



New Mexico Activities Association Student Spotlight

Garcia Wants More Than Just a State Championship

By Jeff Jackson

Whether he's grappling with opponents on the mat or Shakespeare in class, Isaac Garcia is bound for success.

Isaac is unbeaten in 16 matches this season as a junior in the 126-pound weight class for Manzano High School and is determined to improve on his finish last season as a state runner-up, also in the 126-pound division. The only way for him to better his performance last season, during which he went 33-4, is to become a state champion wrestler.

"Definitely, no doubt about it," he said when asked if the second-place medal from 2015 has motivated him for the 2016 state tournament. "It's driven me for this year and makes me want to perfect it for this year."

Isaac and his brother Isidro (120 pounds) each won championships in December at the APS Winter Invitational, leading the Monarchs to the team title as well.

Being undefeated so far this season for the Monarchs has presented no additional pressure, he said.

"I'm just doing what I can to win, whatever it takes. It's just a number. It doesn't affect me," Isaac said, adding that wrestling is his only sport this season. "They say the only way to get better at wrestling is to keep wrestling. As a team, we're doing very well, much better than last year and pushing ourselves to individual goals."

He's also putting on quite a show for his parents, Joseph Garcia and Juanita Moya-Garcia, who attend all his matches.

"They're in the front row and they're the loudest ones screaming," Isaac said.

Wrestling is helping Isaac reach his goal of getting to college, where he wants to continue wrestling and study sports medicine to become a physical therapist.

"I get physical fitness from wrestling. It makes me better as a person, makes me better in life. It helps me maintain my goals and prepare for college," Isaac said. "I have a lot of personal goals, but right now I want to focus on getting to college."

In addition to his success on the mat, Isaac gets a boost from his academic status with a 3.7 grade point average at Manzano and has those priorities in proper perspective.

"I take a lot of pride in my grades and sports, but one day that (sports) will be over. My education will be what defines me. My parents, they take a lot of pride in that as well," he said.

Math and English, he says, are his top subjects and he is enrolled in advanced-placement programs for both those areas of study.



“English is probably my favorite class. I like writing,” Isaac said.

As part of English class, Isaac and his classmates have had to read several literary classics such as *The Scarlet Letter* and Shakespeare works *Othello*, *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

He approaches reading works of The Bard as he would a wrestling opponent – with fervor.

“There’s so much to learn. It’s a good challenge to read Shakespeare and learn the language,” he said.