

COLUMBIA --Saturday the Bears did what no other BHP **wrestling** team has done over the last two decades -- they won the state championship.

BHP (32-2) came from behind to defeat **Chapin** 35-30 Saturday and claim the AAA**wrestling** title.

The Bears trailed 30-29 when senior Kyle Lowe stepped on the mat for the last match of the day.

"There's no better ending than to put Kyle Lowe out there for our last match," said head coach Chris Strickland.

"All week I played with the numbers and the lineup trying to decide whether to bump everyone up a weight class or leave them where there were. When the draw came to start the match at 126 pounds, I knew we were going to leave the lineup alone and let Kyle be our last wrestler.

"He's the heart and soul of this team and has been our leader all year. It couldn't end any better." Lowe dominated his 120-pound opponent building a 5-0 lead after one period. His pin at 3:58 in the match brought the state championship home to BHP.

The Bears led 12-3 before **Chapin** won two consecutive matches to tie. BHP lost three of the next five matches by pin and trailed 30-21 with three matches left.

"I told our 'Big Three' lighter weights that they would pull it out for us," said Strickland. "I saw the look in their eyes and knew they were ready to go for it." Jobe Sherard won by technical fall and Parker Peeples won by decision to pull BHP to within one of the Eagles and set the stage for Lowe.

"Jobe has such a competitive spirit and wants the weight of the world on his shoulders. He was disappointed that he didn't pin his opponent.

"Parker has battled to cut weight all season and get to 113 pounds. He has wrestled well at times and then not so well at other times. He had lost four straight before the state finals. His performance speaks volumes about his heart and determination and character to not give up." Strickland expected a close match with last year's state runner-up, who had more returning state qualifiers and more senior wrestlers than the Bears.

"On paper we were stronger on the lower ends and they were stronger on the top," said Strickland. "I knew if we wrestled our best we had a good chance. You can't measure 'heart' on paper and we have 'heart.'" Caleb Bowie's come-from-behind win at 195 pounds kept the Bears in the hunt for gold. Trailing 8-2 in the third period, the sophomore rolled the 10th ranked Eagle on his shoulders to put BHP back on top 21-18.

Although Josh Campbell and Chris Smith lost, they both wrestled with heart.

Campbell lost a decision, but almost turned his opponent and put him in a cradle.

After trailing 4-0, Smith reversed the defending 160-pound state champion twice to end regulation in a tie. The BHP senior was taken down in overtime.

Freshman Dylan Gary gave BHP the early lead with an opening decision at 126 pounds.

Coleman Gary followed with a pin and a 9-0 lead.

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