

Mountain Blanca



Joe Chavez
—Section Editor—

Mt. Blanca is the fourth highest summit of the Rocky Mountains and is found right here in our own back yard. The mountain towers an astonishing 14,351-feet and is the highest peak in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

The mountain can be found on the drainage divide separating the Rio Grande National Forest and Alamosa County from The Sangre de Cristo Land Grant and Costilla county north east the small town of Blanca before leaving the San Luis Valley.

Mt. Blanca is known to the Navajo people as the Sacred Mountain of the East, the Dawn or White Shell Mountain. The mountain is considered to be the eastern boundary of the Dinétah, the traditional Navajo homeland. It is associated with the color white, and is said to be covered in daylight and dawn and fastened to the ground with lightning.

Blanca Peak is the highest point of the mountain and is scaled every year by many experienced hikers. The trail to Blanca peak is a long 19.2 miles. Blanca peak is higher than any point in the United

States east of its longitude. The trail can be traveled by foot or horseback. The trail can also be accessed by all terrain vehicles but can not be traveled all the way to the peak due to the rough trail.

The trail has proven to be rocky and full of boulders. The trail even has two big obstacles known to many by "Jaws 1" and "Jaws 2". Jaws 1 and 2 are two sections of the trail filled with sharp rocky boulders.

11,750 feet up the mountain just before the tree line stops another main attraction from the mountain can be found. Como Lake is a high mountain lake full of several different types of trout. The lake close to the shore portrays a glass like view and the water can be seen through clearly with no murkiness.

If you look hard enough you can see the trout swimming right pass you. Como Lake can be reached by ATV on a challenging path. Como lake also marks the stopping point for all motorized vehicles.

Another amazing sight than can be seeing while climbing the mountain is being able to look off the mountain to the valley floor. From the mountain views of the San Luis Valley crop fields can be seen and allows someone to realize how much the valley depends on its

Firsts and Lasts: Make Memories



Melody Lipke
—Co-Head Editor—

If I'm being forthright, I'm terrified. I've spent years (almost four to be exact) on being a great high schooler, and by the time I finally have it mostly figured out, it's officially time to move on.

Christmas predictably makes me feel sentimental. Something about the sparky snow draped like a blanket over the town, lights winking from trees and awnings, and the warm glow of a nativity scene provokes nostalgia.

Being a high school senior can lead to a lot of complicated feelings. Sometimes I catch myself sitting next to the fire, or watching the snow and feeling the word "last" settle into my bones.

No, this isn't my last Christmas ever (I hope!) but may be the last time I plan parties with my friends, or decorate the house come December.

There are other "lasts" too. Last piano recital, last soccer season, and last December issue of the Alamosan.

Life, however, is not a list of firsts and lasts and things to do. It's hard to enjoy life when thinking of it this way. In the moment, the pressure

of something being the first or last time weighs it down with expectation and prevents one from truly savoring the moment.

There are so many powerful messages out there, but not every message is meant for everyone.

The idea of a bucket list has always appealed to me: they seem to instill a sense of wonder and remind those who employ it that every day is a new day, and that there are so many things to experience in life.

There are so many things to do on this Earth! That sounds positive when I say it that way. But the other side of this issue is:

There's so much to do! How will I get to it all?

That's the problem I have with it being a list. Growing and experiencing new things is not some compulsory template from which we must check boxes.

If someone never completes a bucket list item, or loses the desire to, then they shouldn't feel obligated to.

Everyone has a different life, and often, a different life than they imagined for themselves, but that doesn't mean it isn't a good life.

Planning is necessary, but too much of it squashes spon-

taneity and reduces real life to a set of expectations.

High school is ironically one of those things that is greatly exaggerated in movies, exalted to a pedestal and possessing a majestic glow despite being only four years of one's life.

I'll be the first to say that every day is special. Every moment of toddlerhood or adulthood is potentially incredibly formative and meaningful.

If something that was built up as a big deal- a "last", it doesn't need to be perfect. Chasing perfection leads to discontentment. Those moments probably won't be remembered anyway.

I'll remember peppermint and times I've laughed with my friends over nothing, and I'll remember that, terrifying or not, we all have been designed for spectacular futures.

This winter, take deep breaths, steal a look out the window. Enjoy little moments of sipping coffee, taking shoes off after a long day, or smiling at a stranger on the street.

Most of all, on this lonely planet, hurtling and spinning in space, be kind. If we only remember that, it is more than enough.

College Wrestling: Who is the Top Dog?



Tab Smith
—Staff Writer—

All over the country, there are elite high school wrestlers that would love to compete in an unstoppable college program. Today, we are going to look at the predictions for the national tournament in Pittsburgh in March.

