

Nokomis, Foxcroft shine in early events

BY ERNIE CLARK
BDN STAFF

‘Tis the season for big, multi-team high school wrestling tournaments around the state, and the early returns were good last week-end for Nokomis of Newport and Foxcroft Academy.

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

Nokomis, now in Class A under the condensed two-class statewide format approved by the Maine Principals’ Association earlier this year, scored an impressive victory at the Tiger Invitational tournament hosted by Gardiner Area High School.

The Warriors scored 150 points to edge runner-up Sanford by 10

points. Three more Class A schools were next among the 18-team field, with Cony of Augusta (105), Westbrook (95.5) and Portland (71) rounding out the top five.

Coach Scott Preble’s Nokomis squad advanced seven wrestlers to the championship finals, with Josh Brown (113 pounds), Quinton Richards (138), Kolin Fraser (145), Christopher Wilson (195) and Hunter Glidden (285) all winning individual titles, and Jacob Booth (120) and David Wilson (152) secured second-place finishes.

Other individual winners were Noah Dumas (106) and Max Storey (220) of Cony, Calvin Thompson (120) of Monmouth Academy, Peter Del Gallo (126) of Gardiner, Isaac Taylor (132) of Erskine Academy of South

China, Zach Elowitch (152) and Clau-tel Buba (171) of Portland, Josh Smith (160) of York/Traip Academy of Kittery and Brandon Lajoie (182) of Westbrook

At Rumford, Class A Noble of North Berwick captured the 17-school Mountain Valley-Franklin Savings Bank tournament, but the Knights got all they could handle from Class B Foxcroft Academy.

Coach Luis Ayala’s Ponies led entering the consolation semifinals and went on to crown three individual champions and three runners-up as well as getting one third-place effort to finish a close second with 137.5 points, just 3½ points shy of Noble.

Host Mountain Valley placed third with 111 points, with Dirigo of

Dixfield (108) and defending Class B state champion Ellsworth (92) rounding out the top five in a field that included six Class A programs.

Foxcroft got individual championships from Breyer Manchester at 106 pounds, Zach Caron at 145 and Brandon Brock at 185.

Manchester pinned Vinny DeRoche of Mountain Valley at 23 seconds of his final, and Caron de-cisioned DeRoche’s older brother, Eddie DeRoche, 8-4. Brock was awarded a forfeit victory over Seth Padelford in his final.

The Ponies’ Antonio Ayala (126 pounds), Michael Pendriss (220) and Conner Holmes (285) each secured a second-place finish, and teammate R.J. Nelson placed third at 132 pounds after pinning Dirigo’s Colin

Woodhead at 3:53 of their consolation final.

Other individual champions were Brendan Bruns (113 pounds) of Belfast; Danny Buteau (120) of Oak Hill of Wales; Austin Shorey (126) and Otto Kiesker (182) of Noble; Caleb Austin (132), Ethan Boucher (138) and Mike Provencher (152), all of Mountain Valley; Trent Goodman (160) of Ellsworth; Robert Hetherman (170) of Mt. Ararat of Topsham; Lucas MacDonald (220) of Dirigo and Michael Darling (285) of Deering of Portland.

The early season wrestling tournaments continue on three fronts Saturday — the Penobscot Valley Holiday Tournament in Howland, the Cony Duals in Augusta and the Atlantic Invitational in Wells.

Device

Continued from Page B5

“The goal is to see how far we can push the different laws of physics on material science,” Ferguson said.

He said that Alba-Technic spent 10 years developing its materials and incorporating them into a headband-style piece of protective head gear called the “Smarty.” It was designed specifically as a medical device to protect the elderly, and others prone to falls, from head injuries.

Made with a two-layer system, the outer material is soft in its normal state but becomes harder on impact. It surrounds an inner honeycomb layer of softer material that further dissipates the effect of a blow.

“Each component works well on its own, but when you combine them, there’s a synergistic effect that was entirely unexpected,” Ferguson said.

Alba-Technic has worked with the National Institutes



James Ferguson (left), founder and CEO of Alba-Technic LLC of Winthrop, shows off the “Smarty,” a piece of protective head gear designed for elderly people prone to falls. The company has developed special impact-absorbing materials that may have applications in protective sports equipment. The company has been named a finalist in the Head Health Challenge sponsored by the NFL, Under Armour, GE and the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

of Health, the Veterans Health Administration research laboratory in Tampa, Florida, and the University of Maine’s Advanced Biomechanics Laboratory for Reduction and Rehabilitation. Within six months, Alba-Technic expects to begin



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALBA-TECHNIC LLC

producing the Smarty in large quantities at an in-state facility staffed by Maine workers.

