

Whiting's title highlights strong state showing for area wrestlers

8 wrestlers place in top 6

PAGES B2-B11

Oconto Falls' Clayton Whiting wrestles Amery's Grant Cook in a Division 2 182-pound weight class quarterfinal match at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament on Feb. 26 at the Kohl Center in Madison.

MORGAN RODE | NEW MEDIA

BONDUEL WINS REGIONAL, B12 • 2 TEAMS LOSE REGIONAL TITLES, B13 • 3 ATHLETES SIGN LOI, B14-B15

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

Oconto Falls' Whiting wins 4th state title

He finishes with 163-5 career record

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

Oconto Falls senior Clayton Whiting capped a historic high school career with his fourth state title after winning the Division 2 182-pound weight class at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament on Feb. 26 at the Kohl Center in Madison.

Whiting won the first-place match with a 17-5 major decision win over Northwestern's Ian Smith.

The four state titles puts Whiting in elite company, as only 19 other wrestlers had accomplished the feat coming into this year's tournament.

"It means a lot that my work is paying off," said Whiting. "All those years of blood, sweat and tears finally came to reality, and I ended up getting my fourth one tonight."

Whiting was one of three wrestlers to win a fourth state title on championship night. While most of the four-time champions are in the lighter weight classes, Whiting won his titles at 152, 170 and 182 (twice).

Whiting's first title was at 152 pounds, making it the heaviest weight for the first title of the 22 four-time champs. Only four of those four-time champs have a title over 152, and Whiting is the only one to have a title over 160 pounds.

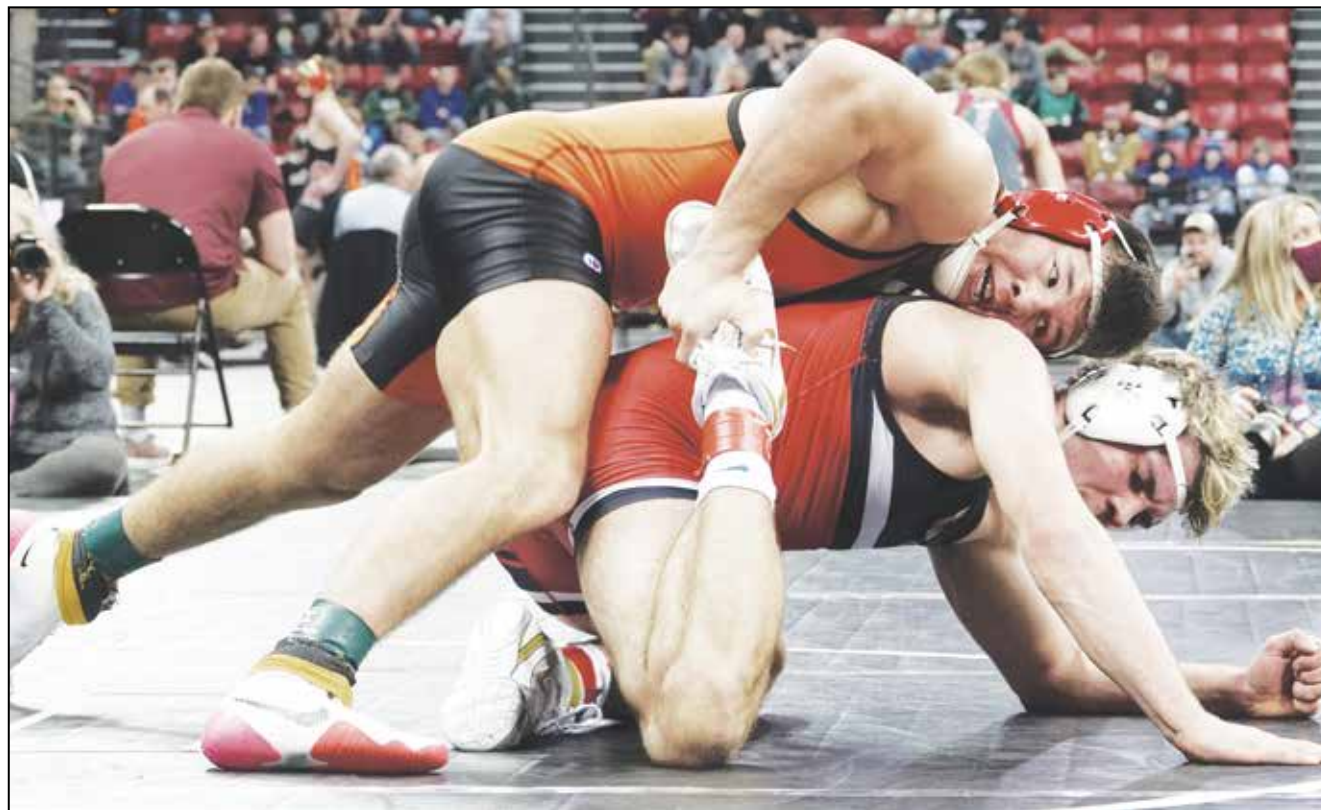
"Just hours and hours of work, day and night, nonstop," said Whiting of what it took to win four titles, adding that mental toughness and positivity were also a big part of his success.

Whiting finished 3-0 at state and 50-1 on the season.

After a bye, he earned a 19-4 technical fall win over Amery's Grant Cook in the quarterfinals. Whiting then pinned Turner's Cal Ries in 3:44 in a semifinal matchup to advance to the title match.

