



NEWS RELEASE

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She's An Inspiration On The Football Field

Wildcat among the few girls playing Texas high school football

(Editor's note: Photos available upon request)

Nov. 4, 2024 – With the game on the line last year, the Elgin High School junior varsity football coaches called for a blitz. That duty fell to Madeline Padron, at the time, a sophomore in her second year playing football for the Wildcats.

Padron prepped herself, and then sped toward the opposing quarterback. In a flash, the play was over, and Padron popped up. Quarterback sack: Wildcats.

“The sideline went crazy, she went crazy with excitement, and we were victorious,” said Junior Varsity Head Football Coach Chris Mueller. “Maddie is a great teammate. She makes everyone around her better with her work ethic and leadership attitude.”

Now in her third year, the 16-year-old Padron is a rarity: A girl playing high school football. Even rarer: The fact she plays linebacker, a position where she inflicts the hits.

“I get asked a lot what it's like to play football as a girl and all I can say is that it's something I enjoy,” Padron said. “Football isn't like some side hobby to me. I am committed to something I love doing, and I encourage anyone to do the same.”

Padron hopes to play again next year, which would place her in even rarer air: A girl playing high school varsity football. That hasn't happened in Elgin since a student was a kicker on varsity about 10 years ago, said Mueller, now in his 23rd year coaching in Elgin ISD.

“I want to be able to play under the Friday night lights,” Padron said. “I hope to walk out on a Friday evening to make great plays, and get a win with my family.”

While others may have followed in the footsteps of a sibling or parent, Padron simply was looking to try something new when football came into the picture. It’s a decision she is thankful she made.

“Joining this program has helped me for the better,” she said, “and at the end of the day, I am very thankful that I joined football.”

Her coaches expressed only joy over having Padron on the team. EHS Head Football Coach Heath Clawson described her as an exemplary team member.

“We talk about ‘Wildcat Pride,’ doing things the right way, showing up every day, not complaining, putting in the work, holding others accountable, being unselfish, and being a great teammate,” Clawson said. “She is all of these things.”

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