It looked as if Lassen High School's wrestling team was up for the challenge at home against Orland last Wednesday at home, but the Bulldogs responded in the late matches to hand the Grizzlies a 42-24 defeat. "I knew Orland was going to be tough. We had to pull off some upsets to get the win," Lassen head coach Rudy Valentine said. "But overall, I think we did pretty well."

Lassen's Warren Jones, who broke into the Northern Section rankings last week, started things off with a win at 103 pounds, and then No. 4 ranked Travis Jones followed by beating No. 5 Buck Garrett at 112 pounds.

Top-ranked Moses Valentine pushed his career record to 136-12 and kept the pressure on by pinning No. 3 John Orsua at 119 pounds. At 125 pounds, Tyler Singh's pin gave Lassen a commanding lead.

But Mike Duffy, Ricky Rizzato and Mike Mesa lost their matches, fueling Orland's comeback.

Lassen's Alma Miles beat his opponent at 145 and Peri Zamora lost in the final seconds to No. 3 Norbert Castellanos of Orland.

Lassen's Matt Maumoynier then lost at 160 and the Grizzlies went on to lose the remaining weights, aside from Chris Seals' upset win at 189.

"We've got a lot of improving to do, but we should be ready to go by sections," said Valentine, who points to the new entry of three wrestlers into the section rankings.

"There's not a kid in the section that can beat Moses. Tyler should be ranked in the top three of his weight class. He has missed a lot of matches, but is improving quickly. Alma could be one of the top three wrestlers at his weight once the section meet is over, and Peri is pumped up with this being his last season," Valentine said. "Matt should be winning more of his matches and I bet Chris will surprise some people at the end of the season.

"We always work our way at improving and getting as much experience we can, so we can be ready for sections. That's always been our team philosophy."

Valentine said if his son, Moses, finishes first at the section meet and advances to state, he will encounter some of the state's most talented wrestlers.

"He's in the toughest weight in the state. He's going to have to wrestle really well to place high," he said.

At the Galena Junior Varsity Tournament in Reno last weekend, Warren Jones and Singh finished first; freshman Colin Duron and Phillip Bush took second, and Riley Urionaguena and Daniel McClure finished third.

The Grizzlies host Corning on Wednesday, Jan. 31 and Gridley Wednesday, Feb. 7. Both dual meets start at 5:30 p.m. The Westside League Championships are set for Friday, Feb.9 in Orland, followed by the section championships Friday-Saturday, Feb. 16-17.

Valentine said he will send some of his wrestlers to the North Valley Tournament this Saturday for experience.