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Two Colby wrestlers take first at state

By Andy Heintz

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For the second time in three years, two Eagles wrestlers took first in their weights at the Class 4A state championships in Salina this weekend.

Colby High sophomore Dustin Reed and junior Konnor Kriss finished first in their weight classes and the Eagles finished seventh as a team with 73 points. Andale came in first with 144.5 points and Clay Center was second with 108.

Assistant coach Rick Williams said both wrestlers were on a mission this week. Fellow assistant Ed Schmitt said both Eagles were experienced wrestlers who put in a lot of time on the mat. He said this prepared them to wrestle in big matches in a big atmosphere. Schmitt said the two lead by example.

Reed dominated all of his matches in the 103-pound class. He won by a technical fall (17-2) over Corey Spader of Spring Hill in the finals in 4 minutes, 23 seconds.

Williams said it was one of the most dominating wins in the final he's ever seen. He said the only thing he could compare to it to was an 8-1 victory in the finals two years ago by Tanner Kriss, Konnor's older brother, who currently wrestles at the University of Indiana. Appropriately, Tanner was in the crowd to watch his brother win.

Williams said Reed is "a hard, hard worker."

"He can't be on the mat enough," the coach said.

Reed finished the season with a

40-2 record.

Reed won his first match by a technical fall (16-0) and he won his second by a pin, or fall, at 1:15. He won a 10-2 major decision in the semifinals.

Kriss beat Kyle Johnson of Columbus Unified High School 5-4 in the finals at 1:30.

"Konnor works hard and is really coachable," Williams said.

Kriss won his opening match by technical fall (17-2) and his second by major decision (12-0). He won by fall in the semifinals. Kriss finished the year with a record of 38-6.

Senior Andrew Flanagin took third at 171, beating Channing Hosey of Labette County High School from Altamont 4-3 in the finals.

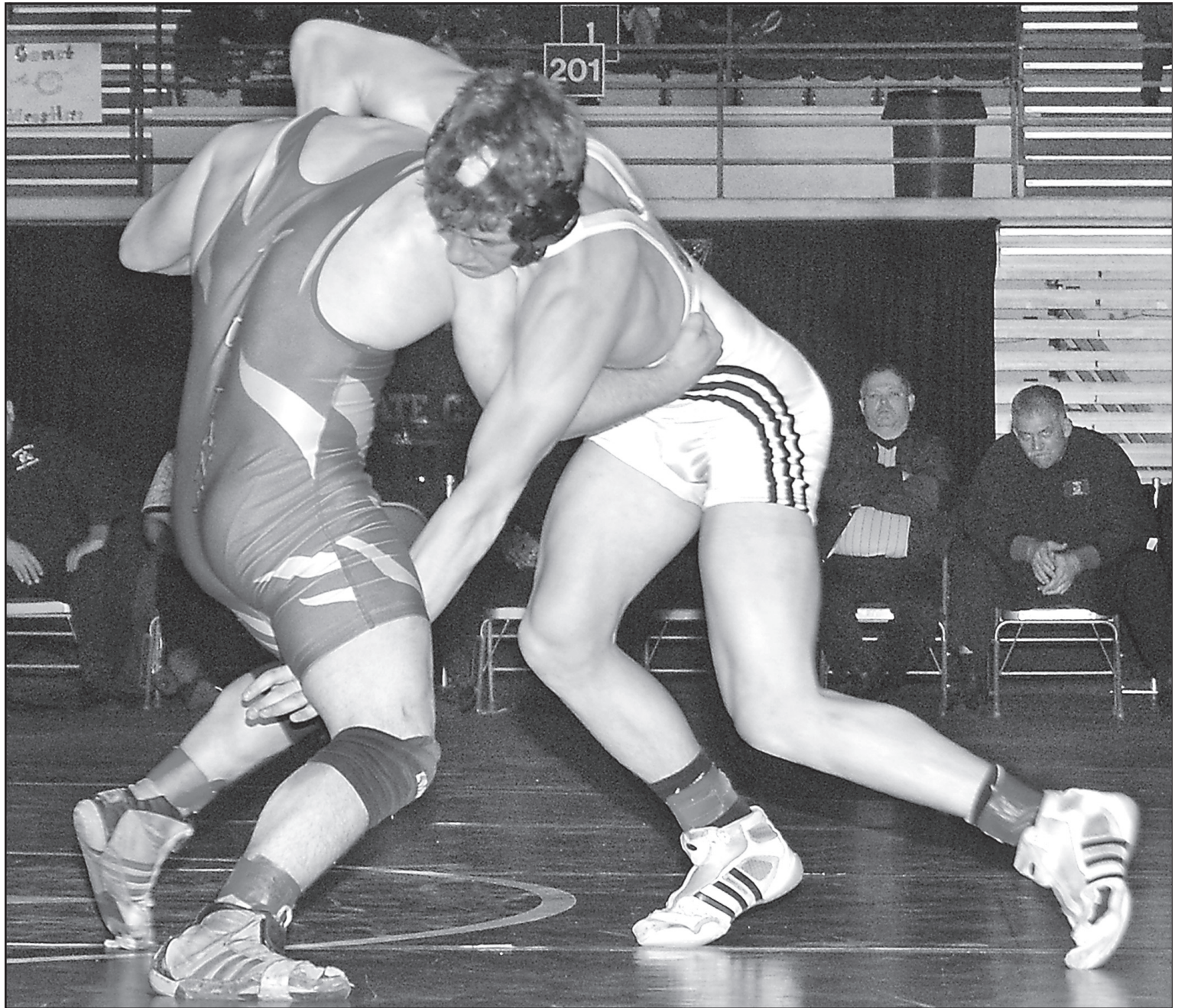
Flanagin won his first match by a pin before losing 11-3 in the quarterfinals to Taylor Baird of Pratt, who eventually won the state championship. Williams said Flanagin was only down by a point going into the third period, but he lost some points trying to go for the win.

