

GRANT UNION

STATE WRESTLING

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EVERY FAMILY HAS THAT ONE THING THEY BRAG ABOUT A LITTLE TOO MUCH. SOME FAMILIES HAVE DOCTORS. SOME HAVE LAWYERS. MINE? WE HAVE STATE WRESTLERS. AND NOT JUST ONE. NOT EVEN TWO. WE'VE GOT THREE. AND YES, THEY'RE ALL MY COUSINS — WHICH BASICALLY MEANS I'M TAKING PARTIAL CREDIT FOR MORAL SUPPORT AND SUPERIOR GENETICS.

THIS YEAR AT THE STATE TOURNAMENT, OWEN AND TAYLOR BOTH BROUGHT HOME 1ST PLACE TITLES, AND JERRET BATTLED HIS WAY TO A HARD-EARNED 4TH. IF YOU LISTEN CLOSELY, YOU CAN STILL HEAR OUR FAMILY GROUP CHAT GOING ABSOLUTELY FERAL.

FIRST, THERE'S JERRET.

JERRET FOUGHT HIS WAY TO 4TH, WHICH, IF YOU'VE EVER WATCHED A STATE BRACKET, YOU KNOW IS NO JOKE. THE COMPETITION IS STACKED, THE MATCHES ARE BRUTAL, AND BY THE END EVERYONE LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE AGED FIVE YEARS. JERRET BATTLED THROUGH IT ALL AND FINISHED ON THE PODIUM. THAT TAKES GRIT. IT TAKES TOUGHNESS. IT TAKES THE ABILITY TO FUNCTION WHILE EXHAUSTED AND SORE — WHICH IS MORE THAN I CAN SAY FOR MYSELF AFTER CLIMBING A SINGLE FLIGHT OF STAIRS.



NOW TAYLOR.

TAYLOR WALKED INTO STATE LIKE HE HAD SOMETHING SCHEDULED — AND THAT SOMETHING WAS WINNING. CALM. FOCUSED. PROBABLY HYDRATED. MATCH AFTER MATCH, HE HANDLED BUSINESS. NO DRAMA. NO FAIRY TALE COMEBACK NEEDED. JUST STRAIGHT-UP DOMINANCE. WHEN HE CLAIMED 1ST, IT FELT LESS LIKE A SURPRISE AND MORE LIKE, “YEP. THAT CHECKS OUT.” IF CONFIDENCE WERE A WRESTLING MOVE, TAYLOR WOULD HAVE IT MASTERED. AND TO TOP IT ALL OFF, HE WON 2A ATHLETE OF THE TOURNAMENT! WELL DESERVED.



FINALLY, WE HAVE OWEN.

OWEN WENT INTO STATE WITH SOMETHING TO PROVE. AT DISTRICTS, THE SAME KID HE FACED AT STATE HAD PINNED HIM. AS IN, MATCH OVER, LIGHTS OUT, BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME. I'M NOT SAYING IT WAS TRAUMATIC, BUT I'M PRETTY SURE HALF OUR FAMILY WAS STRESS-EATING SNACKS IN THE BLEACHERS. SO HEADING INTO THE STATE REMATCH, EVERYONE KNEW IT WOULD BE A BATTLE. AND GUESS WHAT? UNDERDOG OWEN SHOWED UP DIFFERENT. HE DIDN'T JUST WRESTLE. WATCHING HIM FLIP THE SCRIPT AND BEAT THE SAME KID WHO PINNED HIM AT DISTRICTS WAS LIKE WATCHING THE BEST KIND OF SPORTS MOVIE. EXCEPT THIS TIME, WE DIDN'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE SEQUEL. HE FINISHED ON TOP, TOOK 1ST, AND OFFICIALLY SECURED HIS VILLAIN-TO-HERO ARC IN ONE SEASON. UNDERDOG? MAYBE. CHAMPION? DEFINITELY.



I COULDN'T BE PROUDER OF OWEN'S COMEBACK, TAYLOR'S DOMINANCE, AND JERRET'S FIGHT. THEY'VE PUT IN THE EARLY MORNINGS, THE WEIGHT CUTS, THE PRACTICES, AND THE GRIND THAT MOST PEOPLE NEVER SEE. AND THEY SHOWED UP WHEN IT MATTERED MOST.

STATE CHAMPIONS RUN IN THE FAMILY. AND APPARENTLY, SO DOES NOT KNOWING HOW TO ACT ABOUT IT.