

LITTLE CHUTE — It's not often a team can win its wrestling match by nearly 40 points and be a little disappointed. But that's just how good the Freedom Irish are. Freedom defeated Little Chute 52-15 in an Eastern Valley Conference wrestling match on Thursday night, but the Irish weren't whooping it up afterwards. Rather, the Irish were thinking about the matches they could have done better in.

"We try not to underestimate anyone," said Nick Sprangers, who recorded the night's quickest pin in 25 seconds at 285 pounds. "We just try to get as many points as we can. We have the top record and we want to keep it that way.

"Even though we beat them by 40, we weren't real impressive."

After Zach Cibrario won by pin at 112 for Little Chute, the Mustangs got wins by Brady Spierings at 130 and Ryan Reynebeau at 135 to close to within 15-12.

But the Irish recorded wins in seven of the final eight matches to pull away.

Andrew Philibeck (125), Luke Vosters (152), Tom VerBust (160), Tom Schumacher (171), Nick Greely (215) and Sprangers all recorded pins for Freedom.

"I wasn't happy at all," Irish coach Mike Buechler said. "I don't think we wrestled very well. It does say a lot about our team. We're not happy just getting a 'W.' We know there are a lot of tougher matches down the line."

That fact wasn't lost with VerBust.

"We figure out what we do wrong and we like to work on that," VerBust said. "We're not happy with any losses."

Philibeck agreed with his teammate.

"We could have done better," Philibeck said. "We didn't come out like we should have. It's a good learning experience."

And that's what makes Freedom a conference power. Not only do the wrestlers start young, they go over each match and watch video of themselves.

It also doesn't hurt that many of the Irish started wrestling at a young age.

"I started in the third grade," Sprangers said. "We have a lot of good coaches all the way up. Dick Vosters was there when I started, but he's moved up."

Vosters is one of four assistants helping Buechler.

"Our kids start early," Buechler said. "We don't push it hard early. Middle school is where we start. It's a program, an entire program along with a strong wrestling club. It takes a community and all the hard work that goes with it. Everyone has the same goal. That is having good wrestlers and good kids.

"We stress we want good kids and good grades. They learn a lot of life lessons here, but we want good people."

And the players appreciate all the coaches do for them.

"I think its our coaches," VerBust said of what he thinks makes Freedom good. "They work us hard every day in practice. I think that helps us out a lot. We also have a lot of kids to wrestle and it helps having a good practice partner."

"We have hard work and determination and work hard every match," Philibeck said. "And we keep at it. If you work hard, you'll get good results out of it."