlebacks going on as of 10:30 p.m. — Flathead led the team race with 129 points. Billings Senior was second with 107 and defending state champion Great Falls was at 97, one point ahead of Butte.

Braves' coach Jeff Thompson was pleased overall. His assistant coach, Dallas Stuker, figured the team would be in good shape if it was within 15 points of Senior after the first two rounds; instead the Brawlers were ahead. They'd hoped to be tied at the end of the quarterfinals and first round of wrestlebacks, and ended up 22 points in front.

"This team really stepped up," Thompson said, just after Chase Youso became the seventh quarterfinal winner for Flathead, scoring a pin at 170 pounds. "We were a little nervous that we were taking some boys into the state tournament, but they proved us wrong. These boys are men." Of the eight semifinalists the most surprising is Logan Stansberry, a sixth-seeded freshman who rallied past Butte's Kyler Raiha 8-7 in the quarters.

"Wild card," Thompson said. "He's been a wrestler, though, that's been on the map since he was 5 years old. I think he's just a tournament wrestler." Stansberry took him down, cut him, let him back up

and took down again and rode him out for the win. What a cool thing. We had a tough loss from Cade Gardner at 120 in the first round, and we had Logan step up and get those points right back for us.”

Ethan Freund (126), Asher Kemppainen (132), Anders Thompson (138), Fin Nadeau (152), Noah Poe-Hatten (160) and Ryan Nelson (182) are the other semifinalists.

Twenty-two of Flathead's 23 wrestlers won matches Friday, and Nelson and Noah Poe-Hatten won narrow decisions to make the semis. Those 50-50 wins help take the edge off quarterfinal losses by Gunnar Thompson and



Cade Troupe. Troupe had reversed and flipped his opponent, Great Falls' Irish Furthmyer, to lead their 145-pound quarterfinal 6-2. Then Furthmyer did the exact same thing in the final 30 seconds and won 7-6.

“That was a heart-breaker,” Thompson said. “He’s been wrestling so well all year along and just kind of got caught in an ugly scramble and it didn’t turn out his way. “But he came right back and got a win the next round. His spirits are high again and bringing home a third place is his goal.” The semifinal round and second round of wrestlebacks are set for 10 a.m. today. The finals are scheduled for 3:30 p.m., but will likely start later because the meet is using just two mats.

Glacier's Teegan Vasquez (120 pounds), Hunter Ketchem (120) and Thomas Klepps (170) of Billings Senior, Avery Allen (132) of Bozeman, Jesse Aarness (126) of Billings West, Hunter Meinzen (160) of Missoula Big Sky, Noah Kovick of Helena Capital (205) and Elijah Davis of Great Falls (285) are all in range of consecutive individual titles. For Allen it would be four straight; for Meinzen, who has a loss to Poe-Hatten this season, it would be three. Vasquez and Ketchem are a possible finals' matchup, and Poe-Hatten and Meinzen are on opposite sides of the bracket as well.



# KALISPELL FLATHEAD LEADS TIGHT TEAM RACE AFTER DAY 1

By: [Montana Sports](#)

Posted at 11:45 PM, Mar 05, 2021



KALISPELL -- If Great Falls High is to defend its Class AA state wrestling team title, the Bison are going to need to pick up some key wins at the lighter weights to contend with a competitive field at the State AA tournament at Flathead High School. Irish Furthmyre did his part on Friday, scoring the biggest upset of the early session. Furthmyre, the No. 4 seed out of the East, took down Kalispell Flathead's Cade Troupe, the West's No. 1 seed, with a 7-6 decision in the quarterfinals of the 145-pound bracket. "Me and that kid have grown up together so it was more than just a match to me," Furthmyre said. "What was

going through my mind was, 'Oh crap, I've got to pick it up.' I want my team to win so I want to give them all I've got. I was looking at them and was like, 'I have to step it up for these guys and that's what it was.'"

Furthmyre will next meet Missoula Sentinel's Jesse Horner in the semifinals on Saturday. Horner, a No. 3 seed, upset Jaron Roberts of Billings Skyview with a second-period pin in the quarterfinals. Anthony Liva of Butte and Avery Allen of Bozeman High will meet in the other 145-pound semifinal match. Allen, a sophomore, is looking to win his second state title.

The Bison -- with Mason Huber (138 pounds), Furthmyre (145), Brendan Lockhart (170), Liam Swanson (182), Elijah Davis (205) and Ethan DeRoche (285) advancing to Saturday's semifinal round -- sit third in the team standings after the first day with 103 points. Kalispell Flathead is first with 135, and Billings Senior is second with 114. "It was a tough day, challenging matches and just a roller-coaster ride," Flathead coach Jeff Thompson said. "Overall we won a lot of matches that we were supposed to win and we got some upsets in there. We put ourselves in the driver's seat. We're in a good spot for (Saturday) morning."