Ferguson is confident his company’s product can be used in many applications, including football helmets, protective equipment or

playing surfaces.

“They didn’t want us to focus strictly on helmets, although that is a real pressing need with all the concussion data that’s out there,” he said. “We know for a fact that we can help with a concussion.”

Patriots

Continued from Page B5

the focus he gets from the defense that allows others far more freedom in the passing game.

It’s the obvious comfort and confidence he brings to the entire team, most notably quarterback Tom Brady who looked more like himself completing 73 percent of his throws rather than the sub-55 percent he’d put up the last two weeks.

“I feel good, and it was great to be back out there,” Gronkowski told reporters. “There was urgency and there wasn’t urgency (to get back on the field). The urgency was, I just wanted to be back out there with my teammates. You miss a game, it’s hard to watch. At the same time, you have to be smart about it, which we were, as an organization and myself. Just rehabbed really hard and everything felt good, so I was good to go. “It’s always good to make a play, score a touchdown, but the icing on the cake is the win.”

His quarterback wasn’t exactly gushing after the game, but Brady’s performance and the outcome said as much as anything.

“He is just a huge influence on what we do offensively and he really toughed it out, so I am proud of him,” Brady said

And the results speak for themselves.

“It turned out good,” Gronkowski said of his knee and his return. “It was great to be back out there.”

DB Johnson strong

Defensive back Leonard Johnson made an impressive Patriots debut in Houston with a pair of passes defensed while serving as a fifth back in the secondary on 41 of 54 snaps.

This came after he joined the New England roster Dec. 9, less than a week after his Dec. 3 release from Tampa Bay’s injured reserve list.

Johnson, a fourth-year veteran who started 17 of the 48 games he played in over the three years with the Bucs was clearly excited to get back on the field, evidenced by his emotional post-play dances against Houston.

“He worked really hard this week,” coach Bill Belichick said, praising his newest defender. “It was a long week, a lot of extra work, a lot of extra meetings, some good competitive time on the practice field. Got to give him a lot of cred-

it — he came in, learned and his teammates embraced it.”

“Football is football. Once I was out there, I was just able to put myself in position to execute the calls. I don’t think I was rusty,” Johnson said. “My conditioning was a little bad, but there’s no way to get in football shape other than playing football.”

CB Ryan earns tough assignment

CB Logan Ryan spent the summer battling for his roster spot and a role on the new-look Patriots pass defense. Sunday night in Houston, Ryan was battling one of the best young wide receivers in the game in Texans breakout star DeAndre Hopkins.

Ryan chased Hopkins all over the field and while he got plenty of safety help over the top he deserves a bulk of the praise for holding one of the top pass catchers in the game today to just three catches for 52 yards, 40 coming on late hiccup with the Patriots already having the victory well in hand.

“I am definitely getting more confident as the season goes on,” Ryan said. “These are the kind of games where I want to be playing my best ball, so it is working out. When everyone said (this defense) was kind of falling off,

we put our heads down, went to work.

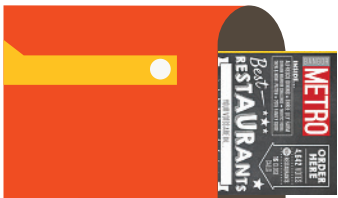
“He is a good player, and that is a tough matchup. I watched a lot of film. I watched every play he’s been a part of, I watched every route he’s run, and it paid off.”

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Injuries

Continued from Page B5

Carter to the practice squad and released wide receiver Austin Hill and defensive lineman Kelcy Quarles from the practice squad.

Ball spent his first two NFL seasons with the Broncos. In 21 regular-season games and three starts, he rushed for 731 yards and five touchdowns on 175 carries for Denver. The former second-round draft pick was released by the Broncos in September.

Easley sustained a thigh injury in the second half of last Sunday’s game against the Texans. He played in 11 games this season for the Patriots and started once, finishing with 15 tackles, two sacks and 10 quarterback hits.

wouldn’t be here. It has required a lot of work, but it has finally paid off. There is still a long way to go to get to the PGA Tour, but I’ve got a great opportunity ahead of me next year,” said Speirs.

Speirs is going to take a “week or so” off from the course and is in the process of lining up some sponsorship deals with golf equipment and apparel companies.

The Web.com Tour begins the end of January, and the first five 0tournaments will be in South America, according to Speirs.

This past season, 122 golfers played in at least 15 of the tour’s 21 tournaments.

The top 25 money-winners, including the regular season tournaments and four Finals tournaments, will earn their PGA cards as will the top 25 finishers in the four Finals Tournaments who hadn’t already earned a PGA card.

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