"My aggression was way more toned down," said Whiting of this year's state run. "I didn't want to rush anything, didn't want to make any simple mistakes throughout all my matches."

All 15 points Whiting allowed in the tournament came on escapes,



Oconto Falls' Clayton Whiting, top, wrestles Amery's Grant Cook in a Division 2 182-pound weight class quarterfinal match at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament on Feb. 26 at the Kohl Center in Madison.

MORGAN RODE | NEW MEDIA

with the Panther wrestler letting his opponents up.

Against Amery's Cook, Whiting had three first-period takedowns to take a 6-2 lead into the second period. Whiting then got a three-point nearfall from the top position before another takedown. In the final period, Whiting escaped from the bottom position before two more takedowns and a three-point nearfall to reach the 15-point threshold for a technical fall win.

In his win over Turner's Ries, Whiting had four takedowns in the first period for an 8-3 lead. He escaped the bottom position to start the second period and got a takedown six seconds later. After three more takedowns, Whiting finished the match off by pin.

Northwestern's Smith made Whiting work hard in the first-place match, but Whiting still made things look easy.

The Oconto Falls standout again led 8-3 after a period after four takedowns. He got two points on a reversal at the start of the second period and then got another two points on a takedown. In the final period of his high school career, Whiting escaped the bottom posi-

tion before tacking on four more points on two takedowns.

After the final whistle sounded, Whiting tossed his headgear to the mat and flexed each bicep before posing amid a loud ovation from the crowd. He then was congratulated by Northwestern coaches before going over to his coaching staff for high-fives and a hug from his dad Shane, who was part of the Panthers' three-person staff on the mat.

Whiting then ran up into the crowd to hug his mom Sarah and interact with his sister Taylor before returning to the court to be interviewed.

Whiting capped his phenomenal career with a 163-5 record. He only lost two matches after his freshman season.

The day before leaving for state, Whiting got word that he was the new No. 1 wrestler in the country in his weight class, according to FloWrestling.

"I'm like, 'Now I really gotta show Wisconsin who the No. 1 kid is really like,'" said Whiting of his reaction to that news.

The University of Missouri commit went 48-3 as a freshman

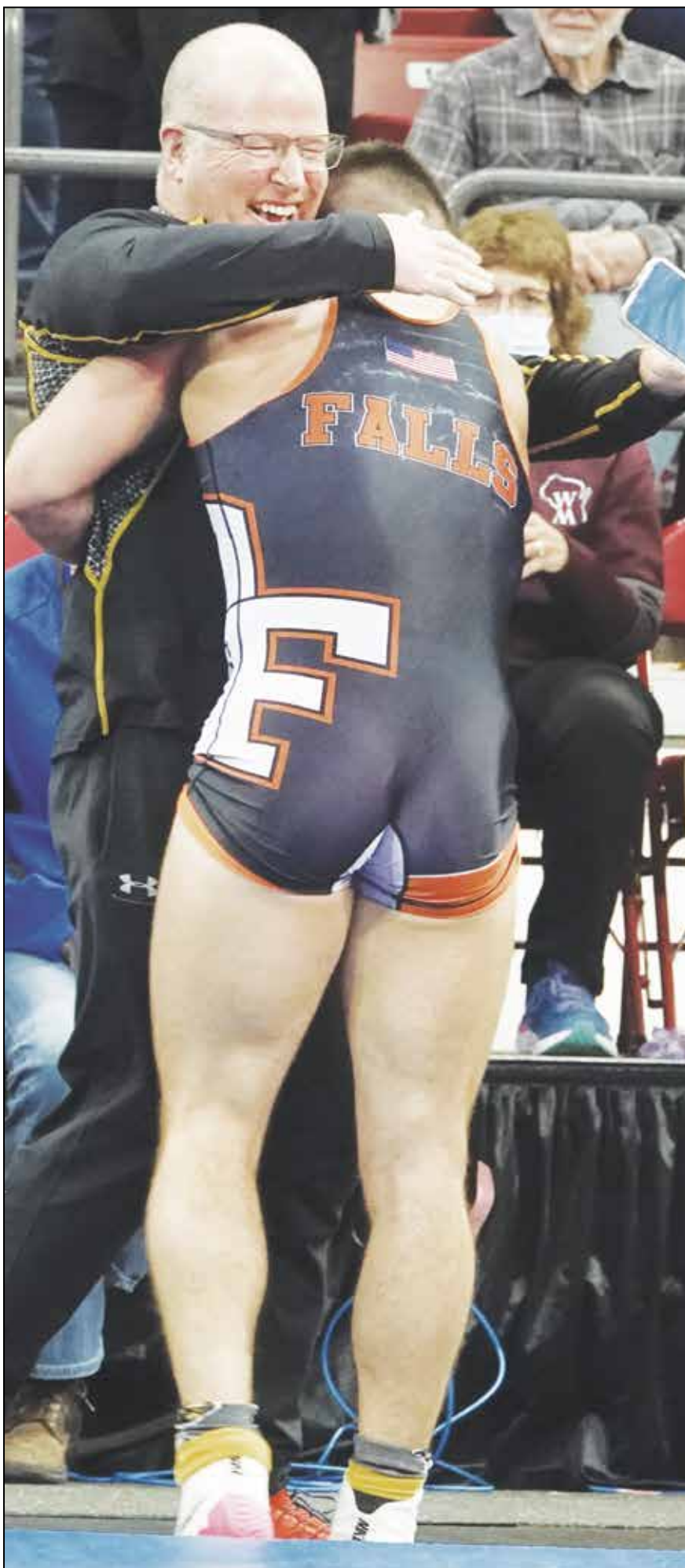
before a state title at 152 pounds. He finished 48-1 as a sophomore before securing the 170 weight class title. He posted a 17-0 mark during his COVID-19-altered junior season when he claimed his first 182 title.