Wrestling is one of the toughest and oldest sports in the history of man. People try to prove to the country and themselves that they are the most dominant wrestler in the country and possibly the world. College wrestling is supposed to help them accomplish that goal.

First, we will look at the top college wrestling teams based on today's rankings on Flowrestling.com. At the number five spot in today's ranking is Michigan University. Michigan has always had a solid lineup, but are struggling to find a dominant national champion.

At number three at 133 pounds, Stevan Micic, 2017-18 national runner-up, is one of the most slick wrestlers on their team. Alongside him are fellow All-Americans, Myles Amine, Alec Pantaleo, and Logan Massa that are attempting to be a

complete team and show out in Pittsburgh in March.

At number four, the famous Iowa Hawkeyes are trying to add to their wrestling name and win another national title. Their leader this year is national champion Spencer Lee, who is having an absolute dominant year already. Also ranked number 1 at 285 is returning AA Sam Stoll, who is sitting out right now because of a gunshot wound.

At number three, a Big 12 team Oklahoma State, who is coached by one of the best wrestlers ever, is looking very promising to be a huge contender. They have many ranked wrestlers including Nick Piccininni, Daton Fix, and Kaid Brock. Oklahoma State has nine out of ten wrestlers that are ranked, the only not ranked wrestler being at 184.

Number two is not that big of a surprise as it was last year's team runner-ups. Ohio State is having a great year. They have many returning All-Americans including Myles Martin, Micah Jordan, and Joey McKenna. Right now, though, Ohio State and Oklahoma State are only projected a one point difference.

Of course at number one, Penn State is the clear fa-

vorite. They have four national champions on the team and two returning All-Americans in Shakur Rasheed and Nick Lee. At 285, Anthony Cassar is an absolute hammer trying to reach All-American status along with freshman Roman Bravo-Young, who is famous for doing a Kolat flip in a match that was featured on Sportscenter's Top Ten. They are no doubt the team to beat.

For the individual rankings, we will start out at the 125 weight class. From Iowa, Spencer Lee is completely dominating the weight class. Senior Ronnie Bresser is also on a tear along with Sebastian Rivera and Oklahoma State's Nick Piccininni.

133 is one of the strongest weights in college wrestling. It's so stacked that a national runner-up in ranked 8th at the weight. No doubt, the favorite is Seth Gross, last year's champion. Former Junior World Champion, Daton Fix, is doing very well at the weight. He beat Minnesota's Ethan Lizak by an exceptional score.

At 141, Yianni Diakomihalis is one of the funnest wrestlers to watch. Jaydin Eierman is a hammer at the weight, this summer he beat world champi-

on Logan Stieber. Also at the weight is Joey McKenna who is a Final X runner-up and has already beat Eierman this year.

149 has two time All-American at the weight Matt Kolodzik ranked at number one. Rutgers' own Anthony Ashnault is number two and is turning people left and right. Ohio State's Micah Jordan is third at the weight and is making a run for the ship barely losing to Ashnault in a 14-10. This will definitely be a featured match in Pittsburgh.

157 has Penn State's Jason Nolf once again maintaining the number one spot at this weight. He is trying to make it three NCAA title for him. Not far from him at number two is Northwestern's Ryan Deakin, who actually is from the Denver area. You can't forget about Hayden Hidlay, last year's runner-up. Tyler Berger who has trained with possibly the greatest American wrestler ever, Jordan Burroughs this summer, is making a huge splash at the weight by beating Hidlay 5-2.

At 165, Vincenzo Joseph is attempting to make history to be the fifth four-time NCAA champion. Tying to stop him is cradling machine Evan Wick who made his name heard last

year a the NCAA tournament, placing third.

At 174, scoring machine Zahid Valencia from Arizona State will more than likely be in the finals again with Penn State's Mark Hall. Mark Hall beat Valencia in the NCAA tournament two years ago and Valencia beat Hall last year.

184 has Ohio State's Myles Martin who has won the NCAA tournament before. At number two, Illinois's Emery Parker is trying to make a name for himself and earn AA honors.

197 has Bo Nickal, who is a very fun wrestler to watch. His blockade from another title is Kollin Moore, last year's number one at the weight.

And of course at 285, Sam Stoll is one of the most scary sights on the mat. Anthony Cassar is most likely going to battle him at NCAA's. Freshman star Gable Steveson is one of the toughest heavyweights in the country. The former world champion is making his name heard around the country and is a real contender at the weight as well.

There is no doubt that this year in Pittsburgh is going to be wild. Fans all over the country are excited and can't wait. Pittsburgh.