

BLAIR

WRESTLING

March 2023 Newsletter

Dear Friends of Blair Wrestling,

Happy March! It has been an exciting week in Blairstown, New Jersey, as we got blasted with snow for the first time this winter.

We just concluded our 2023 National Prep tournament in Washington, D.C. As a team, we took first place and won by roughly 50 points. It was a total team effort, and Blair hasn't won since 2019, so it was great to get back on top.

This tournament has grown so much in terms of its depth, and that is a great thing for prep wrestling, and wrestling in general. Competition is key to improvement and better preparation, and each and every wrestler on our team was challenged in this tournament.

Before I mention some highlights from the tournament, I do want to say how motivated our staff and kids are as we move forward. There were tons of situations and actions that we learned from this weekend as staff and as wrestlers.

The real test as a program is how we adapt and adjust coming out of this weekend. We have made jumps this year as learners of this sport, but I think we can still grow, including the coaches. Preparation is really everything, and I thought we prepared well, but I know we can do better. Consistently improving, and trying to improve, is a skill we want all our wrestlers, students, teachers and coaches to have.

Morgan Edwards '24—Junior Morgan Edwards needs to be highlighted. She just won her second National Prep title, and she is the first to ever win two women's titles. Morgan won a really close semifinals match to move on. In the finals, Morgan was losing 7-0 to a fierce competitor, Isis France from Wyoming Seminary. France went for a throw and Morgan capitalized to get the pin. It was awesome.

It should also be known that Morgan was just recognized as a face of Pennsylvania high school wrestling in the state capitol in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Recognized by her representative and

the Pennsylvania state government, Morgan was honored in a ceremony that her parents and I were able to attend. We are really proud of Morgan and what she has done and continues to do.

Peter Snyder '26—Ninth grader Peter Snyder is a complete gamer. He won his first National Prep title this year, at a weight class that has many upperclassmen. Peter has gone through the ups and downs this year that many new students experience. I am most proud of Peter because he owns who he is, and he believes in who he is. Peter won in overtime in the semifinals and the finals. Peter wins a lot, and he wins close a lot, and that is something he wants to improve on. As he learns this sport daily, his attitude is contagious and everyone loves to be around Peter. Congratulations, Peter!

Nolan Neves '23—Nolan won his first National Prep title at heavyweight, controlling all of his matches and utilizing a snatch single in most of them. It's a great attack and he went to it in almost every match. You usually see his brother at heavyweight, but we made the decision to wrestle Carter at 215 pounds and Nolan at heavyweight for this tournament, for many reasons. One reason you haven't seen Nolan much in the lineup is because he is a postgraduate, and he has been on the college open circuit with Coach Antonelli. Coach Antonelli and Nolan have a great bond, and it has brought me a lot of joy to see their relationship grow. Coach Antonelli has put a great deal of time into Nolan not just in wrestling, but also in football and life outside of sports. For me, that is what Blair is all about, and it's great to see those relationships build.

As our resident postgraduate, Nolan has been nothing but awesome in all facets of Blair life. He lives his life right, and he has balance in his life. He puts the same effort into wrestling that he puts into areas like math or history, family life, friends, football and anything else you can think of. We are so excited that he will be going to a great school like Columbia. We are very fortunate to have Nolan, and for our younger guys to be around him.



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Final thoughts:

On the drive back from the National Prep tournament, we visited Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Art Museum on the way home. We saw some different exhibits, ate cheesesteaks and spent time with one another. It was relaxing and nice to see so many smiles and laughs.

On Tuesday, **Craig Powell '96** visited Blair as part of the School's Society of Skeptics series. Craig was a postgrad here at Blair, and he made a point of sharing that Blair changed the trajectory of his life for the better. Craig is a successful entrepreneur and many of the standards and principles he lives by are due to wrestling. Craig was able to spend a lot of time with our wrestlers, and it was really cool to see how engaged they were.

I will conclude this newsletter with a message Craig gave to our team. Craig has done extremely well, and when asked the question by **Lorenzo Norman '23**, "How important was it for you to make money when you decided you wanted to become an entrepreneur?" Craig replied, "It isn't even in my top three reasons why I do the work I do. In fact, it can't be in the top three. As you progress, it might make the top five, but definitely not the top three."

That message relates perfectly to why Blair Wrestling is special. It's great that Blair has a winning tradition, but in taking a lesson from Craig, there has to be more to it. The lessons learned, and the mistakes made, were plentiful this year. Coming together to support one another on and off the mat is the Blair Wrestling way. More importantly, though, striving to improve and getting the most out of one another and yourself is the ultimate goal. Being lifelong learners is really our ultimate mission and goal.

Thank you for reading these newsletters, and stay tuned for our spring wrestling updates. Go Bucs!

*Best,
Coach Gitomer*



BLAIR ACADEMY

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