Whiting will leave high school with four of the school's 18 individual state titles. He joined Jacob Morrissey (3), Riley Delzer (2) and Dewey Krueger (2) as the lone multiple-time champions in Panthers' history.

"I think my legacy is going to stay in there forever, and I think it means a lot to all the wrestlers that are incoming to my high school," Whiting said. "It's going to motivate them that anything is possible, and they can become just like me someday."

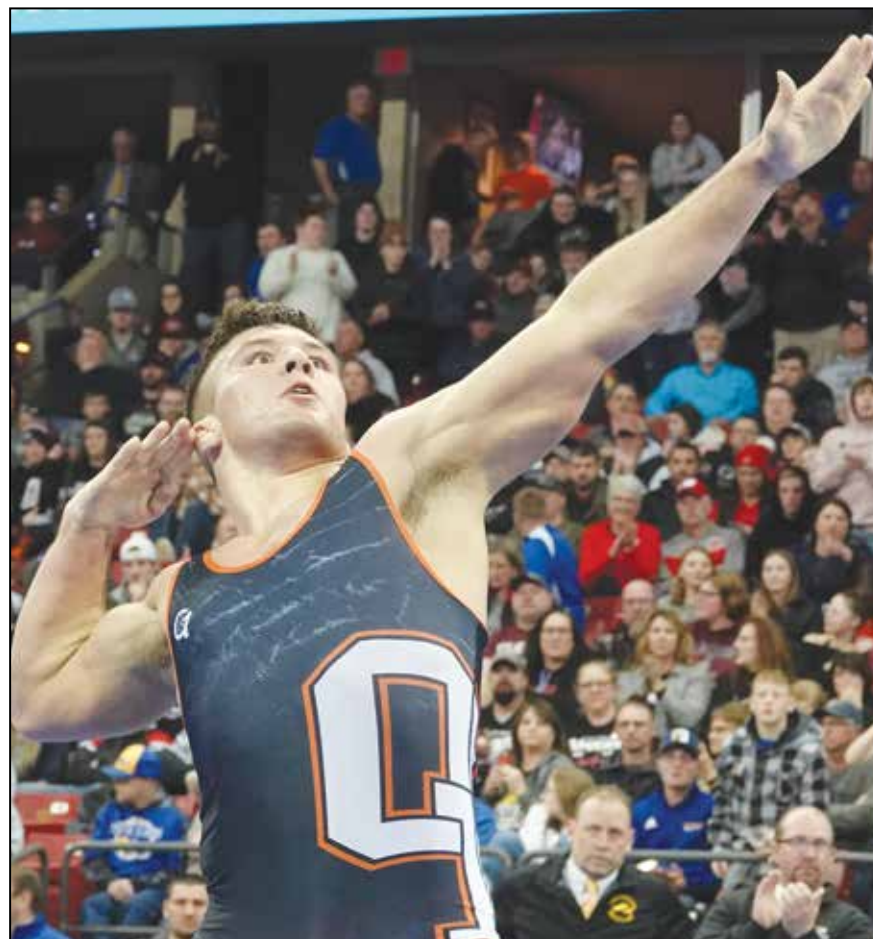
While Whiting's career at Oconto Falls has come to a close, his wrestling career as a whole is far from over.

Whiting, who also hopes to compete in the Olympics one day and win gold, will be a part of the Pittsburgh Wrestling Classic on March 25. He is part of Team USA and will wrestle in the team's dual against Team Pennsylvania at 182 pounds.



Oconto Falls' Clayton Whiting, front, hugs his dad Shane after winning his fourth state title during the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament on Feb. 26 at the Kohl Center in Madison.

MORGAN RODE | NEW MEDIA



Oconto Falls' Clayton Whiting celebrates his fourth state title after winning the Division 2 182-pound weight class first-place match at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament on Feb. 26 at the Kohl Center in Madison.

MORGAN RODE | NEW MEDIA

**CONVENIENT • TRUSTED
LOCALLY OWNED**

**Pig Stop Fuel Center -
Crystal Clean Car Wash**

Iverson's

**piggly
wiggly**



**409 E. HIGHLAND DR,
OCONTO FALLS**

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

Pulaski's Gibbons 2nd, Wells 3rd at state

Eggert takes 5th, while Woosencraft, Gille end seasons at state

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

Pulaski High School sent five individual wrestlers to the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament, held Feb. 24-26 at the Kohl Center in Madison. Of those, three athletes placed in the top six.

Trenton Gibbons placed second in the Division 1 182-pound weight class, while Mason Wells was third at 220 pounds and Ethan Eggert grabbed fifth at 113 pounds. Brady Gille (138) and Chase Woosencraft (170) dropped both of their state matches.

Gibbons opened the state tournament with two wins by pin on Thursday. He pinned Union Grove's Gianna Scacco in 2:42 and then took down De Pere's Michael Alexander in 5:03.

Gibbons trailed 2-0 against Scacco before pulling off a reversal to tie the match. Gibbons had another reversal in the second period before getting the pin.

The Pulaski junior was down 5-0 to Alexander before an escape in the second period. He trailed 7-1 before taking down Alexander in the third period and pinning him.

