

## High school wrestling: Three Mid-West wrestlers have shot at gold

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— GROVE CITY -- It was a long day of wrestling at Grove City High School on Friday, and when the smoke cleared, the Mid-West Mustangs had three wrestlers still in contention for a gold medal in the 25th annual Fred Bell Memorial Wrestling Tournament.

Carrying the banner for the Mustangs into the championship semifinals are A. J. Steininger at 103, Ty Knepp at 140 and Sam Shirey at 145.

"I thought we got a good effort as a team and we have three guys in the semifinals," said Mid-West coach Clint Swartz. "We still have four guys trying to work their way back through the wrestlebacks, so overall, it has been a pretty good day for us. We'll just have to wait and see how he does here tomorrow."

Steininger had a cake walk into the semis with a bye in championship preliminaries, followed by a pair of first-period falls.

In the Round of 16, Steininger made short work of Erie McDowell's Mike Mele in 1:02 before needing only 40 seconds to dispose of Franklin's Trever Graham in the quarters.

Steininger is slated to face Grove City's Ian Ablanalp in this morning's semis, which begin at 11 a.m.

"He has been pretty dominant for most of the year," said Swartz. "All he has to do is keep working, keep busting and get ready for the postseason."

Knepp became the second Mid-West semifinalist with a 13-8 win over Curt Delatre of Warren in the quarters. Prior to his win over Delatre, Knepp won a 16-0 technical fall over Aaron Arbogast of Lakeview after getting a bye in the pigtail round.

"He (Knepp) is progressing day to day," said Swartz. "This was only his seventh or eighth match, but he is getting better every day. He is giving us a real good, solid effort and progressing every time he wrestles."

Sam Shirey completed the trio of Mustang semifinalists and he did it in dominating fashion by going 3-0 for the day.

Shirey majored Erie Prep's Jeremy Kuhn 12-4 in the pigtail round before decking Linwood Thorne of Commodore Perry in the round of 16.

In the semis, Shirey was all over A. J. Magagnotti of Redbank Valley for a 16-0 technical fall with just five seconds left in the bout.

"When he (Shirey) is on, he is on, and he can be real tough," Swartz said. "He worked hard in the offseason and he has been busting all season. He has put in some good efforts and hopefully we'll see some good things from him and the other guys in the postseason."

Other Mustang grapplers who fell out of championship competition during the day were Brandon Osbourne (125), Ricky Johns (135), Barrett Shaffer (152), Landon Bruner (160), Chris Baker (171), Jed Heintzelman (189), John Aumiller (215) and Tyler Wagner (285).

Of that group of eight, Heintzelman was the only wrestler to pick up an individual win as he decked Washington's Jeremy Hull in 3:59 of their pigtail match.

In addition to the trio of Steininger, Knepp and Shirey, other Mustang matmen still alive for possible medals are Shaffer with a pair of falls in the wrestlebacks, Baker with a technical fall and a 9-2 decision, and John Aumiller, who lost in the pigtail round but received a pair of byes into the next round of consolations.

District 10 rep Commodore Perry leads the team race with 104.5 points, closely followed by host Grove City with 98 and Erie Cathedral Prep with 95.5. Mid-West is in ninth place with 57.5 points and six wrestlers still alive.

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