PREP WRESTLING

Blue and white pride shines

CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/BRYAN KELSEN

Central High School wrestler Jimmy Gonzales walks across the mat of the newly refurbished John L. Rivas Wrestling Room at the school. The facility was dedicated Thursday before Central's match with South.

John L. Rivas Wrestling Room dedicated at Central High

John L. Rivas

BY NICK JURNEY
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Brand new blue and white mats shined as bright as the smiles of Central High School wrestling supporters Thursday.

Coaches, wrestlers, fans and administrators were in attendance for the dedication of the newly renovated John Rivas L. Wrestling Room.

The family of the late coach John Rivas — including his wife Clara and his children John "Bud," Gary, Louise and several other family members — were in attendance and cut the ceremonial ribbon in front of a room that also features new mats and padded walls.

"Basically it was something that was long overdue," said District 60 athletic director Rick Macias, who spearheaded the project. "We had some money from our vending contracts that we had to spend and we had done all of the other high schools already, so Central was the last one.

"It had been put off for awhile, and we finally took it to the board and got it through. It's been a long process, but we got it done."

The facility was made possible by allocations from the Pueblo City Schools board of education through funds specifically for school

SEE CENTRAL, 3D

Copyright © 2017 The Pueblo Chieftain, Pueblo, CO. 01/20/2017
January 20, 2017 6:00 am (GMT +7:00)
Powered by TECNAVIA

CENTRAL/
from page 1D

upgrades from vending contracts.

Central athletic director Dave Craddock gave credit to Macias and the school board, which includes former state champion-winning Wildcat coach Bobby Gonzales, for making the upgrade possible.

"These rooms over time just get worn out, and Rick sort of spearheaded this whole thing and we're appreciative of him and the board," Craddock said. "It's state-of-the-art, like a brand new room. We're so honored to have this for our kids and their future."

The Rivas family was overjoyed. The room was dedicated to John Rivas — known as "Mr. Blue" — a former wrestling coach and teacher at Central from 1966-1970 who later became a principal and president of the Colorado High School Activities Association. Rivas died in 2010.

"My father always said this wrestling room was the hardest working room in the building," Bud Rivas said. "Because he was that way too. He was a hard-working guy, and that's what he taught us. He always said 'If you work hard, you'll never lose. You may not win, but you'll never lose.'"

One of the brightest smiles at the ceremony belonged to current Central coach Ken Pino. Pino took over the program this season and held practice at the nearby Jackson's MMA gym while the room was renovated.

"It's a new start, a new beginning," Pino said. "It helped me encourage my team and tell them: 'You're part of something big. You're the start of something.' And they've believed it and bought in. It's helped their self esteem and confidence."

The ceremony was a precursor to the Wildcats' final home dual of the season against South, which featured several competitive matches in front of a near-full crowd.

Jimmy Gonzales (113 pounds), Leo Palma (145 pounds) Jesus Trujillo each earned wins for the Wildcats, but the Colts — led by pins from Luke Kitchen (132), Marcus Martinez (160), Elias Manzanares (170), Jake Gallina (182) and Kyle Aumiller (285) — surged to a 48-25 win.

Still, the Rivas family, grouped in the same section of the Central bleachers that family members have sat since 1966, cheered faithfully through every match.

"We are so honored," Clara Rivas said. "My husband would be very, very happy. You just can't beat the blue and the white."

njurney@chieftain.com

My father always said this wrestling room was the hardest working room in the building. Because he was that way too. He was a hard-working guy, and that's what he taught us. He always said 'If you work hard, you'll never lose. You may not win, but you'll never lose.'

JOHN 'BUD' RIVAS

Copyright © 2017 The Pueblo Chieftain, Pueblo, CO. 01/20/2017
January 20, 2017 6:00 am (GMT +7:00)

Powered by TECNAVIA