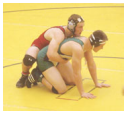
By EARL WATT

• Daily Leader

Justin McPhail became Liberal's only hope at winning a championship Saturday at the Newtown Tournament of Champions.

After jumping ahead of Clay Center's No. 1 ranked Zach Anderson, McPhail had a chance to get the gold.

But McPhail is still a sophomore, and the veteran senior from Clay Center was able to take advantage of a McPhail mistake and get a pin in the title bout, dropping McPhail to second, the highest finisher for the Redskins.



"Justin could have beat the kid," Liberal coach Mike Pewthers said. "He just got caught on his back and couldn't get off."

Anderson advanced to 19-0 after trailing McPhail 3-1.

Adrian Slaas took fifth at 119 pounds, and Carlos Rodriguez came in seventh at 160.

The tough competition is something that will benefit the Redskins, according to Pewthers.

“They realize some things they need to do,” he said. “We were able to see where some of the 5A guys came up and how we matched up against them.”

Liberla’s 12th place finish was better than six other Class 5A schools while three 5As finished ahead of the Redskins.

Garden City won the event, and the Redskins will dual the Buffaloes in the Big House Thursday.

“The last four years we’ve had the upper hand on Garden,” Pewthers said. “Their team is coming on. They have a good group of seniors this year. We have a shot at them. The way things match up, we will have to have our best dual of the year to beat them.”

The dual starts at 6 p.m. and will recognize Liberal’s seniors.