Lexington defeated White Knoll 35-28 on Wednesday in the Class 4A Lower State championship match to earn another shot at securing the program's first state **wrestling** title.

The top-ranked Wildcats (30-2) are 0-2 in state championship appearances, losing 39-22 to**Hillcrest** a year ago and dropping a 37-27 decision to Fort Dorchester in 2006.

Lexington will have a rematch with **Hillcrest** on Saturday at Dreher High.

"Once again, this team showed what it is all about," Wildcats coach Derek Strobel said. "Anytime we had somebody who we felt would win and didn't, somebody else made up the difference. To have two tough, emotionally draining matches against great teams like we've had in the past three days just shows how deep these guys can dig to get it done. They earned the right to have a chance to bring a state championship to **Lexington**."

White Knoll opened the match with consecutive pins by Jamal Lackey (170 pounds), Jake Beckett (182) and D.J. Taylor (195) and had a 21-6 lead after a decision by Asa Gossett at heavyweight.

Lexington stormed back with four wins in a row to take a 24-21 lead through 126 pounds. The key surge featured a pin by Blake Risinger at 120 and technical falls by Jackson Myers (106) and Cody Bonham (126).

White Knoll regained the edge, 28-24, thanks to a major decision by Kevin Epting at 132 and a 6-4 win by Austin Lee at 138. Lee rallied from a 4-0 deficit in the third period.

Lexington, however, came up big with the pressure on in the final three bouts, starting with major decisions by Caleb Brack (145) and Brandon Shepherd (152). Shepherd's four-point win broke a 28-28 tie, leaving it up to the duel between **Lexington**'s Alex Mayrides and Jacob Poston at 160.

"My coaches told me I needed to get a major decision, and I just went out and did my job," Shepherd said.

Mayrides took command with a four-point move at the outset of the second period — a takedown with back points — and held on for a clinching 7-6 win.

"Yeah, that was a lot of pressure for one guy," Mayrides said. "I knew I had a little edge because the team could still win if I lost by a decision, but I tried my best to end it with a win."

White Knoll, which finished the team portion of the season with a 23-6 record, left it all out on the mat.

"It was an excellent match; that's how it's supposed to be in a championship match," Timberwolves coach Kevin Emily said.

"We threw everything we had at them, so we have nothing to hang our heads about. I'm proud of my guys."

« **LEXINGTON** 35, WHITE KNOLL 28

106: Jackson Myers (L) dec. Austin Palmer 16-2 (technical fall). 113: Andy Szalwinski (L) dec. Emil Collins 5-0. 120: Blake Risinger (L) pinned Chase Huffstetler 0:45. 126: Cody Bonham (L) dec. Cruz Taitague 15-0 (technical fall). 132: Kevin Epting (WK) dec. Russell Taylor 9-1. 138: Austin Lee (WK) dec. Walker Barfield 6-4. 145: Caleb Brack (L) dec. Liam Smith 15-6. 152: Brandon Shepherd (L) dec. Ben Gruetman 10-0. 160: Alex Mayrides (L) dec. Jacob Poston 7-6. 170: Jamal Lackey (WK) pinned Dacus Fenchel 0:56. 182: Jake Beckett (L) pinned Joe Degenova 5:05. 195: D.J. Taylor (WK) pinned Andrew Carnes 1:37. 220: Nate Meagher (L) pinned James Moore 5:08. 285: Asa Gossett (WK) dec. Joey Perrotta 8-3.