The Braves have eight in the semifinals, including Logan Stansberry at 120 pounds, Ethan Freund at 126, Asher Kemppainen at 132, Anders Thompson at 138, Fin Nadeau at 152, Noah Poe-Hatten at 160, Chase Youso at 170 and Ryan Nelson at 182. Stansberry, a No. 6 seed out of the West, gave Flathead a big win at 120 pounds, upsetting Butte's Kyler Raiha, a West No. 2 seed, in the quarterfinal round with an 8-7 decision. "At the beginning of the year I lost to him, I had a shoulder injury against him so it was a pretty big win," Stansberry said. "I honestly just didn't want to lose."

Stansberry will face East No. 1 Jalen Vladic of Billings Senior in Saturday's semifinal round after







Vladic scored two pins on Friday. Teegan Vasquez of Kalispell Glacier and Hunter Ketchum of Billings Skyview are also into the 120 semis as returning state champions. Ketchum won at 103 a year ago while Vasquez was the 113 victor, and their clash should make for an entertaining matchup in the semifinal round.

In addition to Vladic, Senior advanced Junior Madrid (103 pounds), Idren Peak (132), Isaiah Murch (160) and Thomas Klepps (170) to the semifinal round. "I'm just happy we have a bunch of guys still fighting," Senior coach Josh Beeman said. "There's not one kid out here that's not trying their tail off and it's been fun to

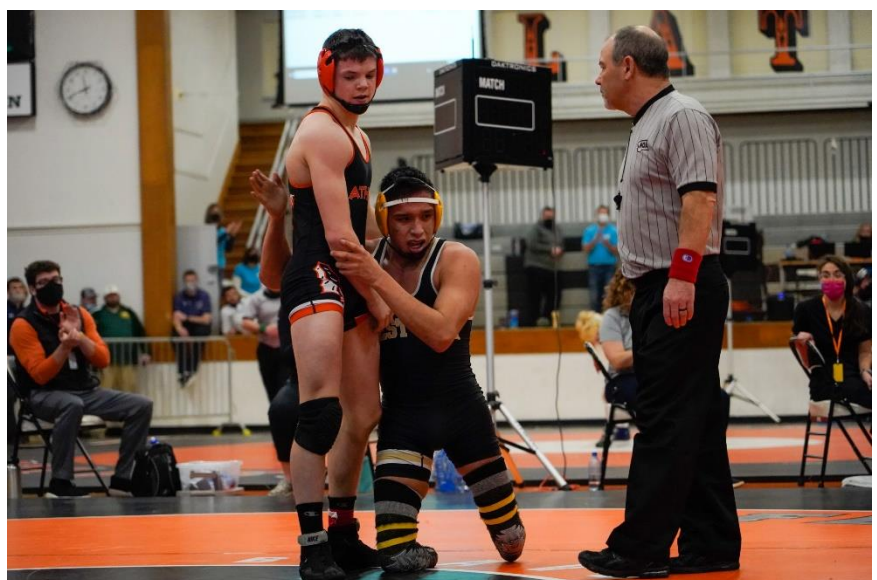
watch, there's been some amazing wrestling today and it's going to be a great Saturday."

Butte's Trey Whitlock and Billings West's Keyan Hernandez, the No. 1 seeds at 103, both advanced to Saturday's semifinal round by virtue of two falls. The Bulldogs and Golden Bears advanced their No. 1 seeds at 113 pounds, too, with Maverick McEwen of Butte and Jase Van Pelt of West both getting out of the first day unscathed. McEwen recorded two falls on Friday, while Van Pelt won his opener by fall and then defeated Billings Senior's Holden Howe with a 1-0 decision in the quarterfinal round.

West also had top seeds Jesse Aarness (126 pounds), RJ Lowdog (138) and Drake Rhodes (152) punch tickets to Saturday's semifinal round. Chris Garcia and Jadyn Hoff are also into the semis at 182 and 285 pounds, respectively, for the Golden Bears. In all, West was second in advancing seven wrestlers to the semifinal round while Great Falls High and Butte each moved six wrestlers on. "The kids came out with a lot of fire and effort," Butte coach Cory Johnston said. "They don't think they're ever out of everything and that's the thing you can't coach in kids that we really like about our kids. "It's been the expectation all year and they're living up to it."

Rhodes will face Felix Petersen of Bozeman Gallatin in the semifinal round after Petersen pulled an upset in the late session. The East's No. 6 seed in the 152-pound bracket, Petersen pinned Butte's Gavin Vetter in the first and then scored a second-period pin on Missoula Sentinel's Blake Jolma, the second seed from the West, in the quarterfinal round. The 160-pound bracket saw an upset, too, as Senior's Murch advanced to the semifinals. He pinned Kalispell Glacier's T.J. Gannon in the first round and then earned a 6-1 decision over Billings Skyview's Cameron Savaria in the quarters. Savaria was the East's top seed. The 205-pound bracket is due to be interesting on Saturday morning as Davis advanced to potentially defend his title. He'll face Sentinel's Zac Crews, while on the other side Capital's Noah Kovik, last year's 182-pound champion, earned a 24-second pin in the quarterfinal round to move on. He'll face Skyview's Dillen Barrington in the semifinal round.

