

PREP WRESTLING

# South's 'Sis' bids farewell

Longtime coach calling it a career after this season

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THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

The end of an era is near at South High School.

In fact, it will be the end of an era for Pueblo prep wrestling as a whole.

The sun is setting on the career of longtime Colts head coach Jerry Sisneros, culminating in the coming weeks with his final Class 4A state wrestling tournament at the Pepsi Center in Denver.

Sisneros said he will retire following the current season after 30 years at the helm of the South program.

Tonight's dual against Centennial (6:30 p.m.) will be his final home match.

"You get to a point where, between coaching and teaching, you've run your course," Sisneros said. "It's time to do something else."

The impact of Sisneros — endearingly known as "Sis" — has been far-reaching. After graduating from Centennial in 1975, he went to work on his teaching degree and eventually made his way to South, where he became an assistant coach for six

SEE SISNEROS, 4D



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South High School wrestling coach Jerry Sisneros (right) coaches with his son, Josh, during the East Invitational last month. Sisneros will retire at the end of this season after 30 years.

### THE LEGEND OF 'SIS'

Some of Jerry Sisneros' accomplishments at South include:

- Years as head coach: 30 (1987-2017)
- Team state titles: 1997, 2004, 2005 (Class 4A)
- Individual state titles: 18
- State qualifiers: 199
- State place-finishers: 99
- Honors: Greater Pueblo Sports Association Hall of Fame (2002), CHSAA Coach of the Year (1997, 2004, 2005, 2012, 2015), National Wrestling Hall of Fame — Colorado Chapter inductee (2015).

## SISNEROS/from page 1D \_\_\_\_\_

years.

He took over the program from Bobby Hawk Martinez in 1987 and began teaching the same year.

Sisneros teams have won three Class 4A state championships 1997, 2004 and 2005 and finished runner-up in 1999, 2006 and 2012.

He won 11 South-Central League titles and eight regional championships, and guided 201 individual state qualifiers, 99 place-winners, 18 state champions and 18 runners-up.

Sisneros says he'll remember most the lessons he taught and learned rather than the wins and losses.

What it all boils down to is, are you a teacher or not, he said.

I just kind of want to be remembered as the guy that helped others love what they do as much as I loved doing it. I really enjoyed coaching, and wrestling, and education. It was easy. I always wanted everyone to feel like I was just a phone call away.

We always say we're teaching more than just wrestling, and it's true. We spent a lot of time on character, building that confidence, and all of those elements of being a good person.

That extends to his own family. Josh Sisneros, Jerry's son and an assistant at South, has been involved in wrestling since he was 6 years old all with his dad as the main man at South.

Josh Sisneros said he plans to stay with the South program in some capacity, though it will be noticeably different without Sis.

It's one of those things, you don't ever want to see that ship park, Josh Sisneros said. But we know he won't be far, and we're happy with that.

The most important thing he always taught me was, yes, wrestling is a great sport and we love it. But it's definitely way down on the totem pole. It's all about family, God and friends. Those are the people we put first.

Fittingly, Sisneros' last home dual is against his alma mater, Centennial, where his junior high and high school teammate Gary Adamson is head coach.

Adamson and Sisneros have history from meeting in eighth grade to Sis serving as their senior class president.

He's a Bulldog at heart, Adamson joked.

It's going to be a little different next year. We've had some great battles over the years. He's had a lot of great kids over there and a lot of success. He's done a great job as the leader and face of that program.

Under Sisneros, South High School wrestling has been the standard of success in Pueblo. The Colts were the first Pueblo wrestling team to win back-to-back state titles, and his 20 top-10 finishes showcase the extent of one of the more successful runs in the area and state.

Seeing us reach that pinnacle and sustain it, that was really something special, Sisneros said. Every team has had their own little flavor of making South wrestling better, and we made our program stand out. We kind of set that bar. You kind of look out there and hopefully, we got the ball rolling for others. We created some statewide traditions.

As for his post-teaching and coaching plans, Sisneros said he hopes to stay around the mat in some capacity.

The most difficult part will be watching from the stands rather than the corner.

For so long, my identity has been Coach Sis, he said. Just losing that and having that purpose, that's going to be a big one for me. It's almost like starting all over. But I'm not out looking for work. It's just time to move on. [njurney@chieftain.com](mailto:njurney@chieftain.com)