

Wrestlers Hermosillo and Lopez back to state

Pair of Devils return for third time

By Chris Freud
cfreud@vaildaily.com

GYPSUM — Teamwork in wrestling is a little different than most sports because teamwork is beating the snot out of your teammate.

Push your teammate in the wrestling room and good things will happen.

That's the case for Eagle Valley's Noah Hermosillo, a 132-pounder, and Raul Lopez, a 138-pounder, who are both bound for the 3A state tournament, which starts today at the Pepsi Center in Denver. Hermosillo qualified by repeating as a regional champion — last year he won at 120 pounds — while Lopez finished third at the Region 4 tournament last weekend in Montrose.

Both are juniors and both are going to the big show for the third time.

"I think it's awesome," Hermosillo said. "Since freshman year, we've been together in everything. Wherever he goes, I go."

It's not just talk.

Hermosillo said they had the best week of practice all season in preparation for the make-or-break regional tournament.

The reason?

"Raul was back (from an injury in January)," Hermosillo said. "He was beating up on me and pushing me in the room. He pushed me when I needed it the most."

WELCOME BACK, RAUL

Lopez won the Eagle Valley Invite early in January and all

seemed well for him ... until he hurt his back lifting weights.

He was out for nearly a month. "It sucked," Lopez said. "Having to watch my teammates on the mat, knowing that I'd do well, it wasn't a good feeling."

As Devils coach Luke Cross said earlier this season, he wanted to err on the side of caution with Lopez. Cross wrestled in his day and qualified for the Colorado state tournament. And the decision proved correct.

Lopez was a little rusty, but ground out a 6-3 win against Rifle's Cary Ebler. Delta's Shaun Stuts sent Lopez into the consolation bracket with a late pin.

But Lopez showed resilience, coming up with his own pin of Sheridan's Diego Madrigal.

In the third-place match, Lopez went to overtime with Montezuma-Cortez's Josh Ramos. In the extra 60-second session, Ramos led 3-2 and was on top of Lopez. Instead of going for the one-point escape and the tie, Lopez picked up the reverse, two points and the win.

BACK-TO-BACK

Hermosillo looked like a defending regional champion last weekend. He won his four matches decisively.

Gunnison's Dane Johnson went by the boards, 16-0. Hermosillo promptly pinned Cortez's Jared Gray in the second round. He clinched state by taking out Steamboat Springs' Dakota Thevt, 12-3, and wrapped the regional title and secured the No. 4 seed at state with an 11-2 decision against Issik Herod.

Hermosillo is locked into the cliché, but true approach of wrestling "one match at a time"



Eagle Valley's Noah Hermosillo wrestles his way to back-to-back regional championships last weekend. Hermosillo is the No. 4 seed at 132 pounds at the 3A state tournament, which begins today at the Pepsi Center in Denver.

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mentality. And there is wisdom in that going to the Pepsi Center this weekend.

As much as one tries to pretend that the state meet is just another meet, it isn't.

Both Hermosillo and Lopez have been there and been understandably awestruck at the scene during their first two trips. They know what to expect in their third trip.

"It's definitely the coolest feeling in the world," Hermosillo said of the Pepsi Center. "There is nowhere else you get that feeling, but you can't be like, 'Oh, wow, I'm here.' You have to take it as your home tournament or regionals — one match at a time. Otherwise, you're going to let it get to you."

Sports Editor Chris Freud can be reached at 970-748-2934, cfreud@vaildaily.com and @cfreud.



Eagle Valley High School's Raul Lopez is back in action after a back injury sidelined him for a month. The 138-pounder finished third at regionals last weekend in Montrose and has qualified for state for the third-consecutive year.

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Radamus grabs another gold at youth Olympics

Third win is a new record at Youth Olympic Games

Staff report
newsroom@vaildaily.com

HAFJELL, Norway — Edwards ski racer River Radamus grabbed the hat trick Wednesday at the Winter Youth Olympic Games giant slalom with his third gold medal of the Games.

The win made Radamus, an athlete with Ski & Snowboard Club Vail, the first Youth Olympic Games skier or snowboarder to win three individual gold medals at the Winter Games, which were initiated in 2012. Radamus also won the super-G and alpine combined golds at the Games.

"Although the super-G and

alpine combined wins were great, River had high expectations for the giant slalom," said Chad Wolk, Youth Olympic Games and men's FIS National Training Group coach. "He has had some strong training sessions leading up to (Wednesday's) performance. Early in the day he seemed nervous about the added pressure of the previous day's success but found a way to let go of the external and focus on what he needed to do in order to go fast."

A 'TACTICAL APPROACH'

Radamus' combined time in both runs of the giant slalom was 1.07 seconds faster than Japan's Yohei Koyama, who finished second. Germany's Anton Grammel took home the bronze medal.

"Both courses were challenging," Wolk said. "The first run was pretty offset with consistent

swing, and the second run had multiple rhythm changes and demanding changes of direction. River executed his tactical approach to a tee. We couldn't be happier for him."

Modeled after the Olympic Games, the Youth Olympic Games debuted its winter event in 2012 at Innsbruck, Austria. Held every four years, the Youth Olympic Winter Games feature more than 1,100 athletes aged 15 to 18, from around the world. Alpine events will include slalom, giant slalom, super-G, downhill and alpine combined. The Games continue through Sunday.

Radamus has been building confidence arriving, Volk said, and that will culminate on Friday when the men ski the slalom, Radamus' best discipline. He is the current U.S. Junior National slalom champion.



Lindsey Vonn, ambassador for the Lillehammer 2016 Winter Youth Olympic Games, poses for a photograph with River Radamus during her visit to the Games on Monday. Vonn and Radamus both call Eagle County home.

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