The senior bounced back to win his next match 3-0. He went on to win his fourth match by technical fall (16-0) before capturing third place in his final match of the tourney on Saturday.

Williams said some guys don't have the toughness to keep battling after their goal of being a state champion has been quashed, but Flanagin was able to re-evaluate things and bounce back. He said it takes a unique athlete to do what the senior did.

Flanagin ended his season at

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ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Colby High junior Konnor Kriss grappled with his opponent during the finals in the 140-pound class on Saturday at the Class 4A state wrestling tournament in Salina. Kriss and fellow Colby wrestler Dustin Reed each took first in their class.

Thomas County needs more emergency medics

By Vera Sloan

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What does it take to be a volunteer emergency medical technician, working on the county ambulance crew?

Dawnelle Umberger, assistant director and educator for Thomas County Emergency Medical Services, says it takes someone with a passion to help others. Volunteers must be able to communicate with dispatchers and receive information about the call, as well as at the location, and have good eyesight, good coordination and be able to lift heavy loads, she said.

It's not for the faint of heart, she added. When volunteers arrive at the scene, they must be able to assess the nature and extent of injuries or illness, then do what's required to stabilize the patient and get them to a hospital.

"Training is the key to being a good EMT," Umberger said. "It takes two to three hours a week for four to five months, and in the beginning, initial classes are held two nights a week and every other Saturday until 200 hours of training have been completed."

State requirements set the standards, she said. Beginning in July,



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Thomas County emergency medical technicians worked on a "burn victim" during a training exercise.

Thomas County will be completing a transition from basic to advanced emergency medical technicians. Everyone will have a higher certification, which will allow crews to do more life support.

Twenty-four paid volunteers make up the Colby, Brewster and

Rexford emergency crews in the county.

"Thirty to forty would be ideal," said Ken Gatlin, the county's emergency medical services director.

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School district to join regional mapping project

By Kevin Bottrell

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The Colby School District will join schools from around northwest Kansas in digitizing blueprints of its buildings and making them available to emergency responders.