Murch will meet Poe-Hatten of Flathead in a semifinal match. The other 160-pound semi puts two-time state champion Hunter Meinzen of Missoula Big Sky against Archie Lafurge of Great Falls CMR. The top seeds prevailed in the 103-, 126-, 132-, 138-, 170-, 182- and 285-pound brackets. Wrestlers are scheduled to weigh in for Saturday's action at 8 a.m. with the semifinals slated to get under way at 10 a.m. The State AA championship finals are scheduled for 3:30 p.m.



## CLASS AA WRESTLING: KALISPELL FLATHEAD WINS TEAM TITLE WHILE MISSOULA BIG SKY'S HUNTER MEINZEN, GREAT FALLS HIGH'S ETHAN DEROCHE 3-PEAT

FRANK GOGOLA Missoulian | Mar 6, 2021 Updated 17 hrs ago



KALISPELL — Kalispell Flathead's coaches all pitched in to hold up one of their assistant coaches in a horizontal pose as he held the first-place trophy at the State AA wrestling tournament Saturday. It drew laughs and smiles all around when the delicate balancing act was pulled off. It was a light-hearted celebration to cap a hard-fought battle as the Braves toughed out the state championship in a heated challenge on their home mat. "This says a lot about our Flathead family," Braves coach Jeff Thompson said of winning state. "Being at home, being able

to wrestle on our own mat, I think you can sense that. These kids love each other. They train together each and every day. It's been a very challenging year, but we really focused on peaking at the main event, and we had 22 of our 23 kids win a match, which is so rare."

The Braves scored 247 points and needed every one of those points to eek out a win over Billings Senior. The Broncs were right behind with 239.5 points, while defending champ Great Falls High finished a distant third with 192 points. Flathead had one individual champion, and that win gave the Braves some breathing room against Senior, which lost one of its two finals matches, with the loss coming to Flathead's crosstown rival, Kalispell Glacier. The Braves put 12 wrestlers on the podium. "I had butterflies in my stomach all afternoon," Thompson said. "Senior was coming back strong, and we knew we'd have to win some key matches, and that one in the finals really secured it."

The 7.5-point margin of victory is the smallest since the 2000 championship was decided by three points. "It feels like we tried as hard as we could," Billings senior coach Josh Beeman said. "It was fun to watch. We had a lot of heartbreak this morning and last night. It was a whole lot of fun watching all the grit that they had when they fought back today. "We lost some close matches and tough ones, but they persevered and showed a whole lot of resilience today. It was impressive to watch the big deficit they had close down to seven points at the end of the night. It was really fun to be a part of." Billings West finished fourth with 186 points and just missed out on its first team trophy since 1995 despite a furious comeback with seven finalists and three winners. Butte was fifth with 147 points.

Flathead completed a sweep of the state titles as it won the first-ever girls wrestling state tournament last month. This is the first state title







for the boys wrestling team since 2018, it's their third in five years and it gives them 10 championships, the third most in Class AA history. "With our girls winning state two weeks ago and the boys putting the nail in the coffin, it says a lot about the dedication of the program," Thompson said. "We're just so dang proud of this team and how far we've come and the adversity we've gone through this year with COVID. It's a very special moment."

### 3-PEAT CLUB

Missoula Big Sky senior Hunter Meinzen capped his standout high school career with his third consecutive state championship. He scored a 5-1 decision over Flathead sophomore Noah Poe-Hatten to avenge his only loss this season. He'll be wrestling at high school nationals later this spring, he said. "There's no words to describe it," Meinzen said of being a 3-time champ. "I wish everybody could have this sort of feeling. I don't know, I can't explain it other than that. It hasn't sunk in yet."

Great Falls High senior Ethan Deroche also completed a 3-peat with his third straight crown. He had one of only two pins in the championship round, needing just 1:23 to beat Billings West's Jadyn Hoff. "I feel like my mind is just going everywhere at the moment," Deroche said. "I'm very happy right now, and I just can't wait (to see) what next year holds for me." Helena Capital senior Noah Kovick backed up his words that he would prevent Great Falls High senior Elijah Davis from winning a third title in a row. Kovick added a second title to the 182-pound crown he won last year by scoring a 5-1 decision over Davis in the finals, executing the rides on top and leg rides he wanted.

