

Take Down
Blair Oden
[’18] executes
a cross-face
against his
Frisco Wakeland
opponent at the
Arlington Martin
meet, pinning
him. **MICHAEL
PATTERSON** |
staff
Photographer



Strength in numbers

By | Jack Kieffaber

Every wrestler has a signature move, and 126-pounder Blair Oden [’18] set up to use his: the cradle. His opponent shot for a single-leg and surged forward for a 2-point take-down. Oden drove hard, knowing if this failed him, he’d land face down on the mat—and the scoreboard.

He threw his legs back to counter his opponent’s grasp, pressed down towards the mat, and swung on top, and reached across to grab his arm in a cross-face maneuver. Now, it was cradle time.

Blair leaned back and pinned his opponent for the win. It was one of two victories he’d take home during varsity wrestling’s first meet of the year at Arlington Martin.

“It was the hardest tournament that we will go to this year and obviously the first so we were still shaking the rust off,” Oden said, “If I’d won one more match, I would have come across a three time national champion, so the competition is really tough. I was getting out-muscled a little bit,

but the first day, I went 2-0, which I was happy with.”

Oden was eliminated the next day after losing tight 2-point contests.

Oden’s solid performance was also ESD’s only showing, as the only other wrestler qualified for the tournament, senior Jackson Fitzgerald (145), failed his hydration test.

Filling the roster has always been an issue for the team, having never manned every weight class in any of its six years.

This makes placing in meets an extreme challenge, but that didn’t stop the team from having a breakout record last season.

“Last year we finished at 6th at SPC, and 9th at state,” Head Coach Riqui Villarreal said. “We had the most placers we have ever had in the history of the program and 9th place was our best finish in the history of the program.”

Villarreal, in his second year, is well on his way to getting more athletes into the wrestling room.

“Of course we’ve got two returning All State guys in Jackson and Blair,” he said, “but we also have a couple more returning

Varsity wrestling looks to build on historic year with fuller roster

sophomores who wrestled at state last year in [sophomores] Rowan Brown (120) and Baron Fletcher (120). As for new guys, I was thrilled to get a new football guy in [sophomore] Chase Toledo (182) to come out. They’re showing promise, and I think they are going to stick with it.”

Other new faces include freshman John Heldman (152), Christopher Talbot (132), a freshman with two years of middle school experience, and senior Henry Rathjen (160), a lacrosse player by trade who Villarreal is working to get ready to wrestle in counter matches.

Many of these newcomers got the chance to establish themselves early in their first dual meet against All Saints last week.

“Chase went 2-0 last night in his first two matches ever,” Oden said. “Not to mention Christopher went 2-0 in his first high school meet. Rowan Brown had one match and won it, and Jackson barely lost in overtime, but it was a really good fight. I think, compared to last year’s team—and even the coaches have said it—we’re already way ahead of where

we were last year.”

With small yet growing numbers, Villarreal is looking for his athletes to place higher as a team this season.

“My goal is to improve on our finishes team-wise and then to have as many or more all conference and all state wrestlers as we had last year,” he said. “If everyone continues to improve the rate they are now, my aim is to have 10 or 11 guys wrestle at the SPC tournament and wrestle at state and improve on our finish.”

Oden is shooting for a higher team ranking, but has some unfinished personal business, though he’s not sure whether he’ll commit to wrestling at nationals in Bethlehem, PA, if given the option, or stay in town to start lacrosse practice, Oden has all his focus on a Prep State title.

“My first goal is to win SPC again,” he said. “My ultimate goal is to win Prep State. It’s going to take more work this year. I think I am up to it and I’m on a team that can push me to get there.”

The team wrestles again on Dec. 19 at R.L. Turner in Carrollton.

Freshmen mount the leader boards in skiing

By | Whitney Webb & Margret Smith

As 2-year olds, freshmen Grace Inglis and Reece Breaux both discovered a talent most Texas toddlers don’t have the opportunity to learn about themselves—they had a need for speed. And ever since, these Dallas teens have made regular 900-mile treks to the Colorado Rockies to take advantage of the pristine powder.

Both Inglis and Breaux grew up in skiing households, where every member of their families took to the slopes.

“All my siblings ski, but I am the only competitive one,” Inglis said.

Breaux also comes from a family of winter sports fans, all of

them skiers. His grandfather, Joe McHugh, introduced the sport to him at a young age, fueling his passion for the slopes.

