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CHSAA recognizes James Garcia for 30 year coaching career

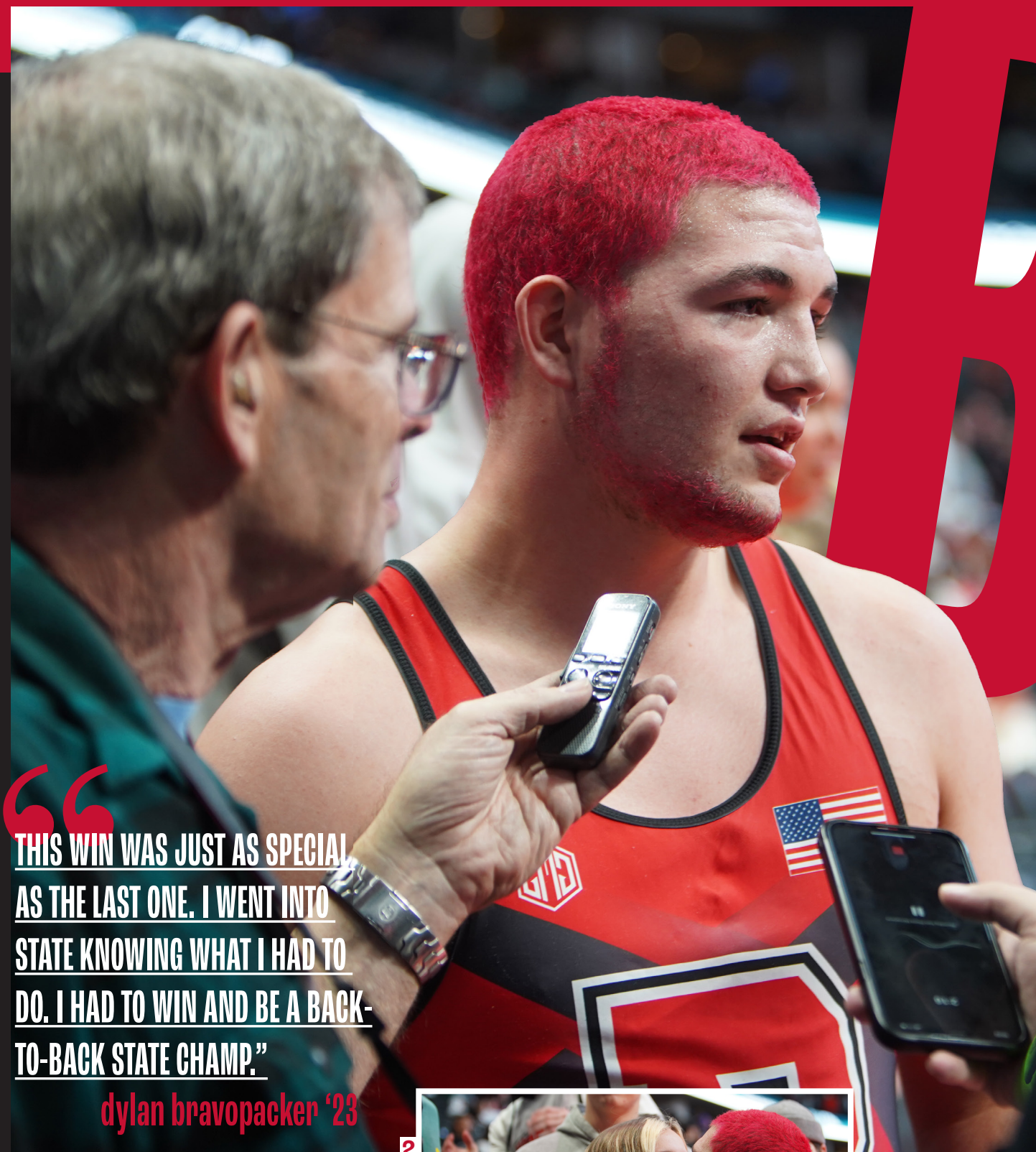
WHO: James Garcia, assistant wrestling coach for boys wrestling and head coach for girls wrestling.

