

Student Reporter

A Typical High School Wrestling Tournament



Joanne Kim

Grade 10
La Canada High School

Among the various sports offered in high school, there is wrestling. Wrestling is an extremely demanding sport that requires the use of the entire body. For six long minutes, broken into three two-minute periods, athletes are expected to take down their opponent and pin them. To pin someone means to get your opponent on their back so both shoulder blades are on the ground. The exhausting sport challenges wrestlers both physically and mentally, especially knowing that two people will give it their all, but only one will be the winner.

There are many components, such as endurance, strength, agility, and fast thinking, that must be considered when training to compete. To gain these abilities, a typical practice would include learning new moves, lifting, calisthenics, and cardio. Having good spatial and bodily awareness are the most common traits in successful wrestlers. In order to decide what to do next, athletes must



The table workers and the volunteers work hard to establish the placers so medals can be distributed as earned. [Source: Author, Joanne Kim]

be aware of their position, their opponent's position relative to them, and their location on the mat.

The most anxiety-inducing aspect is that all tournaments are for gaining and building experience for the state tournament. For Californians, the tournament is known as CIF, California Interscholastic Federation. It is first held regionally, with only a couple of schools participating in the tournament. The placers of regional CIF advance to CIF Masters and eventually CIF state, in

which all surviving athletes compete for the title of state champion. Ultimately, the deciding factor of whether or not someone is a successful wrestler is decided by their performance at CIF.

A model wrestling tournament starts with weighing in and skin checks. Wrestlers must line up in weight order with their team to weigh in for the tournament. If someone were to miss weigh-ins, they would face automatic disqualification. Other circumstances in which a wrestler can be

disqualified before competing is by not passing skin checks and, depending on the tournament, not making weight. To not pass skin checks means that the athlete has a skin disease or infection that could spread to other wrestlers during their matches.

Once weigh-ins and skin checks are complete, wrestlers are able to eat and warm up. Then, the wrestling begins. At the start of the tournament, the room becomes tense, as there are high stakes with each match. When asking a wrestler from La Canada High School about her thoughts about tournaments, she replied, "Competing never gets easier, but you grow to get used to it."

Although it is a very difficult sport, there is an undeniable sense of accomplishment that comes with each win. Wrestling is admittedly not for everyone, but I think it is worth a shot for those interested and willing to try something new.

Student Reporter

Insight into Instruments Worth Self-Learning



Audrey Park

Grade 10
Northwood High School

Self-learning is most familiar to hobbyists, artists, or musicians, and involves learning a skill over long periods of time with limited instruction. But just recently, I realized how often hobbyists become multi-skilled musicians through the arduous but rewarding process of self-learning.

This notion became most recognizable to me when I observed the musical routines of friends who play instruments related to rock bands— electric, acoustic, string-plucked, or percussion instruments. It became clear that they picked up their instruments through outside hobbies and personal interests rather than the common motive of yielding to parent or school influence. The positive trajectory of their progress helped me realize that the casual manner in which they



Musicians who dive into the music industry through personal interests may achieve mastery with limited competitive pressure.

[Source: Author, Audrey Park.]

learned their musical skills decreased burnout, helped broaden musical capabilities, and made self-learning possible.

For example, learning instru-

ments through hobbies exemplifies the prospect of doing something on one's own. Furthermore, when learning instruments with only limited instruction, steady comparisons to online mentors or musicians over extended periods make up for the elevated competition that one may face when learning orchestral instruments. Because increased competition makes one susceptible to loss of personal interest, even those individuals who have a natural aptitude for certain activities will come across burnouts or long terms when their abilities will plateau. In these moments, it may be harder for students to progress without feeling demoralized because they could mistake their temporary stagnation for a flaw in their capabilities. Through the insight of several friends who play electric or percussion instru-

ments, I have observed that taking a more casual approach to music helps discipline one's mindset to accept stagnation better, as hobbies are initially not taken up with pressure or rapid improvement in mind.

While passionate students may master competitive instruments through outside pressures, this does not mean that those who are invested in the music industry through something as casual as hobbies will not be equally successful. As a matter of fact, they may have a better chance of achieving mastery in several instruments, as learning them competitively decreases the motivation to extend musical abilities because one would not want to stray away from the ambitious need to improve quickly.