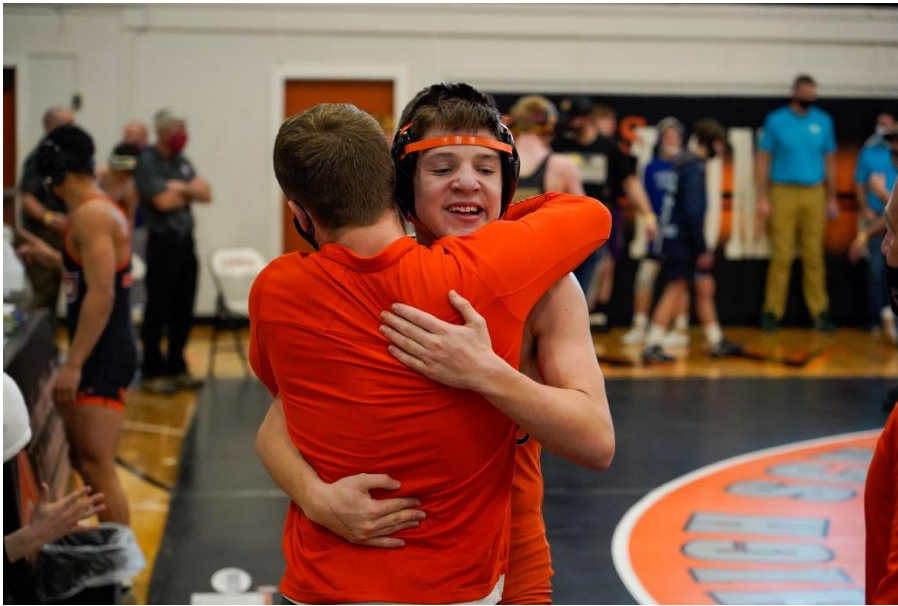
"It's awesome," Kovick said. "I bumped up to wrestle him. I didn't want to wrestle the same kids I did last year and I beat the crap out of and walked my way to a state title, I wanted to earn it, I wanted to have a challenge. So I came to challenge the two-time defending state champ, and I proved myself today."

### 4-PEAT ON THE HORIZON?

Kalispell Glacier sophomore Teegan Vasquez is halfway to a four-peat as he earned his second title in as many years. He picked up an 8-0 major decision over Billings Senior's Jalen Vladic in the 120-pound final. It was an emotional win for him as he wanted to win for his late friend, Maverick Bench, a 9-year-old boy who died of aplastic anemia, a rare blood disorder, near the start of the season. Vasquez even posed with his first-place medal while holding a Captain America shield, one of Bench's favorite superheroes. "This one means a lot," Vasquez said. "It was definitely a little bit more because we had Maverick pass away, so I was wrestling for him because he was like a little brother to me, came to club a few years ago and got to know him and his family and they let me kind of be a big brother for that little guy."

Bozeman sophomore Avery Allen followed suit by making it two titles in two years as he chases a 4-peat. He needed just 2:13 to pin Great Falls High's Irish Furthmyre at 145 pounds for the first pin in the finals. "I just know that everyone's tough and you got to respect everyone," Allen said in regards to moving up a weight class but still dominating. "Same thing, it's just another wrestling match, so wrestle the same every time." Billings West freshman Keyan Hernandez has a longer road to go,





but he came into high school hoping to win four titles and started his career by grabbing the 103-pound championship. He rolled to an 8-0 major decision against Butte's Trey Whitlock.

"When my dad was a freshman, he didn't win his freshman year, so I wanted to redeem his loss, so that just gave me motivation," said Hernandez, whose father, Jeremy Hernandez, is the head coach. "I've been working hard since the beginning of the year, and I think I showed I deserved that championship." Billings West sophomore Jesse Aarness had his

hopes of a 4-peat dashed when he lost to Kalispell Flathead sophomore Ethan Freund at 126 pounds. Freund scored a 5-3 sudden victory that led to the gym erupting with cheers and helping Flathead seal the team title.

It was Freund's first time at state in Montana after his family moved from Washington because of COVID so that he could attend in-person classes, he said. "I'm the new kid here at Flathead, and when I win and I have all these new kids that I call my best friends now behind my back and to celebrate with them, it was really cool," Freund said.

## REPEAT OFFENDERS

Helena Capital junior Carson DesRosier rebounded from a disappointing runner-up finish in 2020 to add the 138-pound title to the 120-pound one he won in 2019. He did so by tallying a 3-1 decision over Billings West senior RJ Lowdog. "It feels amazing. You can't get used to this feeling at all. It's just an amazing feeling," said DesRosier, who hopes to wrestle in college and can show his potential by continuing to win at state. "To put in all that work all year, and then for it to be this big of a reward, it's amazing.

