

BHSA

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every time they come in. You never see poor body language from them. They get in, put the work in and move on to the next day.”

The two maintain that approach even during intense moments in practice.

“They’re both two level-headed girls,” Kriz said. “If they were to get hot toward each other in practice or if it’d get chippy, they know that’s not a very good look. It’s OK to be chippy and very competitive in practice, but they don’t ever get down each other’s throats. They stay very level-headed. They complement each other very well.”

Rueb was the lone blemish of Hellmann’s 45-1 record last season. In a season-opening tournament in Dell Rapids in December, Rueb defeated Hellmann in a tournament where their weight classes were combined.

Hellmann enters this season having won her previous 26 matches by pin. Her last decision win was in December of 2022.

At the Class B state tournament last February, Hellmann’s combined time for three matches was two minutes and 49 seconds. Hellmann’s first two matches took 34 and 36 seconds, respectively, before a semifinal forfeit. Hellmann then pinned Sully Buttes’ Cateri Yellow Hawk in 1 minute, 39 seconds in the 126 final to remain perfect in three

state tournaments (11-0).

In 2022, Hellmann used three pins to reach the 126-pound state championship match. She then finished off her 41-4 season with a 5-1 decision over Yankton’s Nevaeh Leonard.

The 2021 Class B 129 pound championship match saw Hellmann pin Iroquois-Doland’s Reganne Miles in a minute.

The 2021 season saw Rueb win all three matches in the Class B state tournament by major decision, including an 8-0 win over Alexis Hauge of Mount Vernon-Plankinton-Corsica/Stickney in the final.

In 2022, Rueb used three pins to reach the Class B 113-pound championship match. Then she completed her 34-1 season with a 4-3 decision over Quinn Butler of Lemmon/McIntosh in the final.

Rueb was 42-4 last season. One of her setbacks was to Harrisburg’s Regina Stoesser, who earned a 2-0 decision in the 120-pound Class B championship final to match Rueb with two state titles.

The BHSA program has grown because of the success of Hellmann and Rueb. And the sport continues to grow, going from 125 girls in 2021 to 284 participants in 2022 and 416 last season.

“For everything they’ve accomplished, they seem to be magnets for the sport in our communities,” Kriz said. “They’ve brought three or four more girls into the program, so they’re trying to build the program themselves.”

SOUTH DAKOTA GIRLS’ WRESTLING

Beresford/Alcester-Hudson

COACH: Brandon Chesnut

ASSISTANTS: Phil Serck, Michael Schurch, Tim Farley, Megan Klentz

VITALS: Big East Conference

RETURNING: Lillie Boden (8th, 100), Reese Olson (Fr., 132, State Qualifier)

Bon Homme-Scotland-Avon

COACH: Darren Kriz

ASSISTANTS: Jim Kocer, Ben Hellmann, Alex Caba, Shane Sutera, Dom Pechous

LAST SEASON: The squad finished ninth at state a year ago.

RETURNING: Peyton Hellman (Jr., 126, State Champ), Britney Rueb (So., 120, State Runner-Up), Hadlee Kracht (Fr.), Leah Whittington (Fr.)

NEWCOMERS: Ashley Tolsma (Jr.), Hope Kemnitz (So.), Bailey Kemnitz (8th)

Dakota Valley

COACH: Grayson Pirner

ASSISTANTS: Caleb Deist, Blake Perryman

VITALS: Dak XII Conference

RETURNING: Kenzie Scott (8th, 120, State Qualifier), Anna Lee (Jr., 140, State Qualifier)

Kimball/White-Lake/Platte-Geddes

COACH: Thomas Konechne

LAST SEASON: The squad finished 14th at state a year ago.

ASSISTANTS: Craig Nightingale, Bruce Hanson, Jeff Konstanz, Cody Westendorf

ROSTER: Akane Metcalfe (6th place at State), LaRae Severson (State Qualifier), Elena Brennen (2nd place at State)

Marion/Freeman

COACH: Chris Sayler

ASSISTANT: Jeff Wollmann

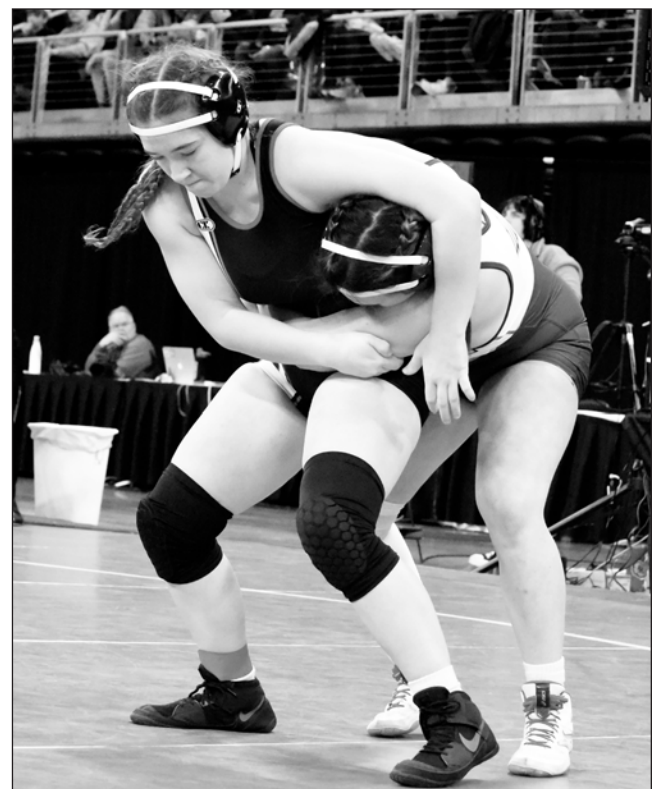
ROSTER: Sara Cremer (Sr.)

Vermillion

COACH: Gary Culver

ASSISTANTS: Trey Hage, Nick Roob

NEWCOMERS: Blair Merkwon (7th), Addison Green (7th)



P&D FILE PHOTO

Gia Miller of Viborg-Hurley-Irene-Wakonda (left), shown here in a photo from the 2022 state tournament, was fourth in the state at 165 pounds in 2023. She leads a VHIW squad that finished seventh in the state a year ago.

Viborg-Hurley/Irene-Wakonda

COACH: Cory Jensen

ASSISTANT: Dylan Thomas

LAST SEASON: The Cougars finished seventh at State.

RETURNING: Gia Miller (Sr., 165, 4th at State), Aubrey Jensen (So., 120, 6th at State), Wendi Silverthorn (Jr., 126, State Qualifier), Brinlee Smith (So., 250, State Qualifier), Kayla Schoolmeester (8th, State MS Champion), Maddie Feiock (So., 138), Ella Kessler (Sr., 152, State Qualifier), Olivia Manca (So., 145), Rayna Miller (Fr., 185), Claire Campbell (8th, 185)

NEWCOMERS: Laine Petersen (7th, 107), Rose Wickham (8th, 107)

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