

SPORTS

MVP

Defeating the undefeated

by JOSHUA SADOV

Senior Nathan Adras shook the high school wrestling world by taking down the undefeated, four-time state champion, Sawyer Bartelt at the Wrestling State Championship Tournament.

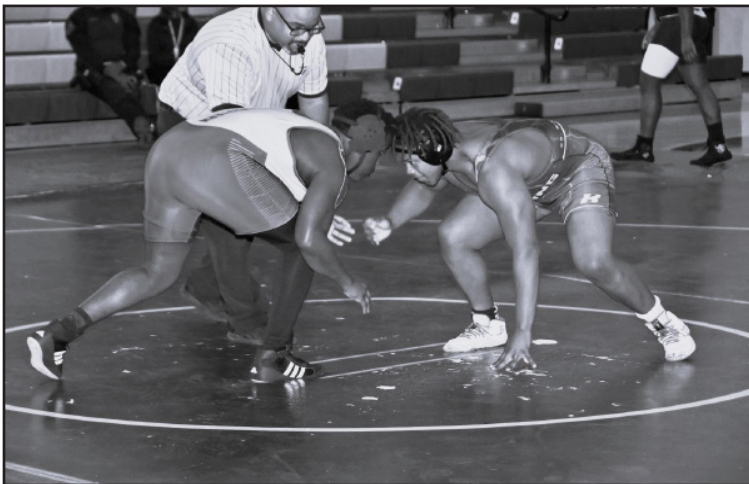
Despite eventually losing to Bartelt in the 215-pound state final, Adras became the first wrestler to ever take down Bartelt, a South Dade High School wrestler with a 139-0 record.

"About five minutes before the match started, we were staring at each other and I wanted him to get really aggressive so that he would let down, so I let him push in and I did laterals, and I scored like that," Adras said. "My game plan was to break him down and prove that I should be highly ranked in the game of wrestling."

Adras discovered his passion for wrestling during his freshman year and rose through the ranks year after year, eventually becoming a state champion in 2020.

"My favorite part about wrestling is the competitiveness and just the feeling of accomplishing something all on my own, from my hard work, it's fun to feel that self-drive," Adras said.

Throughout his high school wrestling career, Adras demonstrated his skills and determination on the mat consistently, ranking among the nation's top wrestlers and even mentioned in the Miami Herald newspaper. His accomplishments in club wrestling show his dedication and commitment to the sport, leading to his success.



Courtesy of Fox-Mar

FIERCE: Nathan Adras on the mat, wrestling an opponent.

DEDICATION

Krop baseball's new devotion

by JAKE DEANGELIS

At a ceremony held before the teams opening game against Hialeah Gardens High School, the Krop baseball field was officially dedicated as "Paul Barrios Field" in honor of Coach Barrios' incredible commitment to the team, the field and most importantly, his players.

Coach Barrios has put all of his time and effort into creating the best possible environment for Krops baseball players to succeed on and off the field. Beyond just running the practice and coaching games, he has spent countless hours maintaining the field itself, making sure players are able to play in a suitable condition.

"I didn't see it coming, I was surprised but mostly humbled," Coach Barrios said. "The time that I put in working on the field is never done for me; it's for my players so they have a nice field to play on and something to be proud of."

His impact goes beyond the physical playing surface. He is known for the personal time, dedication and mentorship he provides for each one of his players. From helping them secure a sufficient GPA to advising them through their future plans, he creates athletes that are prepared for the world to come.

"My philosophy has evolved since I was young to now, and it has always been based on never



Photo taken by Jake Goldsmith

COMMITMENT: The outfield and scoreboard at the new 'Paul Barrios Field.'

cutting corners to chase wins," Barrios explains. "My intent has always been to give back to my players and the game everything that was given to me."

Coach Barrios takes immense pride in the relationships he has built with his players over the years. He sees his role not just as a coach, but as a mentor who helps guide his athletes not just on the field, but in their development as well-rounded individuals.

The relationships gained from this mentorship are the most important part to Barrios, as he loves watching his former players come back to the program and support the current team.

"Whether my players continue to play the game, or simply grow into compassionate adults, watching them make their mark on the world and start their own

families is truly special to me," Barrios said.

Unlike some of the other coaching positions he has held in the past, Barrios has found the leadership at Krop to be trusting and supportive, allowing him and his coaching staff the freedom to do what they believe is best for the players.