Student Reporter

Capybaras, Hollywood, and LA



Angel Song

Grade 9
Harvard-Westlake School

One thing I learned while attending a school known for its notoriously short winter break is that it's essential to rest and go to many places you can for sightseeing before the day back from break catches up to you. Wanting to take a break from all the schoolwork that spilled over into winter, I left behind my midterm study guides and visited famous places around or near Los Angeles.

Revisiting famous tourist attractions of Los Angeles, including Hollywood and Universal Studios, was undoubtedly a new experience. As someone who has lived in Los Angeles all my life, I have never really appreciated these places. The last time I visited most of these was about a decade ago! Although all these places were flooded with tourists in celebrity tour vans, I saw things I had never seen when I was younger. When visiting Hollywood, the grandeur of the Chinese Man

Theater and the columns with all the movies that had won the Academy Awards every year amazed me. After moving on to Universal Studios Hollywood, I finally understood why people constantly visit Hollywood and point it out as one of the places you must visit when traveling to Los Angeles: it was fun!

One day of my trip was devoted to visiting familiar locations, while the last day was for something new: the Santa Barbara Zoo. Although five-year-old me had been to the LA Zoo, it was my first time going to this zoo, which was about two hours away from my home. I was going there to see my favorite animal: the capybara. When entering the zoo, it was evident that the staff worked hard to maintain a fresh and beautiful environment for the animals and visitors. Before searching for the capybara I had been waiting for days to see, I went to other ani-



Antonio the capybara basking under the sun at the Santa Barbara Zoo. [Source: Author, Angel Song]

mals. The animals were kept in good condition, and although many were sleeping, I'd say it was worth the visit.

At last, I met Antonio. Antonio was a relatively younger capybara, which explained his smaller build than the adult capybara, Poppy, next door. After taking photos and videos to save this memory, I happily returned home with many good memories of winter break.

After my trips to Hollywood

and the Santa Barbara Zoo, I could finally relax and enjoy my winter break without worrying about school or anything else. Most of all, I was able to have fun in these familiar yet strange places, noticing something new that I'd never thought of or seen before. Sometimes, visiting locations that you've ignored because you live near them can be a new experience to recharge and rest. It's like rereading a book you read a few years ago. Every time you go back, you notice something new.

Student Reporter

Where Did All the Snow Go?



Jacob Rim
Grade 9
West Ranch High School

This year, my family and I went on vacation to Lake Tahoe over winter break. We planned to go skiing and sledding for the entire five days, but when we arrived at Lake Tahoe, there was little to no snow.

I was very shocked at this finding since the year before, the mountains were completely covered with snow, and the roads were layered with sheets of ice. I was a bit disappointed with the lack of snow, but we were still able to ski as there was still a lot of snow packed near the pinnacle of the mountains.

We stayed at a nearby residence for three days, then moved to a hotel. When I asked some locals about the snow, they mentioned that November brought in a lot of snow, but heavy rainfall in December had slowly melted all of it away.

For me, the winter season stirs images of snow and activities such as sledding, building a snowman,



Me and my siblings lying down on a patch of artificial snow. [Source: Crystal Rim]

and throwing snowballs, so when I found that there was still heaps of snow near the summit of the mountains, I was overjoyed and relieved.

Another thing I noticed on my trip was the use of artificial snow. Some places were using this in order to make up for the snow that had melted away. Artificial snow is a good alternative for things like skiing, snowboarding, and sled-

ding, but because of its denseness, it is very stiff, acting as a very big deterrent for making snowmen and snowballs, as it was hard to work with.

Skiing is a very enjoyable experience. It is not too difficult to the point where you have to dedicate a lot of time to grasp it as a hobby, but still challenging enough to bring about a great deal of enjoyment when tackling a course. This year,

I went out of my comfort zone and did a very advanced course. I approached the start very slowly since the hill appeared very steep. However, it turned out not to be as bad as I thought it was. I got comfortable with going down the hill very fast and stopping abruptly by turning my entire body to one side.

The worst part about the trip to Lake Tahoe was the drive there. It was a very long and boring journey, consisting of me scrolling through my phone all day. My family and I left during the middle of the night, which made it better since I could sleep through a lot of the ride. I was awake for about 5 hours of the entire journey, which was 8 hours and 36 minutes.

All in all, this year was a very good one, and I am grateful to have spent the last few days of 2023 with my family, having fun and enjoying the cold winter season.

