BLAIR WRESTLING

January 2026 Newsletter

Dear Friends of Blair Wrestling,

It was another eventful weekend of wrestling, highlighted by a home event at Blair Academy. We don't get to wrestle at home often, and so being able to compete in front of so many supporters is always special. The kids were excited and it showed through in their wrestling.

Blair Quad

It was awesome to see roughly 100 supporters at the pre-match social in the new Center for Health and Well-Being. Huge shout-out to Director of Alumni Relations Courtnay Stanford '95 for organizing this event for the program. It's always great to have everyone together.

Blair vs. St. Christopher's

We had a nice win against St. Christopher's right off the bat. It is always special to me to compete against St. Christopher's, where I taught and coached for 10 years in Richmond, Virginia. It is a special place, and to be able to see their lineup full of athletes I worked with when they were in elementary school is really cool to see. Year in and year out, St. Christopher's is one of the top programs in Virginia, so it was great to welcome them to Blair in this quad. In addition, they are a class act, and every one of their wrestlers fights hard. Coach Squires and Prebish are great coaches and teachers. We will see them again next week at Escape the Rock and later at Prep Nationals.

Blair vs. St. Edward

Anyone who knows wrestling appreciates the legendary program that is St. Edward. We earned a dominating 50-16 team win, and I was very happy with how hard our athletes wrestled. Some of the highlights were Ryan Meier '26 dominating his opponent with techniques we implemented just last week. Salah Tsarni '27 also dominated an opponent he beat by a slim margin earlier in the year at Ironman. Ryan Rios '26 battled through an extremely close match with Karson Brown, one of the top pound-for-pound wrestlers in the country. It was also great to have Eric Bocanegra '27 and Barry Norman '26 back in the lineup after dealing with injuries.

Blair vs. Lake Highland Prep

The group gave a great team effort here. Barry Norman earned a huge win over Lucas Boe, whom he lost to earlier in the year. The dual meet concluded with Cael Mielnik '27 securing a tech fall to clinch the match for us. I was especially happy that the dual came down to Cael, because when the pressure is high and the challenge is great, Cael is the guy you want in there. Lake Highland Prep is well coached, and they are one of the top teams in the country. We won 30-28.

A Few Thoughts

After the St. Christopher's match, we had a team meeting, and Weston Borgers '28 said something to the team that resonated with all the wrestlers as well as the coaches. He volunteered his thoughts, saying, "I think we need to have more fun in the matches. We need to smile more, but really, we deserve to have more fun." After that, we all became accountability partners, including the athletes and the coaches, and we just reminded one another to have fun the rest of the day. For Weston to share something like this unsolicited speaks volumes about his growth as a young man.

Eastern States

Coach Palanca traveled to Albany, New York, with Marie Sharp '28 and Corynne McNulty '27, where they dominated the competition. They both wrestled five matches and won each

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one by fall or technical fall, and both beat nationally ranked opponents in the finals. Sela Rozov ’27 also won two matches on the day and continues to improve. We have had some injuries on the girls’ side, but stay tuned for their return.

Bissell Invitational

We also had a combined squad travel on Saturday, January 10, to compete at the Bissell Invitational at The Hill School. Many of our newer and novice boys and girls wrestled, with each athlete getting two or three matches on the day. Archie Wenner ’29 went undefeated, garnering three victories. Sammy Goff ’27 and Cali Vetter ’28 both finished 2-1 while wrestling boys in their division as well as girls.

Fun fact: All in all, across all of our various combined teams, the Blair Academy wrestling program competed in an impressive total of 101 matches this past weekend.

We will travel to the Escape the Rock tournament in Holland, Pennsylvania, next weekend where the team will get challenged again. Please mark these dates on your calendar for our next home events:

Saturday, January 24, at 1 p.m.: Blair vs. Green Farms Academy–Senior Day! We will honor our seniors.

Thursday, January 29, at 7 p.m.: Blair vs. Delbarton

Best,

Ross Gitomer