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# Ponderosa rules 5A wrestling

**Mighty Mustangs prevail for a record seventh year in row**

By Mike Judson  
The Denver Post

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History. The Ponderosa High School wrestling team made it Saturday night at the Pepsi Center, and everyone who tried to get in the way became it.

The Mustangs won their seventh consecutive Class 5A state title, eclipsing the state record of six set by Denver North from 1944-49, the last of which came three decades before Ponderosa coach Corey McNellis was born.

And the Mustangs, who had clinched the title before finals began, perfectly finished what they started in Thursday's preliminaries, as all four of their finalists won their matches. Ponderosa totaled 137.5 points, with Pine Creek (101) second and Chaparral and Loveland (98) tied for third.

Leading the way was 140-pound junior Jake Snider, who won his third championship,



Ponderosa's Jake Snider gets a well-earned embrace after taking the title in the 140-pound class and starting the Mustangs' four-match sweep. (Andy Cross, The Denver Post )

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although Coronado's Nathan Burak gave him quite a run before falling 4-3. Senior Daniel Kelly (145 pounds), his junior brother Steven Kelly (152) and sophomore Austin Gabel (160) also won to complete the Ponderosa sweep. Snider roared into position to become Colorado's 16th four-time champion.

"Next year is a long time away, but there's more training to come, and I have to get ready," he said after holding off Burak. "This title, No. 7, feels awesome — a lot better than all the other ones."

Wrestling is technically an individual sport, but Gabel put the team aspect well: "It was a total accomplishment as a team. No one wrestled for themselves, but for each other."

Former coach Tim Ottmann, who received a national coach-of-the-year award Saturday night, built the dynasty. McNellis is running with it. As a state champion himself on Ottmann's first title team, in 1997, McNellis made a historical note.

"When we won our first title in 1997, we had four champions (at successive weight classes), and the newspapers called us 'Murderer's Row,'" he said. "We just won those same four weight classes tonight."

Can the Mustangs make it a great eight next year? Well, returning three state champions isn't a bad place to start.

"So many people go into making this thing what it is," McNellis said.

Three 5A wrestlers finished unbeaten, but none from Ponderosa. Snider (36-2) didn't lose to anyone from Colorado, though.

Central of Grand Junction 103-pounder Matthew Gurule (42-0) successfully defended his title, handing Pine Creek's Josh Martinez his only loss after 45 wins, 4-2. Legacy 189-pounder Danny Mitchell (23-0) recorded his third first-period pin in four state tournament matches (the other victory was a major decision), and Loveland sophomore 215-pounder Connor Medbery finished 40-0.

Three wrestlers besides Gurule became two-time champions: Rocky Mountain 112-pounder Jeremy Schmitt, Northglenn 119-pounder Philip Grout and Ponderosa's Daniel Kelly (145). And climbing to the top of the podium for the first time were Chaparral's Kurtis Nelson (125 pounds), Standley Lake's Gavin Peters (130), Rocky Mountain's Tino Laureles (135), Ponderosa's Steven Kelly (152) and Gabel (160), Lakewood's Mike Morgan (171), Legacy's Mitchell (189), Loveland's Medbery (215) and Westminster heavyweight Moises Alcala.

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#### CLASS 5A

**Team scores** — Ponderosa 137 1/2, Pine Creek 101, Chaparral 98, Loveland 98, Coronado 84 1/2, Central (G.J.) 77 1/2, Rocky Mountain 75 1/2, Pomona 68, Legacy 61, Standley Lake 56 1/2, Grandview 40, Lakewood 40, Westminster 40, Northglenn 35 1/2, Poudre 32, Centaurus 31 1/2, Cherry Creek 31 1/2, Grand Junction 31, Fruita Monument 28, Gateway 27, Rampart 25 1/2, Adams City 24, Fort Collins 24, Heritage 23, Green Mountain 21, Douglas County 20 1/2, Columbine 20, Fairview 19, Durango 19, Arapahoe 18, East 18, Air Academy 15 1/2, Sand Creek 15 1/2, Mountain Range 13, Regis 13, Arvada West 12, Doherty 10, Brighton 10, Boulder 9 1/2, Fountain-Fort Carson 9, ThunderRidge 9, Ralston Valley 9, Eaglecrest 6, Palmer 5, Cherokee Trail 5, Aurora Central 4, Mountain Vista 4, Smoky Hill 4, Overland 3, Highlands Ranch 2, Chatfield 1, Liberty 1.

#### Championship matches

**103 pounds** — Matthew Gurule, Central (G.J.), Jr. (42-0) dec. Josh Martinez, Pine Creek, So. (45-1) 4-2.

**112** — Jeremy Schmitt, Rocky Mountain, Jr. (38-4) dec. Dominic Madril, Pomona, Sr. (39-7) 7-4.

**119** — Phil Grout, Northglenn, Sr. (42-1) dec. Eric Wilson, Grandview, Sr. (43-5) 5-3.

**125** — Kurtis Nelson, Chaparral, Jr. (32-5) dec. Conor McElhany, Coronado, So. (41-3) 8-6.

**130** — Gavin Peters, Standley Lake, Sr. (47-1) maj. dec. Caleb McDowell, Chaparral, Sr. (43-6) 13-1.

**135** — Tino Laureles, Rocky Mountain, Sr. (37-3) dec. Josh Kreimier, Loveland, Sr. (39-3) 7-6.

**140** — Jake Snider, Ponderosa, Jr. (36-2) dec. Nathan Burak, Coronado, So. (41-6) 4-3.

**145** — Daniel Kelly, Ponderosa, Sr. (41-2) dec. Robby DePontibrand, Douglas County, Sr. (41-9) 3-2.

**152** — Steven Kelly, Ponderosa, Jr. (37-5) dec. Scott Lohn-dorf, Fairview, Sr. (43-5) 5-1.

**160** — Austin Gabel, Ponderosa, So. (29-3) maj. dec. Bryce Thurston, Chaparral, Sr. (37-12) 12-4.

**171** — Mike Morgan, Lakewood, Sr. (36-2) dec. Taylor Termentozzi, Fruita Monument, Sr. (37-9) 2-0.

**189** — Danny Mitchell, Legacy, Sr. (23-0) pinned Connor Stevens, Pine Creek, Jr. (40-8) 1:40.

**215** — Connor Medbery, Loveland, So. (40-0) pinned Donny Haupt, Pomona, Sr. (37-4) 2:43.

**Heavyweight.** — Moises Alcala, Westminster, Sr. (42-2) pinned Lane Stuht, Loveland, Sr. (32-3) 2:11.

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