

# BLAIR WRESTLING

## September 2024 Newsletter

### *Dear Friends of Blair Wrestling,*

We just started up here at Blair, and to say it's been busy is an understatement. The vibe on campus is strong, and the students are motivated and excited to be back. We started our fall training, and we have roughly 25 kids in the room this fall, which has been the largest yet since my time here.

Many of our ninth graders are getting in the room, while also competing in team sports such as football, soccer and cross country. Currently, we are in the wrestling room a few days a week, while also doing many small group workouts with the kids.

We have a really strong new group this year, which is primarily ninth-grade wrestlers, with a few new sophomores, juniors, seniors and PGs mixed in.

I'd like to give two big highlights from this past summer from two of our wrestlers. It was a great summer for Blair Wrestling. We also had a large crew go to Fargo, North Dakota, where we had seven All-Americans at the national championships. **William Henckel '25** also made the finals of the U20 challenge tournament in early June in Ohio. He beat many NCAA qualifiers, and had a really nice tournament.

**Victoria Carbonaro '27:** In June, Victoria Carbonaro qualified for the U15 Pan Am team and then traveled to El Salvador to compete. Victoria did not give up a point and tech falled all of her opponents en route to gold. Victoria then traveled to Fargo, North Dakota, in July, competed at the women's 16U nationals and took second place. Victoria made some really nice improvements this summer.

**Billy Dekraker '25:** Billy Dekraker made the U20 Pan Am team in July and traveled to Peru to compete. Billy won gold, tech falling all of his opponents. Billy will be attending Northwestern next year, and the levels he has jumped in this past year have been outstanding.

In addition, we also had two phenomenal camps at Blair this summer. We had over 90 kids at our day camp, and 35 girls at our women's camp. For the women's camp, we had 17 wrestlers travel to Fargo, North Dakota, to compete, and 11 of them were All-Americans.

I am excited to share a new wrestling initiative. We have developed plans to permanently endow our program. Please read below for more detailed information about this plan.

### **Blair Wrestling Endowment**

Since I took the job here at Blair, a top priority of mine has been to make sure the program is well supported by our alumni, parents and friends of the program. Blair Wrestling has an unbelievable tradition, and believe it or not, it is growing. Our numbers this year will exceed 50 student-athletes. Much of this has to do with the rise of the women's program, but also more and more students want to try the sport and be a part of Blair's wrestling tradition.

The matriculation of the wrestlers has also been awesome, with many attending amazing schools. Travel, coaches and training opportunities have become more and more frequent and prevalent, and it's our job to give the most opportunities to our kids. Currently, wrestling is one of the most expensive sports to operate at Blair.

For all of those reasons and more, we are pleased to announce that **A. Craig Powell '96** has agreed to make a most generous challenge gift of \$500,000 to Blair's wrestling endowment. We, as a Blair wrestling community, must raise an additional \$500,000 to meet this challenge. This would ensure Blair reaches its goal and secures the funds for the ever-changing needs of the program. Please consider making a gift at [www.blair.edu/supportwrestling](http://www.blair.edu/supportwrestling) and help us continue to build on our cherished and beloved legacy. Our minimum goal is to raise \$1 million to secure our future growth.

I would love to get as much support as possible from our alumni, friends, parents and supporters of the program. Evolving and growing as a program is important, because if you're not doing these things, others will pass you.

Please reach out to me with any questions, thoughts or ideas via email at [gitomr@blair.edu](mailto:gitomr@blair.edu) or cell at (908) 310-8267.

I am happy to talk at any time.

Best,  
*Coach Gitomer*