Gibbons picked up another thrilling win in the semifinals Friday night, winning 5-4 by ultimate tiebreaker over Waterford's Evan Danowski.

Danowski led 3-1 heading to the third period before Gibbons escaped and earned a point on a penalty to tie things up. After each wrestler escaped during overtime, Gibbons didn't let Danowski escape the bottom position in double overtime to earn the final point and win.

Gibbons then took on West Bend West's Connor Mirasola in the title match Saturday night, but he lost by pin in 28 seconds.

Wells lost just once on his way to third place.

Wells won by injury default over Port Washington's Jacob Peacy in his first match. Wells led 7-2 after the first period after a takedown, two two-point nearfalls and a penalty point.

The Pulaski junior then won a 14-6 major decision over Pewaukee's John Mohr in the quarterfinals.

Wells had two takedowns and a



Pulaski's Trenton Gibbons, top, wrestles Union Grove's Gianna Scacco during a Division 1 182-pound weight class match Feb. 24 at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament at the Kohl Center in Madison.

MORGAN RODE | NEW MEDIA

three-point nearfall in the first period to lead 7-1. He had two escapes and a takedown to win the second period 4-3. Mohr had a reversal to start the third period, but Wells escaped and took him down to seal his win.

"I stuck with my training and what got me here," said Wells on what he did well at state. "I finished my shots good. I wrestled tough and wrestled through the whistles."

In the semifinals Friday, Wells lost a 12-6 decision to Madison La Follette's Jackson Mankowski. It was a tight match going into the final period, but Mankowski got a takedown and three-point nearfall to pull away.

Wells won two tight decisions Saturday to grab third place. He first defeated Holmen's Carson Westcott 10-7 and then edged Brookfield East's Aaron Botsch 7-6 in the third-place match.

Against Westcott, Wells was down 7-6 entering the third period, but he pulled off a reversal and two-point nearfall to win it.

Wells trailed 6-4 in the third-place match but escaped from the bottom position before getting a takedown. Then he held on for the one-point



Pulaski's Mason Wells, bottom, wrestles Brookfield East's Aaron Botsch during the Division 1 220-pound weight class third-place match Feb. 26 at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament at the Kohl Center in Madison.

MORGAN RODE | NEW MEDIA

decision win.

"It's great; it feels amazing," Wells said of his third-place finish. "But I lost in the semis, and it's my goal next year to get past that."

To win a title next year, "I just got to keep training in the offseason and putting in the work and listen to my coaches and trust what they tell me," Wells said.

Eggert had a busy three days at state, posting a 4-2 record to take fifth.

His state run began with a 7-2 win over Holmen's Turner Campbell.

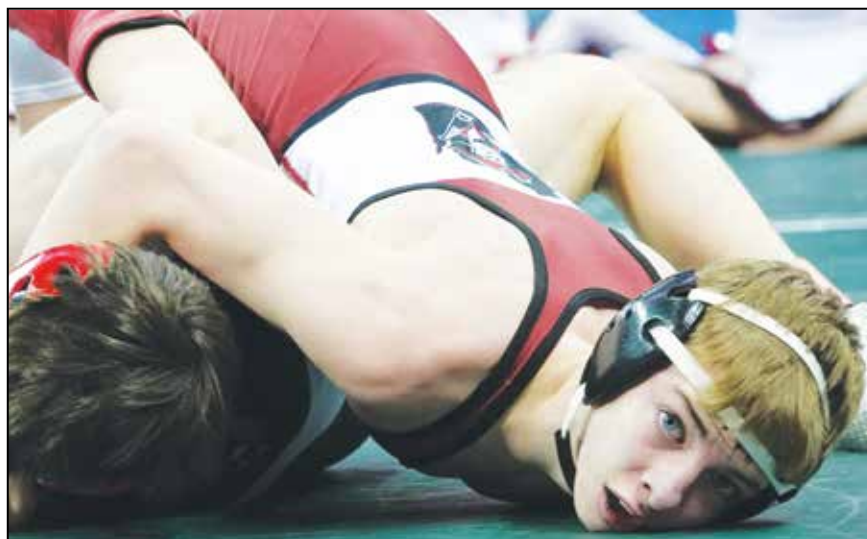
Eggert led 4-0 going to the third period after takedowns in the first and second. He upped the lead to 7-0 after getting a penalty point and reversal and eased to the win from there.

The junior then dropped an 8-0 major decision to West Bend West's Ben Bast, which sent him to the consolation bracket Friday.

Eggert opened consolation action with a pin in 3:59 over Mount Horeb/Barneveld's J.J. Poarch. The Red Raider wrestler got the only points in the first period on a takedown and then had an escape and takedown in the second period to take a 5-0 advantage. Poarch took him down in the third, but Eggert pulled a reversal and then got a penalty point to pull away before pinning Poarch.

Eggert then earned an 8-2 decision win over New Richmond's Luke Kamish to guarantee himself a spot on the podium.

Eggert outscored Kamish 5-1 in the second period after escaping and then taking him down twice. Kamish escaped in the third, but Eggert took him down again and added another point on a penalty to come away victorious.



Pulaski's Ethan Eggert, right, tries to pin Milton's Aiden Slama during the Division 1 113-pound weight class fifth-place match, held Feb. 26 at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament at the Kohl Center in Madison.

MORGAN RODE | NEW MEDIA

The Pulaski wrestler split his two matches Saturday. He lost a 10-5 decision to Slinger's Noah Tonsor before earning a 5-0 decision win over Milton's Aiden Slama in the fifth-place match.

