

Owatonna's Ginskey wins Triple "A"

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

Owatonna senior Connor Ginskey won the Class AAA Triple "A" award this past week after being selected by the MSHSL for the honor.

Ginskey was chosen as Owatonna's male representative last December and advanced through the regional selection process to be a Triple "A" finalist. The senior became

eligible for the award after showing exemplary commitment and participation in academics, arts and athletics for Owatonna High School.

Aside from being a National Merit semifinalist, Ginskey also played the trumpet in the band for four years while also singing in the school's solo ensemble and choir.

Athletically, Ginskey was a part of the Owatonna cross-country team



Connor Ginskey

and was an individual participant at the MSHSL state meet.

More recently, Ginskey competed for the Owatonna basketball team and helped his squad reach a sixth-place finish at the MSHSL State Tournament.

In winning the Triple "A" award, Ginskey will receive a four-year \$1,000 scholarship as he prepares for college.

Ginskey is Owatonna's second male winner in the past two years after Lane Versteeg won the award last March.



Steele Sports
JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Twins add serious power

Since the MLB announced that it and the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) agreed to end the lockout that had held the league stagnant, no team has impressed me more with its player transactions than the Minnesota Twins.

As a longtime Oakland Athletics fan who watched the majority of the franchise be dealt off in a fire sale, it was refreshing to see the local team move in the opposite direction and push toward building a World Series-winning roster.

Familiar faces like Byron Buxton, Max Kepler and Miguel Sano will still be wearing Twins colors this season, however, they will be accompanied by a new set of star power reinforcements thanks to manager Rocco Baldelli and general manager Thad Levine.

Dawning the Twins navy blue, scarlet red and Minnesota Kasota gold for the first time this season will be shortstop Carlos Correa, catcher Gary Sánchez and third basemen Gio Urshela amongst other additions.

For those unfamiliar with the names listed, if I had to describe the three athletes in one word it would be "reliable."

All seasoned veterans in the MLB, each athlete has proven themselves to be reliable day-to-day starters — a quality that the Twins were lacking in multiple positions.

Twins fans have been quite used to the carousel that has taken place in the catcher and infield positions over the past few seasons.

Names such as Willy "La Tortuga" Astudillo, Mitch Garver, and Andreton Simmons all saw time at their respective positions; however, the team was not able to benefit from the consistent play of one athlete over the course of the season.

This is the missing piece of the puzzle that Baldelli and Levine were working to solve and have seemingly found the answer to.

Easily the biggest signing of the bunch is Correa, a superstar shortstop who comes to the Twin Cities after a seven-year stint in Houston that saw him win a World Series title in 2017 with the Astros.

Twins fans can expect to see a resurgence of the "Bomba Squad" once Correa comes to town.

The Puerto Rican superstar has hit 133 home runs since entering the league in 2015 and averages a steady 19 home runs a season.

The front office staff has put a great deal of faith in Correa shifting the Twins' culture to being a perennial contender by signing him to a three-year, \$105.3 million contract.

Also looking to contribute to the culture change are Sánchez and Urshela, whom both came to the Twins after the team sent Josh Donaldson, Isaiah Kiner-Falefa and Ben Rortved to the New York Yankees in a trade.

Sánchez will bring his power to the lineup, adding yet another deep ball threat to the squad, while Urshela will serve as a solid defensive piece on the hot corner for the team.

Minnesota has proven through its off-season moves that the time in Minnesota to win a World Series is now.

After putting together multiple competitive seasons over the course of the past few years, it appears the Twins have decided to go all-in in 2022 and bring home the team's first World Series trophy since 1991.

Robb brothers earn a pair of podiums

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

Ever since they were young, Peyton and Cael Robb have had a passion for wrestling; this March, both athletes made wrestling dreams become reality.

The elder Robb, Peyton, made his mark at the NCAA Tournament in Detroit on March 19 by taking fourth place at 157 pounds to earn his first-ever All-American honors, while younger brother, Cael, earned his career-best podium finish at the MSHSL State Tournament by taking third place.

"It's just cool that some of the guys that I came into the team looking up to — guys who had their names and pictures on the wall outside the Nebraska wrestling room — now I'm one of those guys. It's just cool to see that transition from looking up to those guys to now being one of them," said Peyton Robb.

Peyton Robb earned his spot amongst Nebraska wrestling royalty by winning five straight matches in the consolation side of the 157-pound bracket after a loss in the second of the tournament.

