

JC wrestlers go together like champagne, beer

Text and photos

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They're as different as champagne and a brew.

One is fluid, moving from hold to hold, looking for a pin. The other is tough, a streetfighter, a brawler. But when Junction City High School's Brett Deam and Bobby Briggs get on the mat, it spells trouble for opponents of the defending state champions.

"They are two different kinds of wrestlers," says Junction City High School wrestling coach LaMont Godsey. "Bobby is a tough, tough kid, while Brett uses a lot of finesse."

Even though their application is different, Briggs and Deam use many of the same tactics in attacking opponents. They both love to use their height (5-10) as leverage in forming cradles.

"Their styles are very similar," says Ben Bennett, Junction City Recreation Department director and former wrestling coach at Junction City High School. "Brett is a little slicker, but Bobby is tougher. He's a punishing-type wrestler."

Easy-going and quiet off the mats, the two seniors have made their presence known in a big way ever since they came up to the varsity squad at the end of their freshman years.

Deam is tall and lanky for his weight. He has a smooth style, winning matches more through his skill than strength. The 132-pounder has totally dominated opponents in 1982.

"Brett has a lot of power that is not noticeable," Bennett says. "He's long and lean, which provides leverage. It's something we worked on with him a lot. He uses the cradle and is successful, even though people know it's coming."

The son of Dr. and Mrs. John Deam, 927 Meadow Lane, Brett is undefeated in 10 matches so far this year and has pinned eight. Some people wondered, earlier this season, whether any adversary was ever going to hear the final buzzer in a match with Deam. He defeated his first four opponents by pins before beating Eric Zeeman of Salina Central, 18-1, in the second round of the Clay Center Tournament.

Fair-skinned with blond curly hair, Deam is made more of the classical features Greek gods come from, rather than mere men who grapple on the mats. There is an innocence to his face that does not divulge the cunning of the mind. His mature personality rounds out the entire athlete.

"Brett is the kind of kid I'd like my daughter to date (if I had a daughter)," Bennett said. "He's the kind of kid who doesn't need much coaching."

"He's very polite and has a mature understanding of himself. He also has a very mature relationship with his parents — the kind a lot of people would envy."

The Blue Jays opened the season with a triple dual at home, featuring one of the top teams in the state — third-rated Leavenworth. Deam pinned all three of his opponents, as he and Briggs carried the top-ranked Jays to victory over the Pioneers, plus Dodge City and Great Bend.

He since has gone on to take first place at the always-tough Clay Center Invitational. Plus, he has posted dual victories over wrestlers from Topeka High, Great Bend, Salina Central and Garden City.

Deam and Briggs loom in the middle of the Blue Jay line-up, at 132 and 138 pounds, respectively, leaving opponents shuttering at the thought of going against them. The two wrestlers have shorn up a murderers' row that brings to mind pictures of the infamous New York Yankees' Murderers' Row of baseball fame.

"Unless someone has moved in, and barring injury, I don't know of anyone who can beat either one of them in Class 6A," Godsey said.

Everything Deam is in slickness and finesse, Briggs is in power and force. His wrestling is the antithesis, in many ways, to Deam's, but it still spells success.

The third child of Bill and Delores Briggs, 1601 N. Perry, Bobby comes from hard-working blue-collar stock — his determination forged in a background of a day's pay for a day's labor. Briggs' father works in civil service at Fort Riley, while his mother is an aide at Washington Elementary School.

Bobby appears tough as nails. He's all

elbows and kneecaps. His leer could melt the hearts of most opponents and usually does.

"I always said Bobby has two kinds of take-downs," Bennett said. "One where grabs you and crunches, and the other where you grab him, and he crunches you, anyway."

Briggs' older sister, Teresa, is a student at Emporia State University. His younger brother, Billy, who wrestles at the city junior high, is a carbon-copy of Bobby.

So far this season, Briggs also is 10-0. His pin output may not be as great as Deam's, but he has shown he can dominate opponents, running scores up as high as 32 points already this year.

Godsey, who is in his first year as head coach at Junction City, after Bennett stepped down to take the director's post, looks to all the seniors on his squad for leadership — especially his two star pupils. Excluding Briggs and Deam, the four other seniors wrestling varsity have a combined record of 29-9.

"They're both team captains," Godsey says. "Probably their biggest contribution to the team is setting examples. They do a lot for the younger kids, showing them moves and holds, plus a lot of other things."

"They stay late after practice to work, which shows our younger people what kind of determination it takes to be a state champion."

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