

HALSEY ATHLETES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

NEWS FOR THE HALSEY HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY

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From Double Leg Take-Downs to Fireman Carries, Minutemen Wrestlers Win Tournaments Left and Right

By Lesly Hernandez



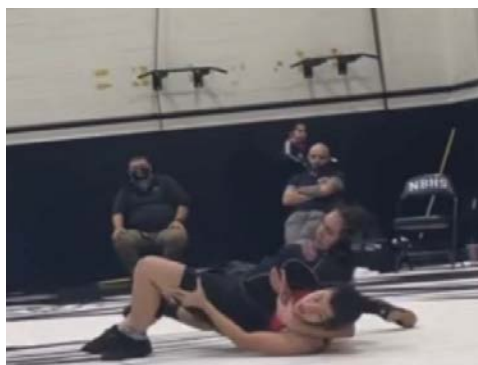
Zophia Gonzalez seconds away from slamming her opponent.

The Elizabeth Minutemen Wrestling Team has had a momentous year of racking up trophies. From the Lady Minutemen Tournament with the girls taking first place overall, Boys Districts, Regions, and States, they had a remarkably successful season. We spoke to some key wrestlers on the team about their wins, losses, and thoughts about the sport in general.

Zophia Gonzalez (see here in the black uniform) is a region qualifier and was selected for the All-Conference Team Watchung Division. She has strong thoughts about the reputation of wrestling as a sport and whether it's appreciated enough. "Definitely not. Wrestling is one of the toughest sports to choose, and with the number of hours we put in and sacrifice, we don't get appreciation. I was selected First Team All-Conference and 4th in my weight class for the Lady Minutemen, but somehow no one mentions it."

Gonzalez has been on the team for the past two seasons. Now that she's a senior and about to graduate, she's sad that her high school wrestling experience is over. But, she's glad she had the opportunity to compete on the mat. "My first day was a surreal experience, I never imagined the challenging work and dedication it took. My last day was emotional, and it felt like a part of me was being taken away, but I was grateful for the experience."

Another up-and-coming wrestler is sophomore Varson Siryon. He is going to be Varsity Team Captain next season. Being a four year wrestler, Siryon knows the ins and outs of the sport and the most difficult hardships involved. "The hardest part is being able to perfect your craft whether it's upper body, lower body, or some form of mobility."



Romina Sanchez pinning her opponent.

After years of working hard, Siryon can't wait to be able to pass on some of his knowledge. "Many people start this sport, little people end this sport," he said. "No matter how sore or beat up you feel if you strive to be better and push through, you will never fail."

In wrestling, just like in every other sport, sexism is present and sophomore Romina Sanchez is one of many to notice. "I've experienced sexism in this sport many times. There's been instances where the

girls team would be put last and the boys first. I've been told that I shouldn't be in this sport because no girl can compare to the strength or ability of a guy." Sanchez wants to prove them wrong.



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Underdogs to State Champs

By Isaiah Pittman

No one expected the Elizabeth Minutemen Varsity Basketball Team to go as far as they did. But despite what the critics said these ball players had an amazing season. Led by Head Coach Phillip Colicchio and Team Captains Justin Agyare and Sebastian Robinson, the Minutemen finished the season 20-7 and in the final four of the Tournament of Champions.

The first run for the Minutemen had them finish with a record of 13-6. Losing the Union County Championship to Roselle Catholic. When asked about the loss Justin said, "The team needed to be more confident in their players and move the ball more offensively."

Robinson added, "We needed to limit our turnovers and know our plays when the game started to be successful." Both points would prove true when the Minutemen went on to win the Group 4 North 4 Sectional Championship.

The team refined their plays and perfected their passing during their practices, which were always loud and active. When asked who pushed the team the most, Robinson said, it was his fellow captain Agyare. "He got them through exhaustion and worked them harder." After practice, the coaching staff sat the boys down to watch film on the upcoming team for the next game. Robinson said the team's coaching staff does a "great job" at preparing the team.

During their next stretch of games, it was either win or go home. The Minutemen would beat JP Stevens, Watchung Hills, and Newark Eastside to advance to the North 4 Group 4 Sectional Championship against Linden. They would go on to beat Linden 49-47 and take home the title of Sectional Champs. Coach Colicchio said, "The key to our success this year was everyone understanding their roles."

After winning the Sectional Championship for Group 4, the boys only needed to win two games to be [crowned Group 4 State Champs](#) and be eligible for the Tournament of Champions. First, they would need to beat Ridgewood, the North 1 Group 4 State Champs. Then, whoever won between Marlboro and Lenape, would win the Central and South Group 4 State Champs. The Minutemen would go on to beat Ridgewood 72-53 and then top Marlboro 70-63. They were now one of only 6 teams to be in the last Tournament of Champions.

In the first round of the TOC, the Minutemen beat Paterson Charter, 50-41. Unfortunately, this would be the last win for the Minutemen, as they would go on to lose to Camden in the semifinals, 60-50.

Even though they lost, the heavy underdogs, who weren't even expected to win any championships this year, were part of the final four teams in the last Tournament of Champions.

