

BLAIR



WRESTLING

January 2025 Newsletter

Dear Friends of Blair Wrestling,

It has been a crazy close to 2024 for Blair Wrestling. I'd like to give you some highlights from the month of December and some important dates as we move forward through the season. In addition, we have gained unbelievable support from so many for the wrestling endowment, which will help grow and support the amazing people who are part of this school and program.

Ironman

Ironman was as tough as ever, and we immediately got thrown into the battle with a very young group of competitors. This tournament was an important first step for the season, because it exposed us in a way that gave us a chance to work on some really important, fundamental concepts in our system. Mikey Batista '27 and Marie Sharp '28 had breakout tournaments, while William Henckel '25 continued his outstanding Blair career with another signature tournament. Mikey battled and took fifth place in a loaded weight class at 113. Marie knocked off the No. 1 wrestler in the country in the second round and then dominated her way to her first Ironman title. William faced a really tough competitor, Asher Cunningham, in the finals and found himself trailing 10-3. Despite the odds, he battled back and won an overtime thriller 15-12! William's leadership this season has been awesome, and it has shown the rest of the group that when there is purpose beyond oneself, it brings more pride and meaning to their wrestling. His passion and commitment have been shown in all of his matches thus far this season.

Robin Leff Tournament

This was the first year where Ironman and Beast of the East were not scheduled on back-to-back weekends, so we were able to have a weekend between to compete. This tournament featured a lot of tough New Jersey teams. We had a bunch of champions in Mikey Batista '27, Vin Anello

'27, Weston Borgers '28, Ellis Kirsch '25, TJ Kellas '28, Barry Norman '26, William Henckel '25 and Peter Snyder '26. Unfortunately, Ryan Rios '26 and Cael Mielnik '27 suffered injuries in matches at Ironman and Robin Leff and were not able to compete. The highlight of the tournament was seeing ninth grader Weston Borgers '28 at 132 lbs., where he defeated two top competitors in the state and country in the semifinals and finals. You are going to be hearing about Weston throughout his career.

Beast of the East

I was really impressed with our training going into the Beast of the East, and each week, it was clear the guys and girls were getting better and better. We faced a number of injuries, but many new wrestlers stepped up and excelled in different weight classes. Anthony Curlo '28, who is a 106-pounder, bumped to 113 for the team, and Eric Bocanegra '27, who also was at 106 at the beginning of the year, moved to fill in at 120. Vin Anello '27 had a breakout tournament taking fourth place, beating a really tough Malvern opponent in the quarter finals, and then was seconds away from getting to the finals before losing an ultimate ride out match against Keanu Dillard from Bethlehem Catholic. Ninth grader Eddie George '28 also had a breakout tournament, ultimately losing in the semifinals against the champion from Malvern. Other highlights included Peter Snyder '26 improving his level of attacks and taking second at 215. Ryan Meier '26 stepped in at 150 and lost in the round of 12. Eric Bocanegra '27 gave an incredibly gritty performance, going 5-2 at 120 pounds before getting his knee banged up. Eric has been, and is, a total team guy.

On the girls' front, Natalia Accorsi '25 took third and Marie Sharp '28 earned second. Marie lost a tough one in the finals. A few of the girls have been injured, but you will most likely see them back in the second semester.



Sam Cali Invitational

We had two competitors at the Sam Cali Invitational in Benji Koch '26 (144) and Anthony Curlo '28 (106). Benji won several matches at the tournament, going 3-2. Benji is getting back to work and has made some great improvements. Anthony Curlo won his second tournament of the year, adding this win to his Sam Lovello tournament victory in early December. Anthony dominated the competition on day two, tech-falling his opponents in the semifinals and finals, against some of the best New Jersey talent. Anthony works tremendously hard, and it was nice to see his hard work pay off.

Up Next

Sunday, January 5: Arm Bar Duals and Dame of Thrones in Clifton Park, New York

Saturday, January 11: Tri Dual with St. Edward and Lake Highland in Orlando, Florida, and Eastern States (girls)

Friday, January 17: Wyoming Seminary at home at 7 p.m. (boys and girls)

Thursday, January 30: Delbarton at Delbarton at 7 p.m.

Saturday, February 8: St. Peter's Prep at home

Our wrestling endowment fund is nearing its fundraising goal, with almost \$1 million raised. It has been great connecting with so many supporters along the way. Every contribution, no matter the size, makes a difference and is appreciated. www.blair.edu/supportwrestling

Thank you and happy new year,

Coach Gitomer

