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## Eureka Takes HDN League Team Wrestling Championship: Sylvia, Bruckenstein & Thurston Honored

Neil Tarpey/The Times-Standard  
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FORTUNA -- The Eureka Loggers, Jim Sylvia, Sara Hubbard, Chris Hubbard, Casey Bruckenstein and John Thurston.

They were the big winners at the 37th annual Humboldt-Del Norte League Wrestling Championships, held at the Fortuna High gym on Saturday.

Eureka took first place among the nine teams with 185.50 total points, and the Loggers had two first place winners, Leo Garcia at 130, and Peter Riendeau at 145.

"I'm excited at how far we've come from the beginning of the season, because we have a really young team," said Eureka head coach Keith Adams. "They've put in the hard work."

The legendary Jim Sylvia received a warm standing ovation and a special award from the HDN officials, coaches, and wrestlers for his "unwavering commitment to the betterment of the sport of wrestling" as a wrestler, coach, official and community member.

Part of the announcer's comments about him said that Sylvia "continually thinks about others before himself."

Well, folks, the speech writers accurately described this legend's warm personality and his interest in helping young people.

On two occasions during Saturday's championship meet, Sylvia tracked me down to make sure that I was aware of individual wrestlers' special accomplishments.

The first time was to notify me that Ferndale's Sara Hubbard, who took second at 103, was the first girl in the history of HDN wrestling to make it to the finals in her weight class.

The other occasion was when Sylvia pointed out that Chris Hubbard, who took first at 171, was only the fifth wrestler in HDN history -- and the first in 17 years --to become a four-time champion.

The previous four-time winners, all from Arcata High, were Garth Conner (1981-84), John Puzs (1984-87), Richard Englund (1984-87), and Robert Shannon (1987-90).

South Fork's Casey Bruckenstein, who won a major decision, 11-0, over Eureka's Jacob Wakeland in the 140 finals, was named the Most Outstanding Wrestler in the lower weight classes. Bruckenstein had moved up from his customary 135-pound weight class.

Arcata's Trent Stevenson, who moved down from 140, used a variety of solid moves in his victory at 135 over Eureka's Jake Cruz.

Stevenson had been named the Most Outstanding Wrestler of the lower weight brackets at the 19-team North Coast Classic last month, when he won the 142-pound class at that event.

Ferndale's John Thurston, who defeated arch-rival Sherman Norton of Del Norte, 4-1, in the 275 finals, was selected as the Most Outstanding Wrestler in the upper weight classes.

In their titanic struggle, Thurston led only 2-1, but scored two points with fifteen seconds left in the match to secure the victory.

Besides the Thurston vs. Norton match, there were two other great battles that generated fan interest and loud cheering.

One was Hubbard's win at 171, a hard -fought, 2-1, overtime clash with McKinleyville's Michael Larson.

And the other was the 191-pound contest, a 13-12 thriller, in which Hoopa Valley's Alex Pratt prevailed over Del Norte's Jacob Young.

I would also like to point out the skills and courage of McKinleyville's Josh Alvarado, who took third at 140, despite the disadvantage of wrestling with one hand, due to a birth defect. Well done, young man.