Against Tonsor, Eggert earned his points on three escapes and a takedown. Eggert had a three-point nearfall and reversal against Slama.

"It means a lot, as I've had the goal

of placing at high school state since I was in grade school," said Eggert, who said he did well on his shots but struggled at times to stay in a good position, which let opponents get to his legs.

"Taking fifth gave me confidence and proved to myself that I am capable of doing big things if I keep working hard."

Gille opened state against

Kaukauna's Greyson Clark, losing a 16-0 technical fall. Clark went on to win the state title.

After Clark advanced, that moved Gille, a senior, to the consolation bracket Friday morning. He dropped a 7-1 decision to Arrowhead's Nate Druckrey, escaping in the third period for his point.

Woosencraft lost a 23-8 technical fall to Milton's Aeoden Sinclair in his first state match. Woosencraft earned all eight points on escapes. Sinclair went on to win the title at 170 pounds.

Woosencraft, a sophomore, then dropped a 6-0 decision to Kasey Gish of West Bend East in a consolation matchup.

"First off, state was an incredible experience," said Woosencraft. "I enjoyed every second of it and love each and every one of our fans; they never gave up on me and always believed in me."

He added that this year's state experience will help him in the final two years of his high school career.

Woosencraft finished the year with a 27-15 record, while Gille was 30-12. Eggert posted a 39-9 mark. Wells earned a strong 36-3 record, while Gibbons went 37-6.

sports@newmedia-wi.com

HIGH SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

By NEW MEDIA STAFF

GIRLS HOCKEY

Xavier co-op 7

Green Bay East co-op 6

The top-seeded Green Bay East co-op, also known as the Bay Area Ice Bears, lost a wild Division 1 sectional title game to the second-seeded Xavier co-op on Feb. 25 at the Mullett Ice Arena in Hartland.

The Green Bay East co-op, which rosters Pulaski players, wraps up the season with a 21-2-1 record.

Green Bay East co-op 3

Univ. School of Milwaukee co-op 1

The top-seeded Green Bay East co-op defeated the fifth-seeded University School of Milwaukee co-op on Feb. 23 in Green Bay.

It was the Green Bay East co-op's first playoff game after it received a bye.

BOYS HOCKEY

Lakeland Union 3

Antigo/Witt-Birn 1

The fourth-seeded Antigo/Wittenberg-Birnamwood co-op was defeated by top-seeded Lakeland Union on Feb. 23 in Minocqua.

Witt-Birn's Owen Dickman scored the first goal of the game for the co-op, but Lakeland Union scored twice in the third period to come away with the win.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Bonduel 68

Menominee Indian 62

Bonduel topped Menominee Indian in a Central Wisconsin Conference-East Division clash on Feb. 24 in Keshena.

Noah Weier hit four 3-pointers and led Bonduel with 20 points. Jon Sell made six shots and six free throws to score 18 points.

Reece Stoltenow chipped in 13 points for the Bears, while Charlie Tauchen had 11 points.

Bryce Dixon scored 16 points to pace Menominee Indian. Isaiah Moss provided 15 points, while Lloyd Reevis had 12 points. Joshua Besaw and Wendell Waukau contributed 10 and nine points, respectively.

Lena 65

Niagara 34

Max Beyer powered Lena to a Marinette & Oconto Conference win over Niagara on Feb. 24 in Lena.

Beyer made 10 3-pointers and scored 39 points to outscore Niagara by himself.

Logan Shallow added 11 points for Lena, while Lane Whiting had eight points.

Tigerton 73

White Lake 65

Tigerton defeated White Lake in a CWC-North clash on Feb. 24 in White Lake.

Ryder Graham led Tigerton with 24 points and 12 rebounds.

Colby Wanta scored 22 points for the Tigers, while Zeke Gripen-trog had 17 points.

Gresham 78

Northland Lutheran 66

Gresham earned a CWC-North road win over Northland Lutheran on Feb. 24 in Kronenwetter.

Lukas Pecore knocked down four 3-pointers and scored 25 points for Gresham. Will Jensen added 15 points, while Belasaire Vele had 13 and Jack Haffner eight.

Vele also dished out 13 assists and grabbed eight rebounds. Haffner had five assists and five boards, while Jensen grabbed six rebounds.

Blade Hoffman was credited with seven rebounds for Gresham.

Witt-Birn 78

Shiocton 64

Wittenberg-Birnamwood took down Shiocton in a CWC-East battle on Feb. 24 in Wittenberg.

Simon Schairer powered Witt-Birn with 26 points, making 12 field goals and two free throws.

Ben Wesolowski and Jack Fraaza each tallied 13 points, while Ben Flak had 10 points.

Ashwaubenon 66

Pulaski 53

Pulaski dropped a Fox River Classic Conference matchup to Ashwaubenon on Feb. 24 in Pulaski.

Derek Shaw made three 3-pointers and scored 16 points for Pulaski.

Brady Wotruba added 14 points for the Red Raiders, while Gatlin Robaidek had seven points.

Shawano 60

Pulaski 55

Shawano outscored Pulaski by six in the second half to claim a nonconference win on Feb. 21 in Shawano.

Michael Metcalf-Grassman scored 29 points to power Shawano to victory. He hit four 3-pointers among his nine field goals, and added seven free throws.

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING



Bonduel's Tyson Bogacz, right, wrestles Boyceville's Ira Bialzik during a Division 3 160-pound weight class consolation match Feb. 25 during the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament at the Kohl Center in Madison.