Ranked as a No. 10 seed in the tournament, two of Robb's five wins came over lower-seeded opponents, with one coming against North Carolina State's No. 4 seed Ed Scott and the other against Arizona State's No. 3 seed Jacori Teemer.

Peyton Robb's 6-4 decision win over

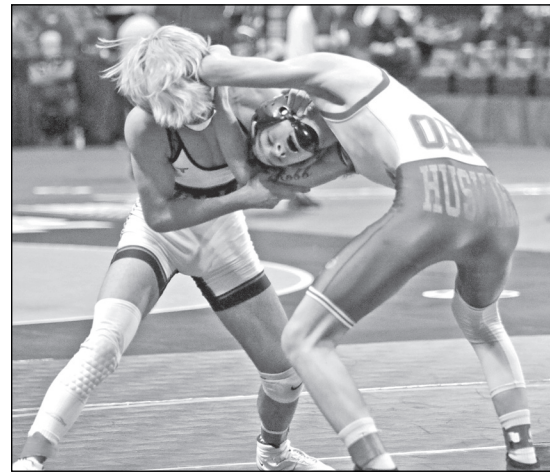
Teemer in the "blood round" — commonly referred to as such because the winner will make the podium and the loser will not — earned him a spot in the third-place match and a guaranteed place on the podium.

While Peyton Robb was beaten 7-2 by Iowa State's No. 1 seed David Carr, the wrestler's run to the podium was nothing short of spectacular.

"It was so incredible. He's a huge inspiration to me. We've always watched the NCAA championships on TV when we were in grade school, so for him to be able to wrestle at the NCAA tournament and get an NCAA All-American fourth-place finish... it's what people dream of. I know it's been what he's been dreaming of these past few years at Nebraska. For him to be able to reach that goal and accomplish it, it was an amazing experience," said Cael Robb.

Peyton Robb was greeted with hugs aplenty after his blood round win over Teemer, and could be seen running off the mat directly to his mother, Carrie, and girlfriend, Taylor Krome, who waited with arms wide open for a celebratory hug.

"They both support me like no other. They always say that it almost feels like they're out on the mat with me when they watch me. It was special to have them there



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Owatonna junior Cael Robb grapples with his opponent in the third-place match at the MSHSL State Tournament. Robb won the match and took home third place — his best career finish at the tournament.

"It's just cool that some of the guys that I came into the team looking up to — guys who had their names and pictures on the wall outside the Nebraska wrestling room — now I'm one of those guys."

Peyton Robb
Nebraska Wrestler

to share that moment with me."

Peyton Robb's run at the NCAA tournament was almost a mirror image of Cael's journey at the MSHSL State Tournament where the Owatonna Huskies junior took third place by winning four consecutive matches in the backside of the bracket after a second-round loss.

The two brothers said that they didn't give much thought to the coincidence that their runs were similar, but both acknowledged the same mindset of resilience and discipline that they learned from their father, Tracey, as young wrestlers.

"Once you lose, you're not safe. I just wanted

to go out there [in the consolation matches] and score as many points as possible to feel safe. I wanted to dominate those matches on the backside to let everyone know that I shouldn't have lost on the front side," said Cael Robb.

As another wrestling season officially comes to a close for both of the brothers, both took time to reflect on lessons learned over the course of their careers.

"It's taught me so many different lessons that it's almost hard to pick which one is the most important. I think a huge one is just respecting others and the respect that I think wrestlers carry for one another. It's also taught me that I have to be courageous. My coaches always say, 'You have to beat fear with courage.' I think it's taught me how to put fear aside and keep my emotions in check," said Peyton Robb.

Peyton Robb will compete for the University of Nebraska, Lincoln again next year with two more seasons of eligibility available to him, while Cael Robb will continue his journey with the Owatonna Huskies wrestling team as a senior.