Student Reporter

Impressive Personal Records Set at the Armory



Seungmin Cheon
Grade 10
Jericho High School

The Track and Field team of Jericho High School experienced a significant day on January 6th, 2024. The team participated in the Hispanic Games held at the Armory in NYC. The competition consisted of traditional track and field sports, such as running, jumping, throwing, and many more. In this first interscholastic competition held in this new year, two athletes of the Jericho Track and Field team broke their own personal records and entered the national leaderboard.

Jericho High School has a rich history in Track and Field sports. Many athletes of Jericho have previously achieved noteworthy records that had entered national rankings. Honoring such tradition, the two athletes have established new personal records specifically in the Weight Throwing and Race Walking sections.



A view from the audience seat before the Hispanic Games held at the Armory in NYC. [Source: Jacob Lee]

Both Weight Throwing and Race Walking may be unfamiliar to many. Weight Throwing involves tossing a 35-pound round ball attached to a hand grip as far as possible. The ath-

lete holds onto the hand grip and typically spins around three to four times in order to deliver as much force as possible to the ball. Jacob Lee, one of the two mentioned athletes at Jericho, competed in the Weight Throwing section of the meet and set his new personal record of 50 feet 10.5 inches, placing him 4th in the competition and as one of the top throwers in the county and top 70 nationally. To this win, Jacob added, "I believe I was able to break my personal records because of my year-long hard work, and I am grateful for my coach and my friends who supported me throughout this journey."

Racewalking is a fairly unknown, unique sport as well. It involves the athlete completing the set distance as fast as possible while walking. It may sound easy; however, there are strict rules to ensure that the athlete

is not running, such that one is not allowed to have both feet off the ground nor have one of the knees bent while moving. Rachel Lee, the other of the mentioned athletes, finished her 1500m race walking game in 7 minutes and 43.3 seconds, earning her place as the 10th best race walker in the United States. To grasp how amazing this record is, it takes the average high school student around 7-9 minutes to complete a mile by running; Rachel exceeded the average by walking. Upon this achievement, Rachel expressed her gratitude for her family and said, "I would like to perform better in my upcoming state competitions, and I will continue to train and do my best to racewalk toward my goal of becoming the best in the nation." With such passionate athletes, the future of the Track and Field Team of Jericho High School looks bright.

Editors Column

Back To School: Part 2



Isleen Lee
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Harvard-Westlake School

If you're reading this, you most likely have returned from winter break and have gone back to school. Whether you like it or not, winter break has already zoomed past our eyes, and we have once again been launched back into a new semester. Here at Harvard-Westlake School, students had two weeks for winter break, starting when school ended on Friday, December 15, 2023, and ending when school resumed on January 2, 2024. Many students agreed that this winter break was a much-needed break despite Thanksgiving break having been only three weeks prior. Although some students wished to have an extra week off, others, including me, began to feel slightly bored with not having much to do and anticipated the new year.

At first, I felt that two weeks was too short, and I knew that it would

be over before I knew it. I decided to spend my break getting a lot of rest and enjoying the time with my friends and family. I learned how to ice skate, hung out with friends that I had not seen for a while, and went on a church retreat to Idyllwood Pines. It was especially refreshing to spend some time away from sitting at my desk or staring at a computer. The week leading up to the last day before break was another hectic testing week. I had assessments every day of the week except Tuesday and undoubtedly was lacking sleep, but was proud of myself for pushing through, making this break feel more restful than ever.

However, there was one thing missing during the first four months of the school year – the Mudd Library! At the Upper School, the library had been closed for months upon months for reno-

vation. As an avid library-goer, I was a bit disappointed not to be able to use the library, especially during those extra busy weeks before significant breaks. When it was announced that the library was finished and would open starting the day we returned from break, I was ecstatic to begin using it. On January 2nd, 2024, I speedily walked to the library and looked around. I could see why it took quite a long time; it was stunning! My favorite part of the library back at the lower campus was the silent study room, which I was able to find here, as well. As I am writing this, I can say that I use the silent study room daily to complete work in an all-around focused environment.

Another one of the best things that I experienced on the first day back was getting to reunite with my friends who had been out of



During my time in silent study, I like to take pictures of my current desk setup to document each day's worth of studying. [Source: Author, Isleen Lee]

town, as well as seeing my teachers. I loved listening to their versions of winter break, and overall, it warmed my heart to see the school buzz with the sound of teenagers mingling and chatting. And because we have entered a new year, I hope everyone was able to enjoy their breaks and is ready for the new semester!