

# New Mexico Activities Association

## Student-Athlete Spotlight

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### Mounho Set to Defend his Title

By Tyler Dunkel, NMAA Sports Information Director

Eldorado High School junior Michael Mounho is a quiet, reserved and humble young man, whose main focus in life is his education. He does, however, carry a passion for sports, especially tennis and basketball, both in which he has found success over the last few years.

"I was pretty young when I first started playing tennis, probably 10 years old. I would go out with my dad and his friends and just mess around, hitting the ball back and forth. Then, when I was 12, I started getting serious about it and my coach Eric Stuart really helped me develop my game. I took a few years off when I was 14 and 15 to focus on basketball, then as a sophomore, I decided to try playing in high school."

Mounho has only played one year of high school tennis because of an injury off the tennis court during his freshman year.

"I was going to play my freshman year but I suffered a broken ankle playing basketball, which basically ended my freshman season. So, after recovering, I came out my sophomore year and had some success, winning the 6A individual title at state."

He continued by saying, "It was frustrating to be injured and not have the ability to participate but I knew I still had a few years to play, so I just focused on my recovery and got ready for the next basketball and tennis season."

Mounho's drive to recover paid off in the end as he won the 6A boys' individual state title in 2016 at the State Tennis Championships.

"I was naturally nervous when I stepped on the court. It was the first season in two years that I had played. Coach Stuart prepared me well for the match and I was confident in my ability to go out and compete at a high level."

"I was shock that I had actually won the state title but at the same time I was happy. All the hard work and preparation I had put into the season paid off in the end. It was a great accomplishment for me and I could not have done it without Coach Stuart in my corner."

Mounho helped the Eagles to the State Basketball Championship semifinals in 2017, falling just short to the eventual state champion, Volcano Vista Hawks. He says it was a tough way to end the season but says the loss will drive him and his teammates next season.

"We had one of our best seasons in a couple years and it was obviously disappointing that we were basically just one point away from making the championship game. It hurt but it gives us a little fire for our senior year to try and make it to the championship game."



As the Eagles' No. 1 singles player, Mounho has compiled a 7-2 overall record and a 4-1 record in district play this season, saying he is ready to defend his title from a year ago and hopefully bring a team title home to Eldorado as well. He also knows there is a target on his back this year.

"I know every time I go on the court this year, the person on the other side of the net is going to give me his best to try and beat me. I just need to be confident, stay relaxed and play my game. The beginning of the season was a little rough because I don't play at all during basketball season, so it took me some time to get back into tennis shape. After a few weeks on the court I was back in the groove and have played well the rest of the season so far."

He continued by saying, "To be state champion again this year is definitely one of my goals. I don't go out on the court to lose. To win the individual title for a second straight year would be great but to also help my team bring home the blue trophy is also something myself and the team have our sites on."

Mounho currently carries a 4.4 GPA and is among the top in his class. He plans to attend college following graduation, focusing on his studies, but hasn't ruled out the possibility of playing collegiately.

"I want to go out-of-state for college, hopefully to the University of Texas at Austin on an academic scholarship. If the opportunity comes about for me to play either basketball or tennis in college I would definitely take a look at it."

He knows that athletics can only carry him so far in life and he has some special advice for young student-athletes.

"My grades have always been the number one focus for me. You can't rely on getting an athletic scholarship because you never know what might happen. One injury and you're done. Your academics will carry you much further in life. My parents have always encouraged me to do my best in whatever I do and school has always come first."

Good advice from a true student-athlete.