Breaux didn’t start racing competitively until four years ago after being accepted into the Vail Ski School program.

“There’s a big program over there called Ski School Vail,” Breaux said. “[That’s when] I noticed that kids were racing, and my form was just starting to get really good, so I wanted to participate. My uncle works for them, so he got me a session and they accepted me.”

Breaux competes in Alpine skiing, making it hard for him to train in flat Dallas.

“Since it’s very expensive to go to Vail, I only practice during



Snow hop Grace Inglis at the NASTAR National Championships in March 2015. Photo courtesy of Grace Ingles.

spring break,” Breaux said. “I haven’t skied since school started.”

Limited practice time hasn’t slowed him down. Breaux has placed in the top three in numerous races and took first in the 2013 Vail Regional Race.

“My biggest accomplishment is winning the regional race,” Breaux said. “The competition was neck and neck, but I tucked my body down and shot to the finish.”

Breaux is not the only one with a first place trophy.

Inglis, ranked No. 1 for her age group in the state of Colorado by NASTAR, skis Giant Slalom races near her home in Steamboat. These are long races where athletes negotiate between gates, otherwise known as poles, spaced at a greater distance than regular slalom events. The point is to get to the bottom as quickly as possible without falling or being

disqualified, which could happen either by missing one of the gates or leaving the course.

Inglis travels to Colorado about three times a month to hone her skill. She will leave Dallas Friday night and return late Sunday.

“What I love about skiing is you’re always learning something new,” Inglis said. “You never just learn one thing and then you’re good to go, there’s always something to perfect.”

She contributes her love for skiing to her dad, who shares the passion with her.

“We used to go down the race course for fun when we were around seven and then I got better and better at it and so I thought racing would be fun,” Inglis said.

By the time she turns 18, Inglis will become ski instructor certified, and she aspires to have earned a ski scholarship for college.



Summit fever Reece Breaux pauses before taking on to take on a double black diamond at Riva Ridge and Prima on the summit of Vail Mountain in Colorado, March 10. Photo courtesy of Reece Breaux.

Eagle Eye

By | Grace Conley

ESD sports at a glance

Womens Soccer (3-0-1)
Notable: With two SPC championships under its belt, the girls team is currently ranked 8th in the region for all public and private schools. The team tied 24-time state champ Ursuline Academy on Thurs., Dec. 3, and beat Greenhill, 5-1 Tuesday. for the first time in five years.
Quotable: “I think the Ursuline and Greenhill games showed the team that we really can compete with anyone, as long as we give our best effort.”
—Senior Captain Morgan Eller

Next match: Thurs., Jan. 7, against Plano East at Highland Park, 6p.m.
Men’s Soccer (3-1-1)
Notable: Only five games into the season, the Eagles have successfully put 11 different players on the score board.
Quotable: “We were scared coming into the season since our main goal scorer Winston Guillory graduated, but the team has really stepped it up.” —Madhav Nair
Next match: Tues., Jan. 12 away against Trinity Valley, 6:30 p.m.

Wrestling
Notable: Head Coach Riqui Villarreal enjoys a more diverse group of weight classes filled with eight so far with only one double-slotted.
Quotable: “We are going to be a lot more balanced this year than we were last year. Last year we were heavy toward the lighter weights and we had one heavy weight, but this year, we have a couple of anchors in the upper weights and it looks like we will have a little more balance than we did last year across the board.” —Head coach Riqui Villarreal
Next meet: Fri., Dec. 19 at the Saints Invitational: First Baptist Academy.

Womens Basketball (5-5)
Notable: Freshman starters Jay Brown and Caitlyn Henderson have become the defensive duo. While point guard Charlotte North [’17] takes on offense, breaking the 1,000 point barrier.
Quotable: “Jay and Caitlyn have been a great help [to our defense.]. They’ve been able to step up, Jay is turning into a defensive specialist along with Caitlin who has been a nice surprise.” —Head Coach Colin Boddicker
Next game: Tues., Dec. 22 home against the Dallas Thunder at 5p.m.

Mens Basketball (3-7)
Notable: The team came back against TAPPS 5-A Bishop Dunne in overtime. Tues., Nov. 24, to win the game 52-47.
Quotable: “That game showed that our team was resilient and better than a lot of people expected. Being able to win in overtime was a great feeling because we had ended up on the losing side of a bunch of close games last year.” —Senior Captain Blake Morrison
Next game: Tonight against Trinity Christian Academy, 7:30 p.m.