The school board voted last Monday to join the Northwest Kansas Regional Homeland Security Council's School Mapping Project, aiming at creating "geospatial information system," or GIS, maps of all schools in the region for use in planning and emergencies.

The map files can contain information about

tornado and fire evacuation routes and lockdown locations, if the district provides them, said Superintendent Terrel Harrison. They also can include photos of key areas that emergency responders might need to get to, including exits, classrooms or crawl spaces.

Harrison said the information will allow police and firemen to know where students are likely to be in an emergency. Maps will also show the location of any hazardous materials. She recommended that the board sign off on the project.

"I would like them to get to us any way they can as quickly as they can," she said.

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Rural tax break moves ahead

By John Milburn

The Associated Press

TOPEKA — Kansas senators have taken a step toward helping Gov. Sam Brownback fulfill a promise that he made during the 2010 election to help get rural counties back on their feet.

A version of Brownback's plan for giving an income tax abatement to residents who move to rural counties from out of state cleared the Senate, 34-5.

Senators modified Brownback's

proposal, expanding it to cover 50 counties that have had an 8 percent decline in population or fewer than 12,000 residents. The plan also includes a provision for the counties to partner with the state to repay part of the student loans of qualifying new residents.

The House is considering its own version of the plan. It covers only 40 counties that had a 10 percent decline in population.

"The governor is pleased that this important economic growth policy is making its way through

the legislative process and he looks forward to working with the Legislature to finalize this key element of the 'Road Map' he outlined during the campaign," said Sherriene Jones-Sontag, the governor's spokeswoman.

Senate Republicans said the proposal is an attempt to stop population losses and help keep rural counties struggling to maintain schools and other services afloat.

Sen. Pat Apple, a Louisburg Re-

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Briefly

Apply now for youth grants

The Thomas County Community Foundation is accepting applications for "Kids Can Do!" grants, which provide \$200 for nonprofit organizations or classrooms. Applications are due by Tuesday. For information, go to www.thomascountycommunityfoundation.com or call 460-9152.

Mailing change delays city bills

Due to a change in mailing, city utility bills may not be delivered until the third day of each month starting this week. City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said the change is beyond the control of the city, and apologized for any inconvenience this may cause residents. For information, call City Hall at 460-4400.

Soccer signup open all week

The American Youth Soccer Organization is en-

rolling players for the spring season through Friday. Kids 5 to 19 are welcome. For information or to sign up, call Emily Griffin at 460-0647.

Prom dresses on sale at church

Gently used, like-new prom dresses will be on sale from 6 to 8 p.m. until Friday in the basement of the First Presbyterian Church, 515 W. Fourth St. in Colby. New styles, great colors and sizes, \$20 each. Proceeds go to Genesis-Thomas County Food Bank. For information, call Sue Draper at (785) 460-6322 or Shanda Mattix at (785) 460-5464.

Learn how to save a life

Thomas County Emergency Medical Services will have a cardiopulmonary resuscitation information meeting for the public from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday at Smoffee's coffee shop. It costs \$20 to be certified in the technique, but anyone can attend

the meeting. For information, call Dawnelle Umberger at 460-4585.

World Day of Prayer coming

Church Women United will sponsor a World Day of Prayer lunch and service at noon Friday at the Colby United Methodist Church. Women from Colby churches will present a program prepared by Chilean women called "How Many Loaves Have You?" Donations will be accepted. For information, call Millie Horlacher at 462-3104.

Gem Lions plan soup luncheon

The Gem Lions Club will be serving homemade vegetable and potato soup, chile and cake for its annual Winter Soup Day from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday at the Gem Community Building. Donations will go for community projects. For information, call Ken Poland, 462-7809. The Lions will be collecting

eye glasses and hearing aids to recycle.

Kids to do musical at school

Second graders from Colby Grade School will present, "From the Inside Out: A Musical Celebrating Positive Character," at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 8, at the Colby Grade School Auditorium. For information call music teacher Jennifer Koel at 460-5100, extension 1104.



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