MORGAN RODE | NEW MEDIA

Bogacz claims 6th at D3 160 weight class

Bonduel junior caps year with 43 wins

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

Bonduel High School junior Tyson Bogacz earned a sixth-place finish in the Division 3 160-pound weight class at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament, which ran Feb. 24-26 at the Kohl Center in Madison.

Bogacz finished with a 1-3 record at state and capped the season with a 43-11 record.

"I wish I could've been higher on the podium," said Bogacz. "My sixth-place finish this year just means I have a lot of work to do this offseason. I learned more than enough from this experience.

"This finish tells and shows me there's still work to be done if I want to get to where I want to be by next year."

Bogacz had a bye and didn't have to wrestle the first night of state. He opened his state run against Aquinas' Calvin Hargrove, dropping an 11-7 decision.

Bogacz had the first takedown, but Hargrove got three points on an escape and takedown to lead 3-2 after one period. The Aquinas wrestler then scored five points off a reversal and three-point nearfall to take a commanding 8-2 lead, but Bogacz pulled off a reversal of his own for the final points of the period.

In the final period, Bogacz escaped the bottom position and then got a takedown with about 45 seconds left to cut the deficit to one. After Hargrove escaped, he took down Bogacz with just over 25 sec-

onds left and hung on for the win.

The loss sent Bogacz into the consolation bracket, where he picked up a 9-2 decision win over Boyceville's Ira Bialzik.

Bogacz had the lone points in the first period on a takedown and then scored five points in the next period on an escape, takedown and two-point nearfall. The junior upped his lead to nine after a takedown in the third period. Bialzik pulled off a reversal with 25 seconds left, but Bogacz didn't surrender any more points the rest of the way to claim the win.

On the final day of the tournament, Bogacz dropped a 9-3 decision to Wabeno/Laona/Three Lakes' Piersson Czaplinski before losing a 6-5 decision to Hargrove in the fifth-place match.

Against Czaplinski, Bogacz trailed 2-0 after a period before

escaping late in the second period. Czaplinski got a takedown with just over 10 seconds left to take a 4-1 lead. In the final period, Czaplinski and Bogacz each had reversals before Czaplinski got three more points on an escape and takedown in the final 15 seconds.

In his second showdown with Hargrove, Bogacz scored the first takedown before the Aquinas wrestler escaped and then took him down with five seconds left in the opening period. Bogacz got the only point in the next period on an escape and then took the lead after a three-point nearfall about 30 seconds into the final period. Seconds later, Hargrove pulled off a reversal and then eventually got two more points on a nearfall with 40 seconds left to emerge victorious.

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

Panthers' freshman Bozile makes podium at D2 126 weight class

Pankratz finishes with 1-2 mark

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

Along with Clayton Whiting's state title, Oconto Falls had Graeson Pankratz and Cole Bozile competing at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament, which ran Feb. 24-26 at the Kohl Center in Madison.

Bozile came away with a sixth-place finish in the Division 2 126-pound weight class, while Pankratz fell a win short of making the podium at 120 pounds.

"It's pretty awesome to wrestle my last matches at state," said Pankratz, a senior. "Not many people get to do that."

Bozile's state run began with a 6-2 decision win over Adams-Friendship's Jordan Dolata on Thursday night.

All the scoring came in the final period, with Bozile and then Dolata pulling off reversals. Bozile got another reversal before a two-point nearfall to pull off the win and advance to the quarterfinals.

Bozile faced Neillsville/Greenwood/Loyal's Derek Zschernitz in the quarterfinals and won another 6-2 decision.

