

GIRLS TAKING OVER

Senior Ashley Gress and junior Emma Cochran blaze a trail for female athletes at CHS

Mark Illyenko and Carson Rector

Staff Writer

This has been a season of change for CHS wrestling, with a new coach, new outlook, new motto, and many new wrestlers. But perhaps the biggest change has been the addition of two female wrestlers into what had been an all-male squad. Senior Ashley Gress and junior Emma Cochran are two new female additions to the Chariton wrestling team. "It is definitely difficult to be a female wrestler because there is a lot of hate and pressure. Everyone seems to be watching, which can be good or bad. It takes a lot of physical and mental strength" said Cochran. "It is a big jump from wrestling girls to guys. Yet, I think wrestling guys has pushed me to not only be the best wrestler I can be, but the best person I can be."

It has been a challenge for women wrestlers to wrestle in a sport dominated by men. "All the guys are more muscle than I will

ever be so they are stronger, however I do believe that with the right tactics and experience a girl could surely pull ahead if she fought for it," said Gress.

Women's wrestling is one of the fastest growing sports at the scholastic and collegiate level with 14,587 participants. According to the National Wrestling Coaches Association, the group is currently in the process of pursuing emerging sports status for women's wrestling in the NCAA. Currently, 42 colleges have women's wrestling programs, with more expected to add them in the future.

Many people are excited about the future of women's wrestling including some male wrestlers. "I've seen it as just wrestling another teammate, because they should get the same opportunity as another wrestler. We have been instructed not to take it easy" said sophomore wrestler Trae Hall, who is often Gress and Cochran's

sparring partner. Sophomore Cain Geesaman, who also practices with Gress and Cochran agrees. "It's the same as wrestling a dude. They're not any different, If you make it awkward it will be awkward. I don't take it easy because they could take advantage of that and nobody gets better," said Geesaman.

However, some wrestlers don't see it the same way. Both Cochran and Gress say that some wrestlers have taken losses to avoid wrestling them. "Unfortunately it is pretty common to have a boy forfeit due to my gender. I understand though, I wouldn't want to lose to a girl either," said Cochran. "It's an honor to be one of the first girls to letter. Yet, I hope Ashley and I won't be the last girls to letter. I hope that we have encouraged other girls to want to go next year and the years after."

Tui's Top 5

Isaiah Tuigong

Sports Editor

Coach Sandy sayings according to senior Aubrie Richards



1 "Get your heads out of your butts before you suffocate!"

2 "Quit pulling the plow!"

3 "Use the bang board!"

4 "I've seen better hands on a clock!"

5 "My grandma could guard all of you!"



Top Left: Junior Emma Cochran wrestles at the Chariton triangular.

Bottom Left: Junior Emma Cochran in referee's position

Top Right: Senior Ashley Gress rests with senior Jordan Blubaugh and sophomore Tanner Ballard