Billings West junior Drake Rhodes also bounced back from a runner-up finish in 2020 after winning the 113-pound title in 2019. He added the 152-pound crown to his collection with a 7-2 decision over Flathead junior Fin Nadeau, who lost in the finals for the third time in three years. "It was definitely hard losing last year," Rhodes said. "Seeing a lot of my teammates lose, I know what they're going through. It just takes a lot of hard work to get back to be the best. But it was definitely fun and exciting."

Billings Senior's Thomas Klepps watched his brother win four state titles, and while he couldn't replicate that, he kept improving and ended his high school career on top with his second title in as many years. He did so by earning an 11-4 win over Great Falls High's Brendan Lockart at 170. "It feels pretty good because growing up, he was like a good wrestler always, but I was going like 1-32 every season, like not winning many matches," Klepps said. "Then freshman year, didn't place. The year after that, sophomore year, I took sixth. Then I came in last year and won it and won it this year too, so it







feels pretty good to climb like that." In terms of those improvements, he said: "I got so much better at wrestling, I got better technique that I knew if I went out there and just wrestled to my ability, I could get it done."

## FIRST-TIMERS

Missoula Big Sky sophomore Izzy Moreno was determined to finish on top after placing fifth last year, and he won the 132-pound title with a 10-3 decision over Flathead junior Asher Kemppainen. "It's unbelievable," Moreno said after an emotional hug with his father and coach, Rick Moreno.

"I've been dreaming about this since I was a little kid. I've always wanted to be a four-time high school state champion. Last year didn't go my way, but I made sure this year did."

To even get to the final, Moreno had to rally for maybe the most dramatic win in the semifinal round. He erased a five-point deficit in the third period, including two near fall points out of a referee's position in the final four seconds of the third period, and then won in sudden victory. "I just believed in myself, believed in my heart, my mindset, my training, everything I've put in. In my head, I was telling myself, there's no way I'm losing this match, and I just kept on going," said Moreno, who has overcome Type 1 diabetes to excel on the mat.

Billings West junior Jase Van Pelt captured his first state title by toughing out a 4-2 decision against Belgrade sophomore Colton Gutenberger at 113 pounds. "This year, I worked my butt off and I've been working for this my entire high school career, and I finally got it, so it feels really nice," Van Pelt said. "Last year, I let people get into my head and I wasn't really working hard, that's the reason I lost. This year, I told myself I'm not going to let anything hold me back no matter what and I was going to take that to state and win." Great Falls High senior Liam Swanson was focused in on winning his first state title in his last go-around, and he pulled that off with a 16-3 major decision against Billings West sophomore Chris Garcia at 182 pounds.

"It was surreal to go out having everyone watch me because they're such a great support system, the coaches, my partners and everything," Swanson said. "When that buzzer went off, it was an overabundance of joy, and I was just so happy, and I knew all the work just paid off so much. "I knew that everyone was going to be good competition, but I felt like I was the best, and I had that confidence, and it just showed, and I performed."

Of note, Felix Petersen became Bozeman Gallatin's first-ever state placer by taking fourth at 152 pounds. The former Bozeman High wrestler is now a three-time state placer.





# STATE AA WRESTLING: KALISPELL FLATHEAD EDGES BILLINGS SENIOR FOR TEAM TITLE

By: [Montana Sports](#)

Posted at 9:25 PM, Mar 06, 2021

and last updated 9:13 AM, Mar 07, 2021



KALISPELL -- Kalispell Flathead wrestling coach Jeff Thompson his team would have enough of a home mat advantage to help the Braves secure the team title at the Class AA state wrestling tournament this weekend.

Turns out he wasn't far off, as the Braves scored 247 points to edge out the win over second-place Billings Senior, which finished with 239.5 points. Great Falls High, the 2020 state champion, placed third with 192 points, followed by Billings West with 186, Butte with 147 and Helena Capital with 128 in a tightly contested team race.

Flathead got an individual state title from Ethan Freund at 126 pounds and a bevy of points from other high placers. Asher Kemppainen and Fin Nadeau were the runners-up at 132 and 152 pounds, respectively. For Nadeau, a junior, that makes three consecutive runner-up finishes at the state tournament.

"We've been training all year to get it done. People in the backdoor really nailed it shut for us like Chase Youso over here," said Freund, a sophomore. "Those extra wins in the backdoor really put us ahead. I knew that (West's Jesse Aarness) was really good with his single to my right side, so I was really aware of it. I was just staying calm and thinking about how I'm going to work to win and finally broke through and won."

Flathead's Noah Poe-Hatten was also a runner-up, losing a 5-1 decision to Hunter Meinzen of Missoula Big Sky in the 160-pound final. Meinzen, an Oregon State wrestling signee, finishes his high school career as a three-time state champion. Big Sky had two champions on Saturday, as sophomore Izzy Moreno won the 132-pound bracket for the Eagles.

"I just couldn't be happier to end on a good note with my last high school match of my career but now we're moving on to bigger and better things so that's what I'm looking forward to now," Meinzen said. "I wish everybody could have this sort of feeling. I can't explain it right now, it hasn't sunk in yet."