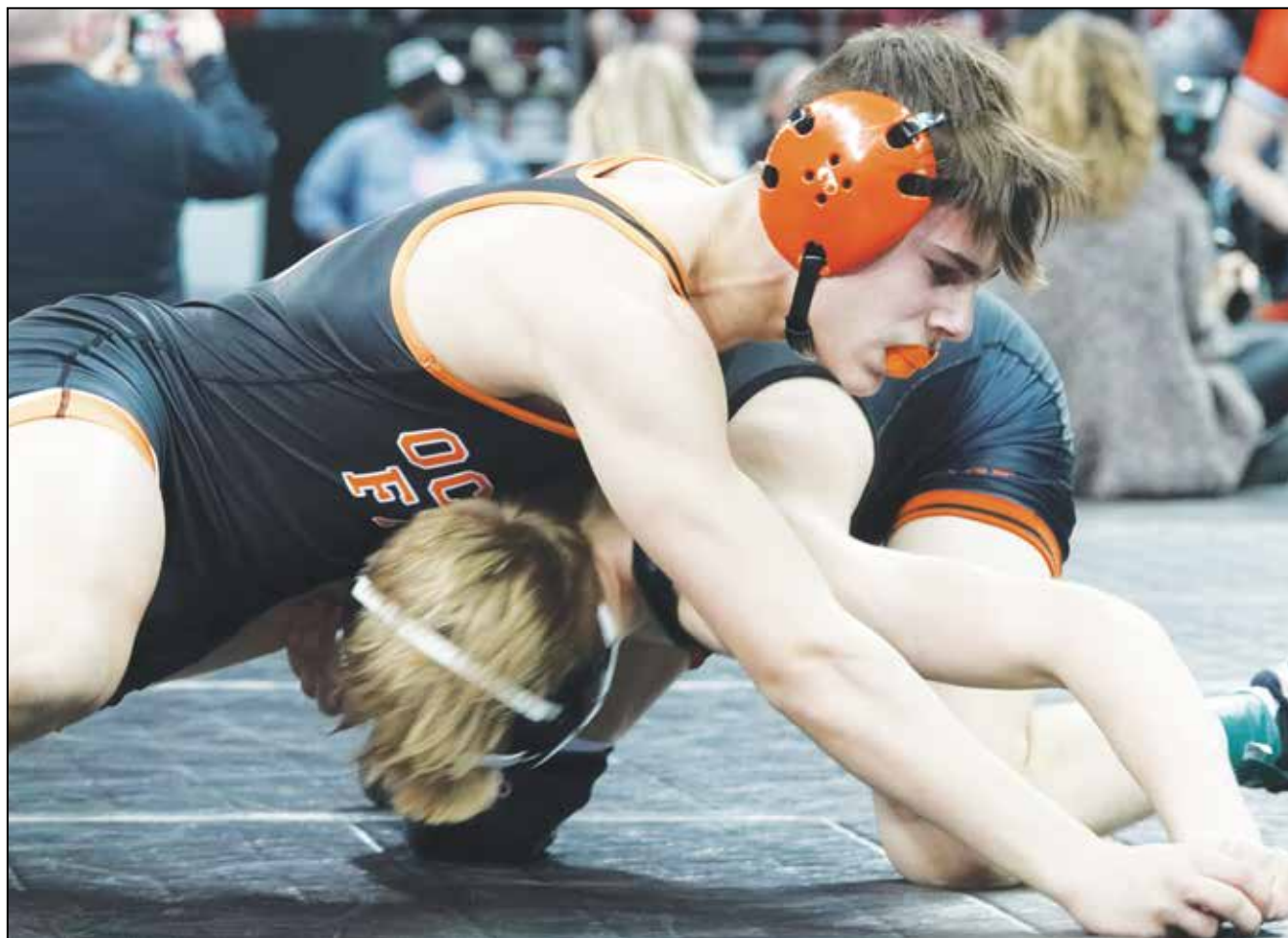
Bozile fell behind early on but pulled a reversal to tie the match. In the second period, Bozile started in the top position and never gave it up, adding two points on a nearfall near the end of the period. In the final period, Bozile earned another two points on a reversal to seal up his win.

Bozile squared off with Portage's Chase Beckett in the semifinals Friday night. Beckett won a 10-0 major decision and then went on to win the state title.

The loss sent Bozile to the consolation bracket, where he wrestled two matches Saturday.

Bozile dropped a 7-0 decision to Campbellsport's Ostin Blanchard and then lost a 4-3 decision to Ashland's Austin Defoe in the fifth-place match.

Against Defoe, Bozile trailed the entire match before getting a take-



Oconto Falls' Cole Bozile, top, wrestles Portage's Chase Beckett in a Division 2 126-pound weight class semifinal match Feb. 25 at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament at the Kohl Center in Madison.

MORGAN RODE | NEW MEDIA

down with just under 10 seconds to wrestle to tie things up. Defoe escaped to claim the win.

"I think I did great — not the outcome I would've liked, but I fought hard," said Bozile of his state tournament. "I think that I could've wrestled better on my feet and getting out on bottom."

The freshman was thrilled to end his year on the state podium and thanked his wrestling partners for helping him get there. He's excited for what's to come in the next three years.

"This finish makes me want to be standing higher on that podium next year," said Bozile. "The state experience was also nothing but the best, and now I know what I have to come in the next three years."

Pankratz began his state tournament Thursday evening against Win-

neconne's Mason Sternard. Pankratz won a 7-0 decision, controlling the match from start to finish.

Pankratz got a takedown about 30 seconds into the match and held that position the rest of the period. In the next period, Pankratz got another takedown. He started in the bottom position in the third and escaped before getting a late takedown to seal his win.

In the quarterfinals Friday, Pankratz was pinned in 4:31 by Neillsville/Greenwood/Loyal's Luke Dux.

Pankratz trailed 6-2 after a period after escaping twice and then escaped twice in the second period, but trailed 10-4. Dux escaped, took down Pankratz and then pinned him in the final period.

It was a similar outcome for Pankratz in a consolation match Friday afternoon against East Troy's Jonah

Edwards, who pinned Pankratz in 4:21.

Pankratz grabbed the lead with an escape and takedown in the second period, but Edwards responded with an escape, takedown and three-point nearfall to surge ahead. He then pulled a reversal before pinning Pankratz in the final period.

Pankratz was pleased with how he wrestled Thursday but said he got caught in some positions and put on his back during his Friday matches. Despite falling short of his expectations, he was happy to end his career on the biggest stage.

"It was cool to experience the tournament one more time, and there's no better place to wrestle my last match," said Pankratz.

Pankratz finished the season with a 37-12 record, while Bozile was 24-9.

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

Comins takes 6th at D3 106 weight class



Lena's Dylan Comins, top, wrestles Fennimore's Amryn Nutter during a Division 3 106-pound weight class consolation match Feb. 26 at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament at the Kohl Center in Madison.

MORGAN RODE | NEW MEDIA

Junior breaks school record for wins in a season

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

Lena High School junior Dylan Comins posted a 2-3 record on his way to a sixth-place finish in the Division 3 106-pound weight class at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament, which ran Feb. 24-26 at the Kohl Center in Madison.

"I accomplished what I wanted to, just to make the podium," said Comins, who finished the season with a 50-10 record, helping him set a new school record for wins in a season.

