

The **Loris wrestling** team will have a shot at a third state title in four seasons after all.

The Lions appeared to have lost to Hanahan 34-33 Wednesday night in the Class AA Lower State final, but **Loris** coach Thomas Britt said the Hawks used a wrestler in the 125-pound weight class who was no longer eligible to compete at that weight because he had wrestled two weight classes higher earlier in the season.

A wrestler can wrestle up a weight class, but still remain certified at the lower class. However, if a wrestler moves up two weight classes, they lose certification at the lowest weight, according to South Carolina High School League rules.

Hanahan's Koffi Dwira defeated **Loris'** Jamar Gore 12-5 at 125, but Dwira had wrestled earlier in the season at 130 and 140, meaning he had lost his certification at 125 and was therefore ineligible to face Gore.

Britt said he had found that Dwira had wrestled at 140 in December when he was given the Hawks' weight certification paperwork after the match. Britt called the S.C. High School League on Wednesday night to register his appeal, and the SCHSL ruled in the Lions' favor on Thursday, resulting in a Hanahan forfeit of the 125-pound match and leaving **Loris** as a 39-31 winner and the Lower State champ for the fourth straight season.

Hanahan athletic director Charlie Patterson said his school plans to appeal commissioner Jerome Singleton's decision to the organization's Executive Committee today. The school must act quickly because the state championship is set for 1 p.m. Saturday at Ridge View High School in Columbia. For now, it's **Loris vs. Woodruff** in the championship.

"We're proceeding like we're going to Columbia on Saturday," Patterson said. "Hopefully, they will hear our side of the story and rule in our favor."

Patterson said the basis of his school's appeal will be that the rule cited doesn't appear on the internet or in the National Federation of High School's rule book.

"The rule they are basing it on is not in the National Federation handbook," Patterson said. "It is supposedly found on a two-page handout that we've never seen. We've talked to some well-known and respected coaches from around the state who did not know of this."

Should they wrestle and win Saturday, **Loris** would win its fifth state **wrestling** title and third in the last four seasons. The Lions won in 1999, 2000, 2007 and 2008, but fell to Abbeville in last year's state final.

This isn't the first time **Loris** has dealt with championship controversy. In 1999, **Loris** appeared to have lost the Class A-AA title to Bishop England before a scoring error was discovered. **Loris** had already gone home with silver medals and the runner-up trophy before finding out two days later about the error which made them champions.