WHAT: The Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) recognized Garcia among others for achieving a 30-year career of coaching wrestling.

WHEN: Garcia's recognition came before the start of the State wrestling finals Feb. 18 on the Ball Arena floor.

FACT: Garcia graduated from Brighton and was a CHSAA Wrestling State champ in 1990.

THE FEELING: "It really meant a lot to get recognized at the State competition. A lot has happened over the years. I have watched some great men become State champs like Dylan [BravoPacker '23] and Kenny Sailas ['22]. We also just started a girls wrestling team. It just means a lot to be part of all of this and watch the program grow since I was in school."



“THIS WIN WAS JUST AS SPECIAL AS THE LAST ONE. I WENT INTO STATE KNOWING WHAT I HAD TO DO. I HAD TO WIN AND BE A BACK-TO-BACK STATE CHAMP.”

dylan bravopacker '23

1. TIME TO BRAG. Right before his match, Dylan BravoPacker '23 walks around the mat listening to music while wearing a T-shirt from his late grandfather. "My grandfather and even my great-grandfathers were mentors for me. I was thinking about them the whole time I was there," BravoPacker said. **2. ASK YOUR QUESTIONS.** Dylan BravoPacker '23 answers questions to reporters like the "Brighton Blade's" Steve Smith after winning the State heavyweight champion match. **3. MY SUPPORTER.** After winning his State title, Dylan BravoPacker '23 rushes to the audience and kisses girlfriend Kloe while she holds a giant head of him. *photos by e.rolfs*



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Best

Dylan BravoPacker '23 wins second State wrestling title

story by e.rolfs
design by b.pollard

WHEN IT CAME TO WINNING A STATE TITLE, WRESTLER DYLAN BRAVOPACKER '23 WAS NO STRANGER TO IT.

After winning his division the previous year, BravoPacker became a two-time State champion after defeating Ponderosa's Adrian Arellano '25 in the heavyweight division.

BravoPacker beat all four of his opponents in the tournament in a total of 4:02. All were four first-round pins. He began the tournament defeating Arvada West's Braden Zack in 26 seconds. His quarterfinal match against Lakewood's Andrew Martinez lasted 1:11. He reached the finals pinning Centaurus' Xavier Valentin-Bradford in 43 seconds, the fastest pin in any 5A semifinal. He pinned Arellano to become the State champion in 1:42.

"It definitely has been a journey for me. Though I placed second my freshman and sophomore years at State, I was determined to win the title my junior year," BravoPacker said. "Just like last year, there was no

option to lose. It was all about coming into each match ready to dominate every opponent. It's what I did."

According to BravoPacker, he credited all of his coaches for preparing him for the competition.

"All of their words of encouragement stayed with me. I knew what I had to do," BravoPacker said. "The guys who got to go to State also helped because we all just supported one another those three days together."

Right before he went into his championship match, BravoPacker wore a T-shirt that said, "My grandson's wrestle. I brag." This shirt was dedicated to his grandfather, who passed away before the State tournament his freshman year as well as his two great-grandfathers.

"All of these men meant something to me. They were my mentors. They were my teachers. I will cherish my memories with them forever, so I wanted them there with me," BravoPacker said.



1. BACK-TO-BACK CHAMP.

As the announcer runs down those who placed in the heavyweight division, Dylan Bravo Packer '23 holds up the number two with both of his hands to celebrate that this was his second straight State wrestling title. "I have worked so hard to get this moment. A lot of wrestlers hope to win one State title, so I am very grateful that I won two. I had to find a way to celebrate that," Bravo Packer said. **2. ALL SMILES.** Standing on the first place podium, Dylan BravoPacker '23 smiles for the audience and press as he holds up his certificate and copy of his bracket after winning the heavyweight State title. "The adrenaline you feel after you win gets you going. I was pumped up," BravoPacker said. **3. TAKING HIM DOWN.** Dylan BravoPacker '23 grabs a hold of Pomona High School wrestler Adrian Arellano '25 while competing in the first period of the heavyweight State wrestling match. BravoPacker pinned Arellano at 1:42 in the first period. "I went into the match very confident that I was going to win," BravoPacker said. *photos by e.rolfs*