

*KHS senior wins 2nd straight title; Ogi is 4th again*

## **Rhoads stands tall on state mat victory stand**

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By JUDY HARLOW

MADISON — By today's standards, Scott Rhoads is kind of small, but after winning his second straight WIAA Division 2 state wrestling title Saturday night, he is standing nearly 10 feet tall, at least in the eyes of the state wrestling circles, his coaches, teammates and his classmates at Kewaskum High School.

By defeating Kendall Vogel of Pioneer Westfield 8-4, Rhoads made history, becoming the first Kewaskum High athlete to win back-to-back championships.

Eric Ogi also made the victory stand, finishing in fourth place for the second year in a row after losing a battle royal with a defending champion, Zac Cibula of Luxemburg-Casco, in the semis.

"He wrestled well ... did a nice job," KHS coach Dennis Aupperle said about Rhoads, reporting the title match at 145 pounds was his right from the start. "Yeah, he got a takedown ... actually lateraled him (Vogel) right to his back" but part of Vogel's body was off the mat, thus he only got the takedown.

"He was in control all the time," Aupperle went on. "He stayed in good position, and put pressure on him the whole match. He just kept being aggressive ... there was no holding back. I think winning the second one (title) was harder than the first" because the pressure was on him.

Aupperle said after his man got the takedown, Vogel got a reversal to tie the match, but Rhoads came right back with an escape for a 3-2 lead after the first period.

Vogel had the choice for the second period and deferred to Rhoads, who took the down position and quickly escaped again, using a sit out to start the escape move.

Aupperle wasn't certain what happened in the next few minutes but said Rhoads "sealed the deal" with a takedown near the end of the third period.

"He's very deserving. He's worked very hard for this," Aupperle said, adding, "He's put in a lot of extra time on his own." Rhoads finished the season at 40-1 and takes over the No. 1 spot in history with a 134 career wins. He finished with a glossy 134-20 record.

In the quarterfinals, Rhoads wrestled smart in posting an 11-7 win over Jon Friar of Lancaster.

Thanks to a couple beautiful takedowns, Rhoads took a 6-1 lead after the first period, and rode Friar right down to the end of the second when there was a questionable reversal call, making the score 6-3.

Plenty of fireworks were on the horizon. In the third period, Rhoads reversed Friar and put him on his back for an 11-3 advantage but gave up four points near the end.

In the semis, it was Rhoads scoring five points to three for Trevin Hines of Ellsworth. With 19 seconds left in the first period, Rhoads used a double leg takedown for a 2-0 lead and stayed out front for a 5-3 decision.

After his two matches on Friday, Rhoads said being in good shape helped him a great deal. "That's a big thing ... working harder during the season so that when you're in a close match, you can pull ahead," he said.

Rhoads was strong on his feet and riding, but he did have a little difficult getting away from Hines. "He was a hard rider," especially using his legs, Rhoads said. "He was really pressing on my back. That hurt a little bit."

When asked if he felt he was ever in trouble, Rhoads said, "I panicked for a second once, then I got out of it."

As far as making history at KHS, Rhoads said, "I'd love to be the first one to make history at Kewaskum ... just the honor of it has been pushing me this season."

Ogi got past his first opponent, Jon Ames of Viroqua by a score of 3-0 in what was a very defensive battle. He took Ames down in the first period and got the other point, an escape, in the third.

The style wasn't one he favored, still Ogi advanced and was definitely fired up for his match against Cibula. A lot of people said this looked like the championship match at 140.

"He got caught in that 'cement mixer' ... take that away and he wins," Aupperle said about Ogi, who lost 7-5 after Cibula scored four points on the move with about 15 seconds to go in the first period.

Ogi drew within two points with a reversal in the second but he got too high riding in the third period, allowing Cibula to gain a reversal.

"I knew I had to be aggressive to beat him," Ogi said. "It was that one move that killed me. He was waiting for me to shoot in on him so he could get the underhook."

The near-fall Ogi gave up to Cibula might have been the only the second he gave up all year, according to Aupperle, who said, "He might have given up one at Oshkosh, if he did give up any."

"There are a lot of tough guys here," the KHS junior went on, indicating he would be striving for third place on Saturday because it would still be an improvement over his sophomore finish.

It wasn't to be, however, as Ogi was defeated 14-11 by Blaze Stephens of Barron to finish the year at 32-6.

"Eric got some nice takedowns," Aupperle said, indicating on one, he took Stephens to his back but off the mat, and on the second, in the middle of the mat, "He just couldn't pin him."

Aupperle also said the officiating in the match was certainly not state caliber, noting Ogi got called twice for illegal scissors moves when, in fact, "He (Ogi) didn't make it a penalty. The other kid did."

"His goal was to get to the finals," Aupperle said about Ogi, who will be aiming for a third trip next February, and since Cibula is only a sophomore, they could meet again.

"You'll see them again next year," Aupperle predicted.

All in all, it was a great weekend for KHS wrestling!