

North Central's bid for its first state **wrestling** championship came up short Saturday afternoon.

Bamberg-Ehrhardt rallied from an early deficit to defeat the Knights 39-31 to win its second straight Class 2A championship. It was the program's fifth championship overall.

North Central finishes the season at 34-4, the best season in school history.

"We had a fabulous season and the kids grew from day one," **North Central** coach Jason Brazzell said. "It is one step at a time. We just got to take it one more step. We had a few things happen today that usually don't happen and weren't able to pick back up from them."

It was the second meeting of the year between the teams. That match tied 39-39 but the Knights won tiebreakers. The championship match also went down the wire even though **North Central** was missing one of its top wrestlers, Paula Velez. The Limestone signee and female wrestler missed the match with a collarbone injury.

Still, **North Central** jumped to a 25-8 lead after wins by Kyle Lesso, Cameron Hoffman, Jordan Small, Hunter Haven and Kaleb Haven. But the Raiders won the next three matches, two by pin and one by forfeit to lead 26-25.

In a swing match at heavyweight, NC had to forfeit after Noe Herrera suffered a head injury, giving B-E a 32-31 lead. The Raiders made it 36-31 with Zymire Chisholm's win at 113 and won the final match at 119.

"I told them we were going to be down before and face adversity. Told them the match isn't over just because a few matches didn't go our way," B-E interim coach Mark Moody said. "Told them to dig in and do what we needed to do and that is win state."

Moody replaced Jacob Stewart, who resigned in January after allegedly assaulting a student. Moody was the middle school coach last season. He credits the team for sticking together during a tough time.

"It shows the dedication to the guys who stuck with us after our coach left. And just showed the heart and dedication they put in the program," Moody said.

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