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Generals can't have too many medals

Arrupe Jesuit's tiny contingent charges toward pinnacle

By John Rosa, Special To The Rocky
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The contingent from Arrupe Jesuit is small but powerful.

Only four wrestlers are competing for the Generals in the Class 3A state tournament at the Pepsi Center, but three could find themselves atop the awards stand Saturday night.

Vincente Gallegos (119 pounds), Richard Apodaca (130) and Lance Gallegos (140) won regional titles last week and all were impressive in posting first-round wins Thursday night.

Arrupe Jesuit's other qualifier, freshman heavyweight Ossiel Vargas (9-13), lost his first-round match, getting pinned by Salida's Scott Wilkins (23-3).

It has been a quick climb to prominence for the Generals, who didn't have a team four years ago.

"It was tough just because our numbers were low right away. The first year, we had three wrestlers, but we had three state placers," coach Clyde Gallegos said. "The second year, we had five wrestlers and we had a state champion and a second (place)."

The state champion was

Clyde's son, senior Lance.

Lance (37-3) wrestled his freshman year at Westminster, earning a fifth-place finish in Class 4A at 125 pounds.

As a sophomore, he took second in 3A at 130, then won the 135-pound championship last season.

He dominated in his match Thursday with Trevor Shockley of Platte Valley, building a 14-0 lead before recording a pin at 3:51.

Lance offered some advice to his younger brother, freshman Vincente (34-5), before his opening match, a 14-4 decision against Joe Visconti of Middle Park.

"I told him he had to treat it like any other tournament," said Lance, who also is a junior Greco All-American. "He did real well. He went out and wrestled his match."

Vincente said the closeness the nine Generals wrestlers share has helped the team to its quick success.

"Everybody's family, even if you're not related," Vincente said.

Senior Apodaca (37-3), the Gallegoses' cousin, scored five takedowns in his 15-5 win against Ty Conrad of Bayfield in the first round.

Clyde Gallegos said this tournament will be bittersweet, no matter the results.

"It's happy and it's sad at the same time," he said. "Two of our kids here are freshmen and two of our kids are seniors. It's hard to see the seniors go, but you're excited for the freshmen."

One wrestler who couldn't wait for the state tournament was 112-pounder Ross Leyba of La Junta.

Leyba won the 103-pound title in 2005 and was the favorite to win it again last season.

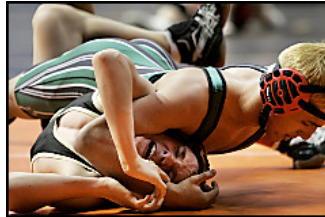
He failed to make weight, though, coming in 0.2 pounds over the limit.

"It took a long time to get over that," Leyba said. "A long time."

Leyba (19-5) said he doesn't want to leave anything to chance this weekend. He made short work of his first-round opponent, pinning Josh Neill of Highland in 12 seconds.

"I'm very motivated," Leyba said. "I'm just trying to get what's mine."

Brush had 10 of its 12 qualifiers advance to the second round and leads the team race with 32 1/2 points. Roosevelt is in second place with 27 points.



Joe Mahoney © News

Monte Vista's Adam Garcia gains control of Clear Creek's John Howard on Thursday during their state Class 3A first-round match at the Pepsi Center. Garcia won the 125-pound contest 19-3.

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