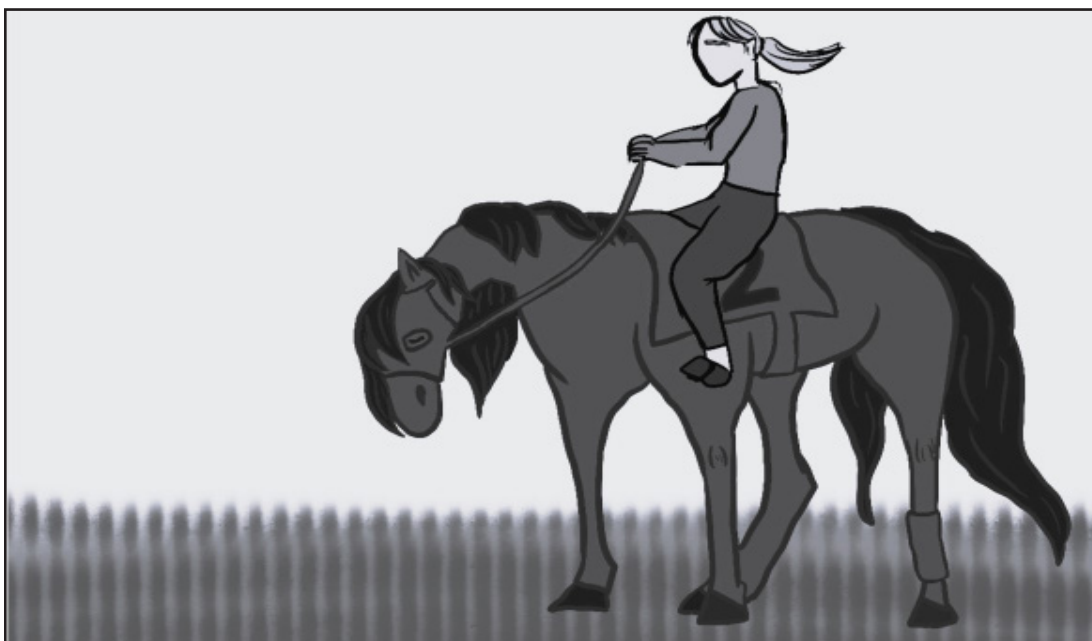
"I've coached at four different places, but the thing about this one is that the staff has always believed in the coaching staff and trusted what we are doing," Barrios said. "They have always been supportive, but most importantly they care about our program."

Through his commitment to the team, the field and the development of his players, Coach Barrios has left a huge mark on the Krop baseball program, well deserving of the field to be named after him.

ANIMALS

Florida horses are sprinting to concerning complications

by TALIA ROBBINS



Drawn by Dorielle Florvil

South Florida has long been known for its animal sports, such as horse racing. However, this seemingly harmless activity contains a complex web of ethical and moral issues that call for us to reconsider our participation and support.

In 1925, Hialeah Park Race-track, one of South Florida's first animal racing establishments was opened, quickly inviting visitors from all around the world to rejoice in funding animal sports.

According to Florida Horse Racing, with sport wagering being legalized in 1921 and the opening of this Hialeah race-track, South Florida, mainly Hialeah, quickly became the

winter racing capital of the United States. Since the early 20th century, the sport has been widely practiced among all people ranging from teenagers to adults.

Betting on animal sports, especially for students, is fraught and can cause moral dilemmas. It's not just about the legality of underage gambling; it's about understanding the implications of supporting industries that may not align with our values of compassion and respect for all living beings.

"Betting on horseracing has been a longstanding tradition in my family," senior Noah Leave said. "But I had no idea the kind of torture the animals are going

through while being raced; now I know I need to stop."

Despite their widespread appeal, animal sports pose serious risks to both the animals involved and our shared morals. The glitz and glamour of horse racing in South Florida belies the reality that these animals are vulnerable to abuse, neglect and harm. Horses are overworked to the point where they have catastrophic accidents while racing.

Katie Couric Media reports, through state racing commissions, almost 10,000 racehorses have been killed since 2014, and further research indicates that more than 2,000 horses die at U.S. tracks every year — that's

about six every single day.

Never mind the death, there's also the everyday abuse. Horses are typically sold, usually at the tender age of one, and then broken, an industry term meaning to be made submissive. Alone and terrified, their servitude begins. According to The Atlantic, a horse doesn't reach full musculoskeletal maturity until the age of 6, but racehorses are typically thrust into intensive training at 18 months and raced at 2.

In the necropsies, 4, 3 and even 2-year-old horses are dying with chronic conditions like osteoarthritis and degenerative joint disease — clear evidence of the incessant shocks these adolescent animal bodies are forced to absorb.

The Humane Society of the United States reports, as federal and state law enforcement can attest, that animal sports are often associated with other criminal activities such as illegal gambling, drug trafficking, gang activity and illegal weapon sales. For example, federal investigations have uncovered international drug cartels running sophisticated cockfighting operations as a means to distribute heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and opioids across the United States.

Using animals for amusement, whether hunting them for sport or making them perform, is de-meaning to ourselves and them. Being a species with a great

amount of power and control over other species brings with it a responsibility not to abuse that power. Using animals in sports and entertainment is an abuse of our position of responsibility and brutalizes society towards animals and nature. Students should advocate for entertainment that respects the well-being of all participants, human and animal alike.

Today, major stakeholders in South Florida horseracing are pushing back by pulling funding in attempts to mitigate the harmful effects of this practice. Health News reports that this past year, The National Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association — which represents thoroughbred racehorse owners, trainers and other personnel — filed a federal lawsuit against the Safety Authority, stripping funding from major horse racing tracks including Hialeah and Gulfstream Park and making it increasingly difficult for tracks to run steady business. Additionally, in 2021 Congress passed the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act, regulating both racing safety and anti-doping control to ensure animal safety.

By choosing not to bet on or support animal sports, high school students can take a stand for the ethical treatment of animals and contribute to a growing culture that values compassion over convenience.