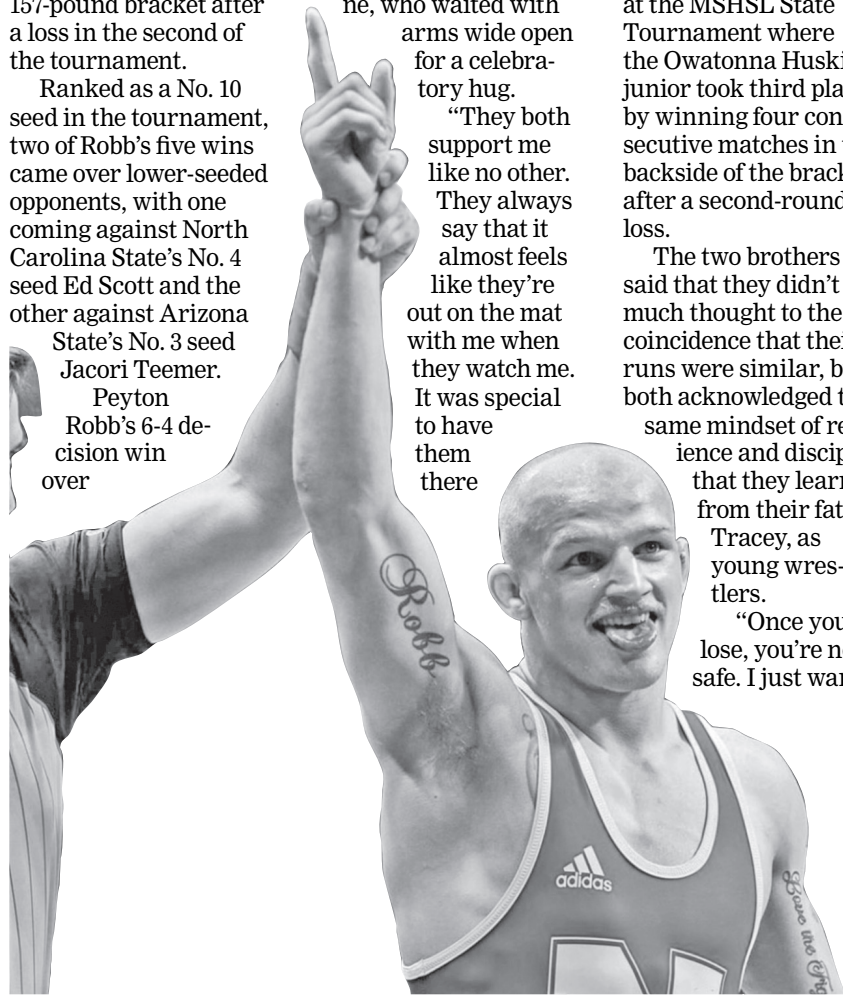


PHOTO FROM INSTAGRAM

Nebraska's Peyton Robb gets his hand raised after a win at the NCAA Tournament on March 19 in Detroit. Robb won five straight matches in the consolation bracket at the tournament to make it to the third-place match, where he earned a fourth-place finish and All-American status after losing to Iowa State's David Carr by a 7-2 decision.

Medford track kicks off season by placing at Mankato

The Medford Tigers boys and girls track teams finished in second and fourth place respectively at Minnesota State University-Mankato last week to kick off the 2022 season.

Medford's boys team had a strong outing and won five races at the meet, while the girls team added two wins of

its own.

Leading the boys team were Henry Grayson, Jesse Ortiz and Paul Cole, who all finished first through third in the 55-meter race to earn Medford 24 points and the team's best finish of the day.

Grayson recorded the team's most wins by winning the 55-meter

and 400-meter races.

Also winning for the Tigers were Cohen Stursa in the 1600, Ortiz in the 200, and the team's 4x800 squad.

The boys squad was second only to Maple River who tallied a blistering 184.5 points while Medford took second with 82.6

As for the girls, Jackie

Cole recorded both of Medford's wins by taking first in the 55-meter race and the long jump event.

The girls squad took fourth in Mankato with a total of 68.3 points and finished behind WEM's 95 points in third.

The Tigers will next compete at Plainview-Elgin-Millville on Friday at 4:30 p.m.

NRHEG girls track captures Mankato Invitational

NRHEG's boys and girls track and field teams competed at Minnesota State University-Mankato last week where the Panthers' girls team took home first place and the boys team took third.

Spearheading the way for the team were Quinn VanMaldeghem, Torri Vaale and Annabelle Petsinger.

The three Panthers had the team's best finish of the day in the 1,600-meter race where VanMaldeghem took first, Vaale took second and Petsinger took third.

The finish earned NRHEG 24 of its 129.5 team points.

Also winning for the girls side were Evelyn Nydegger in the 400-meter and triple jump, Natalie Johnson in the 55-meter low hurdles and the team's 4x800 squad.

The boys side took third place with 78 points behind the 82.6 points of Medford.

NRHEG's boys squad saw one win on the day with Sawyer Prigge taking home first in the high jump with a height of five feet and 10 inches.

NRHEG will next compete at the Hayfield Invitational on Thursday, April 5 at 4:30 p.m.