

RED DEVIL Bret Marietta (above) wrestled against a young man from McCook before lunch Saturday at the Oberlin Invitational. Lions Club member Jack Benton (below) talked with Gary Sanden, who manned the ticket booth, before Mr. Benton got busy with the lunch crowd.

Gym swells with fans, wrestlers and volunteers

The population at Decatur Community High School swelled Saturday as spectators from across the area jammed into the gym for the Oberlin Invitational Wrestling Invitational.

Fourteen teams from Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado were represented in competition Saturday. With the wrestlers came coaches, cheerleaders and fans who filled the senior high gym.

Teams were from Smith Center, Oakley, Oberlin, Yuma, Colo.; Kearney, Neb.; Lakin, McCook, Stockton, Overland, Colo.; Hill City, Sublette, Osborne, Quinter and Dakota Ridge, Colo. The gym was packed with very few seats left.

Competition started around 10:20 a.m. Eleven hours later the tournament was over, and fans and team members headed home. First place

went to Smith Center with 171.5 points, followed by Oakley with 170.5 and third went to Oberlin with 154.

Although fans were there for just the 11 hours of wrestling — or stopped in to watch a certain boy wrestle an hour or so to support a team — the work behind the tournament has been going on for a while.

Athletic Director Randy Olson, who was out of the office Monday afternoon, started early in the month setting up volunteers for the day. Melissa Dreher, secretary and volunteer, and wife of Coach Joe Dreher, said she thought around 30 to 40 helped Saturday.

Volunteers included students and adults. Each had a job to do. In the morning, students started copying, stapling and putting names on brackets.

The brackets were hung outside the gym so fans and team members could keep track of who wrestled when and against whom.

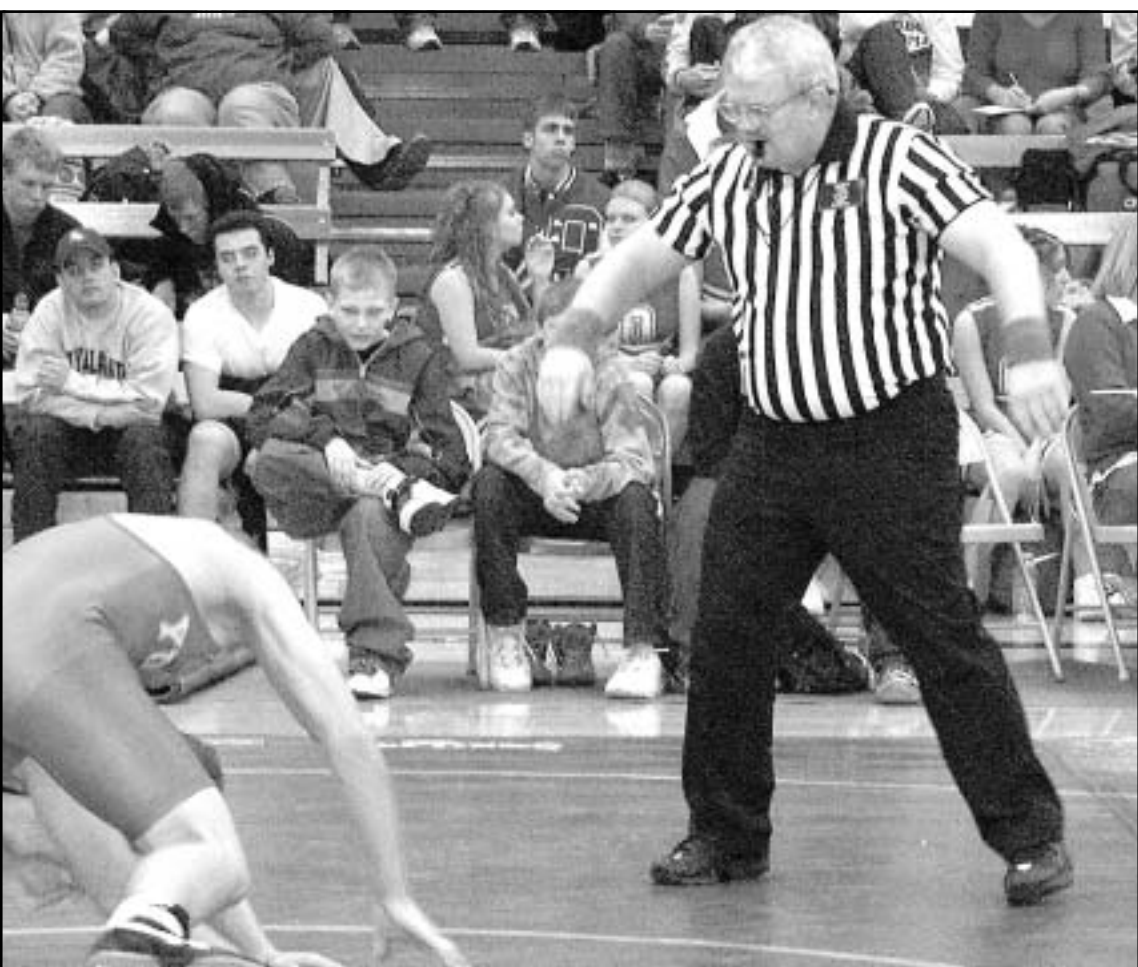
Other volunteers kept track of how many moves each wrestler made during a match, timed the matches, announced them, sold tickets, watched doors and did other odd jobs.

In the cafeteria, students from the vocal department ran a concession stand with all kinds of munchies and sodas.

The Oberlin Lions Club also sold soup and sandwiches for lunch and Mrs. Dreher said she thought the Lions sold out on some of their items.

The volunteers, she said, worked all day in the gym.

By 9:20 p.m., many were ready to go home. It had been a long day.



IN THE MORNING, Joe Stanley refereed a match on the west mat (above) while Ken Badsky and Adam Kadavy (right) gave a play-by-play on KFNF Radio.