Moreno celebrated by jumping into the arms of his father, Big Sky wrestling coach Rick Moreno.

"It's unbelievable. I've been dreaming about this since I was a little kid," Izzy Moreno said. "I always wanted to be a four-time high school state champion. Last year didn't go my way but I made sure this year did."

"I wouldn't be anywhere close to where I am now without my dad."





Flathead's Gabe Lake placed third at 145 pounds, pinning teammate Cade Troupe in the third-place match. Chase Youso also added a third-place finish for the Braves at 170 pounds that effectively sealed the team title for the Braves.

The team win makes it three state championships in five seasons for Flathead as the Braves went back-to-back in 2017 and 2018 as well. This year, the Braves didn't have to travel the trophy across the state with the tournament being held in their home gym.

"Oh man, just so special to be able to wrestle state here at Flathead and being on the black and orange mats," Thompson said. "What a special moment for these wrestlers, the Flathead wrestlers, and I'm still soaking it in, man, it's so special. We've had so much adversity this year, to end on that high note of bringing home a state championship after our girls did it last month, that's the icing on the cake."

Like Flathead, Billings Senior had just one individual state champion: Thomas Klepps at 170 pounds. But the Broncos got a lot of points from Junior Madrid (third at 103 pounds), Demetrious Salarias (third at 113), Holden Howe (fourth at 113), Jalen Vladic (second at 120), Logan Cole (third at 126), Idren Peak (third at 132), Shawn Miller (third at 160) and Isaiah Murch (fourth at 160). Klepps ends his high school career as a two-time state champion after winning at 160 a year ago.

After a bumpy start to his high school career, Klepps walks away with two titles after following in the footsteps of his older brother, four-time state champion Charlie Klepps.

"Growing up he was a good wrestler always, but I was going like 1-32 every season, not winning many matches," Thomas Klepps said. "And then freshman year didn't place, sophomore year took sixth, then I came in last year and won it and won it this year too, so it feels pretty good to climb like that."

Billings West freshman Keyan Hernandez started his high school career with a state title at 103 pounds, and his teammates, Jase Van Pelt and Drake Rhodes, added championships for the Golden Bears at 113 and 152, respectively.

"Last year it was rough being runner-up and not doing it so this year I had to do it," Van Pelt said. "What's going through my mind is I'm not going to take defeat again so this year my mind was set on being a champion and that's what I did."

"We were wrestling tough and every match we wrestled tough, win or lose, we all went out and tried our best no matter what and I think that's what got us to seven people in the finals," Hernandez added.

Rhodes, a state champion as a freshman two years ago at 113, was a runner-up last season at 126 before righting the ship on Saturday evening.

"It was definitely hard losing last year and seeing a lot of my teammates lose







(Saturday)," Rhodes said. "I know what they're going through. Just takes a lot of hard work to get back to be the best. It was definitely fun and exciting."

Helena Capital and Great Falls High also had multiple individual winners on Saturday, with Carson DesRosier (138 pounds) and Noah Kovick (205) winning titles for the Bruins and Liam Swanson (182) and Ethan DeRoche (285) claiming championships for the Bison.

"It's cool that I finished that off like that, and now I get to go wrestle for (Providence) and see how that goes," Swanson said. "I want to win a national championship so that'll be awesome to see how I do."

"The plan was just to go and try and find a shot and just trying to break him down, tire him out, go with the heavy hands and a winning mindset," DeRoche added. "That's what it truly came down to and it worked out perfectly."

Kovick moved up in weight after winning the 182-pound title last season to challenge two-time champ Elijah Davis of Great Falls High. Kovick won the bout in a 5-1 decision.

"It's awesome, I bumped up to wrestle him. I didn't want to wrestle the same kids I did last year and I beat the crap out of and just walk my way to a state title," Kovick said. "I wanted to earn it, I wanted to have a challenge, so I came and challenged the two-time defending state champ and I proved myself (Saturday) so it's awesome."

"I felt some pressure going into this match but just because I've won in the past or lost in the past, it doesn't change, you just have to go out there with the mindset of just trying to do the best to do your thing and get anything you can get, win or lose," DesRosier added.

Bozeman High sophomore Avery Allen won his second state title, pinning Great Falls High's Irish Furthmyre in the 145-pound championship, and Teegan Vasquez of Kalispell Glacier, also a sophomore, won the 120-pound bracket. For complete results, please click [here](#).

"It feels good. All of the hard work pays off and yeah it's a good feeling," Allen said. "I just know that everyone's tough and you've got to respect everyone and same thing it's just another wrestling match so I wrestle the same every time."

For Vasquez, his celebration will include a big dinner to celebrate his birthday, which falls on March 1. He waited to celebrate, though, so he could make weight at state. Now, the celebration is on.

