

locking in new traditions

by annessa hernandez

Pain. It became a battle inside freshman Gabriela Castorena's mind as she tried not to let it get to her. Stretching out her injured shoulder and rubbing on Tiger balm, she focused on what moves to execute on her Chapin opponent.

Before she knew it, she was on the mat fighting another opponent—the pain trying to get the best of her.

"I suffered a shoulder injury from one of the practices when I was wrestling Yoselin [Negrete]," Castorena said. "She did a reversed half on me, and I somehow popped and pulled my arm trying to go over her. Later, I started having pain in my shoulder. My Chapin opponent didn't know about my injury, but she used certain moves that strained or put pressure on my shoulder. The pain was unbearable. I just focused on wrestling and not quitting. I was really upset with myself that the pain got the best of me."

Focused on strategy, new coaches John Majerczyk and Charles Johnson wanted to develop their own program. They'd do that by instilling confidence, support, and tough conditioning.

"It was a big change for me," Majerczyk said. "I went to El Paso High and we came to practice at Burges. I knew the

past two coaches. I have much respect for them. I knew I had a lot to live up to to maintain that winning tradition."

Junior Micheal Dominguez, who has been on the team for three years, said he liked the changes.

"The coaches were able to work with us a lot more on the mat," Dominguez said. "It was very hands-on. I was able to work more on my technique with them, then work on strength. When I first found out I was going to state, I was beyond happy, but at the same time, I was much more determined. The coaches helped my training and my strength a lot. It felt good to have that from them."

For sophomore Arturo Ayala, the beginning of the season started out slower than usual. When conditioning started to pick up, his confidence did too.

"Each practice I felt myself improving over last year, and it felt good," Ayala said. "During my match before district, I kept telling myself I had to win to be in the top rankings. I also kept in mind what my coaches told me, which was to keep pace and work any moves I could get in. That helped me a lot throughout the season. In the end, I won about 20 of 25 matches. I attribute that success to my dad. He was a wrestler, and he always believes in me."



victoria brown

QUICK THINKING
Nerves vanishing, junior Micheal Dominguez tries to untangle himself to pin his Irvin opponent. "My match was full of surprises," Dominguez said. "I didn't know what my opponent was thinking or what moves he was going to pull next. I was trying to race through the match so I could win and land a place at regionals." Dominguez advanced to state in the 185 lb. weight class division. He was the only wrestler to make it to state.

BITTER LOSS
Concentrated on not "locking hands" with her opponent from Chapin, sophomore Kaylee Romo struggles to take her down during the Bowie tournament. "I thought I was winning," Romo said, "but because the referee kept making the same call, my opponent got more points. I was devastated because I lost when I shouldn't have. It hurt just seeing her on the podium and getting her hand raised."



genesis barraza



genesis barraza



genesis barraza

PINNING DOWN A VICTORY
Inexperience doesn't stop senior Yoselin Negrete from taking down her opponent from Chapin. "I had her in a cradle, and I was trying to pin her down," Negrete said. "I usually wait for my opponents to shoot first, so that's what I did. I finally pulled a head and arm and pinned her which allowed me to go to district. Originally, I had dropped eight pounds for the season to meet my weight class." Negrete went to regionals and won one of three matches.

TASTE OF DEFEAT
Frustrated and disappointed, junior Italy Ramos gets checked for a concussion after a match with an Irvin opponent. "The day before the match, I had a headache, sore throat, and a fever," Ramos said. "My opponent grabbed me by my tricep and head, then threw me. I hit my head and blacked out for a bit." Ramos was cleared of having a concussion.



rudée valenciana



IN CONTROL
Determined to win, sophomore Hector A-Banuelos refuses to let a bloody nose get in his way. "At first my opponent was on top of me," A-Banuelos said. "He was in charge of every move. While I was bleeding, my opponent tried to scoot off the mat because I gained control, but I held him so he could stay where I was able to pin him." (photo by mikey provenghi)

SWIFT SUCCESS
Motivated with thoughts of winning, sophomore Arturo Ayala gets his opponent from Chapin in a "guillotine." "I just kept thinking that I had to put him on his back," Ayala said. "That way I would be able to pin him and win. My opponent ended up being easy to pin because he was making a lot of mistakes." Ayala, who wrestled in the 113 lb. weight class, finished second at the district meet, earning a spot at regionals.

record

DISTRICT	
Boys	2nd
Girls	5th

"Being a senior, I knew the day would come where I could no longer wrestle. I couldn't have asked for a better year or a better team." jorge robes-12