He expressed disappointment at ending his state experience with

a loss. "I didn't wrestle up to my potential in my last match, but I'm happy with my state run."

Comins opened his state run Thursday night against Cadott's Kaleb Lodahl, winning an 18-1 technical fall.

Comins controlled the match from start to finish. He got the first takedown before a three-point nearfall about a minute into the match. Lodahl escaped shortly after, but Comins got another takedown and three-point takedown before the first period expired.

In the second period, Comins pulled off a reversal from the bottom position before two three-point nearfalls helped him reach the 15-point-plus advantage to call the match by technical fall.

"It was awesome to wrestle in the Kohl Center," said Comins. "The atmosphere of everything is just unexplainable."

In the quarterfinals the following

day, Comins dropped a 13-7 decision to Glenwood City's Wyatt Unser.

Unser had all five first-period points on a takedown and three-point nearfall, before Comins won the second period 4-1. He had two takedowns to one Unser escape.

In the final period, Unser escaped the bottom position before Comins got a takedown to trim his deficit to one. Unser took over the match with the next six points on an escape, takedown and three-point nearfall before Comins got a late escape.

The loss sent Comins into the consolation bracket, where he pinned Auburndale's Derek Godard in 2:01 to guarantee himself a place on the podium.

It was Godard that led 5-0 after a period, but Comins got a takedown halfway through the second period that led to the pin.

Comins wrestled twice on the final day of state. He dropped an 18-2 technical fall to Fennimore's Amryn Nutter

and then lost a 9-3 decision to Unser.

Against Nutter, Comins trailed 2-0 about three minutes into the match before Nutter got a takedown and trio of nearfalls to go up 12-0. Comins had the first takedown of the final period, but Nutter escaped, took down Comins and got a three-point nearfall to end the match.

In Comins' second match against Unser, the Lena junior trailed 7-0 going to the third period. Unser scored the first point of the last period before Comins picked up a point on a penalty before getting a late takedown. He then let Unser escape but couldn't bring him down again.

Comins' state experience the past two years has him planning big things for his final high school season.

"Next year I will be hungrier to get higher on the podium after I got a taste of what it is like to win in Madison," said Comins.

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

Shawano's Young and Smits fall short of Division 1 state podium

Young wins pair of matches

By **MORGAN RODE**
Sports Editor

Shawano Community High School wrestlers Caden Young and Jackson Smits fell short of top-six finishes during the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament, which ran Feb. 24-26 at the Kohl Center in Madison.

Young went 2-2 in the Division 1 170-pound weight class while Smits, a senior, dropped his lone state match at 220 pounds.

"Being my last wrestling season, just like everybody else, I did not want it to end," said Smits. "Making it to the state tournament gave me more time to do what I love with the people that I love. In the end, I am just grateful to have gotten more time."

Young opened his state run Thursday afternoon against New Berlin West/Eisenhower's Jack Gillis, winning a tight 8-6 decision.

Young dominated the first period, taking down Gillis three times before allowing three escapes. Gillis tied the match with an escape and takedown in the next period.

The Shawano junior started the third period in the bottom position, and after drawing a stalling call, picked up the go-ahead point on a penalty. He got his final point on an escape.

The win moved Young into the quarterfinals against Arrowhead's Noah Mulvaney, who topped Young in a 12-6 decision.

Mulvaney got two takedowns to one Young escape in the first period. Mulvaney scored all five points in the next period on an escape, takedown and two-point nearfall to take control. Young continued to battle in the final period, cutting into the deficit with a takedown and two-point nearfall, but a Mulvaney escape and takedown sealed the match.

The loss meant Young moved to the consolation bracket Friday. He began consolation action with a 10-3



Shawano's Caden Young, top, wrestles Union Grove's Travis Moore during a Division 1 170-pound consolation match Feb. 25 at the 2022 WIAA State Individual Wrestling Tournament at the Kohl Center in Madison.

MORGAN RODE | NEW MEDIA

decision win over Muskego's Matt Kinzel.

Young controlled the match, going up 5-0 after a takedown and three-point nearfall in the first period and escape in the second. Kinzel escaped in the final period, but Young secured the win with a takedown and two-point nearfall.

Young's season came to a close after a 9-2 decision loss to Union Grove's Travis Moore.

Moore got a takedown in the first period and escape in the second to go up 3-0 before a three-point nearfall in the third period. Young pulled off a reversal, but eventually ran out of time.

"For me, my state tournament as a whole was underwhelming," said

Young. "I feel like I didn't wrestle to the best of my abilities."

Despite falling short of his expectations, Young believes he can build on the experience.

"This is definitely going to help motivate me to reach the top of that podium," said Young, who added he enjoyed the state experience.

Smits' state match came against Holmen's Carson Westcott on Thursday afternoon. Westcott won a 9-4 decision, then lost in the next round, meaning Smits was eliminated from the consolation competition.

Smits fell behind 2-0 before escaping early in the second period. Westcott then got a takedown and three-point nearfall to make it 7-1.

In the final period, Smits got a

takedown and then kept the pressure on, eventually getting a point on a stalling call. The senior eventually ran out of time, with Westcott picking up late points on a penalty and escape.

"My match did not go the way I hoped it would, but I rest easy knowing that I left everything out there on the floor of the Kohl Center," said Smits. "All in all, the state experience is one that I will never forget. I am truly blessed to have had this opportunity to make more memories with my coaches, teammates and family."

Smits finished the season with a 32-9 record, while Young was 28-4.