"It definitely means a lot," Vasquez said. "I was just ready to go wrestle my style, just be dominant like I was raised to be and coached to be so it was pretty dang cool. Love the competition, this definitely makes it more fun to wrestle instead of just having no competition, it makes me want to get that just more."



# BRAVE BRAWLERS BACK ON TOP



Flathead's Ethan Freund celebrates after defeating Billings West's Jesse Aarness at 126 lbs. for first place at the State AA wrestling tournament at Flathead High School on Saturday. (Casey Kreider/Daily Inter Lake)

by **FRITZ NEIGHBOR**

Daily Inter Lake | March 6, 2021  
11:08 PM

The Flathead Brave Brawlers got back to the top of the State AA wrestling heap, and it took about two dozen of them to make it happen on their home mats. "Total team effort," veteran head coach Jeff Thompson said of the

school's third title in five seasons and ninth overall. "Twenty-two of our 23 wrestlers scored points. It took a family.

"We had two semifinal matches we pulled off in the final seconds, with Ethan Freund and Asher Kemppainen. That's just exciting. It shows our guys are hungry." Freund, a 126-pound sophomore who spent last season in Kelso, Washington, was the Brawlers' lone individual champion. Like his semifinal match (a late takedown decided it), the final was tense: He and Billings West's Jesse Aarness traded stalling points in the third period, which ended 3-3.

In overtime Freund scored the takedown to win. That put Flathead at 247 points; Billings Senior ended up second at 239.5. In reality the team race was decided the match before Freund's. Glacier's standout 120-pounder, Teegan Vasquez, downed Senior's Jalen Vladic 8-0 for his second state title.

Also helping was Chase Youso, a junior who suffered an upset loss in Friday's 170 quarterfinals to Great Falls C.M. Russell's Gabriel Price. As Saturday wore on, Senior began making big points in the wrestlebacks to narrow Flathead's once sizable lead to 1.5.



Youso, meanwhile, made his way through the blood rounds to the third-fourth match — and there was Price again. This time the Brawler got the win in 3 minutes, 25 seconds, ending a match he led just 2-0. "It was a little better match this time," Youso said. "It was coming close. I lucked out and was able to secure the pin. Winning that match was a big relief I think for the team, and for me." Senior had two wrestlers in the finals and Flathead had four.

Kemppainen — he had a reversal in the final 20 seconds of his semifinal to win 6-5 — lost to Missoula Big Sky's





Izzy Moreno at 132; Noah Poe-Hatten lost to three-time champion Hunter Meinzen of Big Sky at 160; and Fin Nadeau (152) was runner-up for a third straight year, this time to Drake Rhodes of Billings West.

"Three different times," Thompson said of Nadeau. "You have to look at the positive: So many wrestlers would love to be in his position, to be a three-time state finalist. He's lost to some horses every year, too. He'll keep working hard, keep grinding and hopefully next year will be his year." This was supposed to be Ryan Nelson's year. Another Washington transfer who finished second in Class 1A in Washington a year ago, Nelson nearly missed this state tournament after an appendectomy. He managed two Friday wins and then fell quickly in Saturday's 182 semifinal. Nelson defaulted from there.

"He was in a lot of pain," Thompson said. "He was in the hospital for almost 10 days. Had an IV in his arm until Tuesday night. He drilled a little bit Wednesday and Thursday and... he has the heart of a lion to come and compete in state." Nelson managed nine team points — a couple more than Flathead's margin of

victory. Youso, after his loss, stuck around and scored 20 for his team. Freund felt Flathead's wrestling room prepared him well for what he faced this weekend.

"Every day is a grind," he said. "It's a state tournament every day, when you go live. My partner every day (Kempainen) just took second. We go hard; no excuses. That's how we get better."

"You can't run, you can't hide," Thompson added. "There's just tough workout partners you have to battle with every day." Just three seniors dot the Flathead roster, which sets the Brawlers up nicely for next year. Two of them placed: Nelson and Gaige Winter were both sixth.

Gabe Lake beat teammate Cade Troupe for third at 145; Youso was also third; Anders Thompson was fourth at 138 and Cade Gardner was fourth at 120; Logan Stansberry was sixth at 120.

In case you missed it, Flathead completed a sweep Saturday. The Bravettes won the first-ever state girls' wrestling championship a few weeks back.

"Kind of historic," Thompson said.

Besides Vasquez and Meinzen, repeat champions were Senior's Thomas Klepps at 170, Bozeman's Avery Allen at 145; West's Jesse Aarness at 126; Great Falls' Ethan Deroche at 285 and Noah Kovick of Capital at 205.





# FLATHEAD COMPLETES STATE WRESTLING SWEEP

TWO WEEKS AFTER THE GIRLS WON THEIR INAUGURAL STATE TITLE, THE FLATHEAD BOYS WRESTLING TEAM EARNED THE PROGRAM'S 10TH TITLE

BY MICAH DREW  
MARCH 7, 2021



Flathead's Fin Nadeau walks off the mat after his final's match loss to Drake Rhodes of Billings West at the AA state wrestling tournament at Flathead High School Kalispell on March 6, 2021. Rhodes won by decision. Hunter D'Antuono | Flathead Beacon

The Brave Brawlers won the state wrestling championship on March 6, the third title for Flathead in the last five years and the program's 10th overall. Two weeks ago, the girls team made history by winning the inaugural state championship.

Flathead had one individual champion, Ethan Freund at 126 and three runners up, Asher Kemppainen, Fin Nadeau and Noah Poe-Hatten at 132, 152 and 160-pounds respectively.

The Braves came into Saturday's wrestle-back and championship rounds already in first place, and behind a typically strong performance in the so-called blood round and 12 top-six state placers, Flathead (247 points) held its spot ahead of Billings Senior (239 1/2) and 2020 state champion Great Falls (192).





# TROPHY TIME

Flathead completed its sweep of Class AA state wrestling, just one highlight from a weekend full of championship action from Northwest Montana's prep athletes

BY MICAH DREW | MARCH 9, 2021



What a year," Flathead wrestling coach Jeff Thompson said after the conclusion of the Class AA state wrestling tournament on March 5-6. "Both the boys and girls wrestling teams went undefeated in duals and both won the 2021 state championships. Life is good in the Brave Brawler wrestling world."

Two weeks after the Flathead girls won the inaugural state championship, Thompson predicted that a home-gym advantage would benefit the boys team. The team proved him right as the Braves came away with their third state title in five years, after back-to-back wins in 2017 and 2018. The program now has 10 state titles on the boys side, the third most in Class AA.

"Success is about routine and doing the same thing over and over to perfection," Thompson said. "Our boys got to warm up on our own mats in their wrestling room that they have spent hours and hours practicing on ... and got to compete on their own black and orange mats in their gym surrounded by their teachers, administrators and teammates."

While the Braves had just one individual champion, Ethan Freund at 126, they had high scorers in nearly every weight class. Out of 23 state qualifiers, 22 won a match and scored at least one point. "That is a total team effort," Thompson said. "Every point matters and we knew we had depth."







The Braves came into the March 6 wrestle-back and championship rounds already in first place, and behind a typically strong performance in the so-called blood round and 12 top-six state placers, Flathead (247 points) held its narrow lead ahead of Billings Senior (239 1/2) and 2020 state champion Great Falls (192). The 7.5-point margin of victory was the smallest in a state championship since 2000, when a mere three points decided the team champion.

Flathead assistant coach Dallas Stuker thought the Braves needed 12 placers and four finalists to win the meet, which is exactly how it played out. The Braves made the most of their scoring opportunities on the two-day tourney's final day. Flathead advanced 14 of its 23 state qualifiers to day two at the double-elimination event and only lost two wrestlers to the first consolation round, which Thompson calls the blood round. Winners after that round are guaranteed a top-six finish.

Freund, the team's only individual champion, was wrestling in a Montana state championship for the first time after moving from Washington last year. The sophomore entered the tournament as the top seed from the west and helped Flathead seal the team title with a 5-3 sudden victory in the final against Billings West's Jesse Aarness, who was denied a four-peat.

"He was the best not only at the state tournament but one of the best workout partners in the room," Thompson said, noting that Freund never missed a 7 a.m. workout or lifting session throughout the season. "[He] was as concerned about his new Flathead team winning the state championship as winning his own."

The Braves, fell just one win short of an individual titlist at three different weights. Junior Asher Kemppainen lost to Big Sky's Izzy Moreno in a 10-3 decision in the 132-pound final, sophomore Noah Poe-Hatten was unable to





repeat his early season win over Big Sky's Hunter Meinzen and lost in a 5-1 decision, and junior Fin Nadeau, at 152, lost in the finals for the third time in three years. Nadeau squared off against Billings West's Drake Rhodes, who won a second state title in a 7-2 decision.

Flathead's other placers were Cade Gardner (third at 120), Gabe Lake (third at 145), Chase Youso (third at 160), Anders Thompson (fourth at 138), Cade Troupe (fourth at 145), Logan Stansberry (sixth at 120), Ryan Nelson (sixth at 182), and Gaige Winter (sixth at 205).

Thompson pointed out that 20 of the state wrestlers return next year, including 10 placers and all four finalists. "A lot of coaches mention they have a young team, but this young team stepped up to the challenge," he said. "They were not waiting for the future. The future was now."

*The Flathead Braves pose with their trophy after winning the AA state wrestling tournament at Flathead High School Kalispell on March 6, 2021. Hunter D'Antuono | Flathead Beacon*

