

The Pueblo Chieftain

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Former Colt returns to mentor mat men

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With hundreds and hundreds of local prep athletes reporting for fall sports, Jerry Sisneros was thinking about the future.

The South High School wrestling coach held a two-day minicamp for incoming freshmen and returners Monday and Tuesday at the Colts' wrestling room.

"We had 25 guys here and I was pleased with the turnout," said Sisneros, who has led the Colts to the 1997, 2004 and 2005 Class 4A state titles. "We've been doing this camp for years and we use it to build on the things we learned at the recent camp we went to at Western State and we're also looking to expand our playbook from what we had last season."

The 2009-10 prep wrestling slate begins in mid-November. The guest for the clinic was former South standout JR Roman. Roman, a 2005 South grad, most recently competed for the University of Oklahoma in Norman. Roman had one year of eligibility remaining with the Sooners, but chose to retire from the sport. "I'm majoring in chemical engineering and I'm scheduled to graduate in May," Roman said. "It was just too much for me to compete in wrestling and get my degree in May. It was a hard decision not to wrestle any more, but I really enjoy coming to do things like this for the wrestlers at South."

Sisneros praised Roman for stopping by to mentor some of his squad members.

"Nothing makes me more proud to see guys like JR come back and give back to our program," Sisneros said.

Roman was mixing it up with senior Vinnie Sanchez among others. Sanchez placed second and fourth at 119 pounds in the Class 4A state tournament the past two years. His runner-up finish came as a sophomore when he was competing with Pueblo West.

"It was good to get out there on the mat with JR," Sanchez said. "I don't think JR was going full speed with me and I was still getting my butt kicked. I don't mind that though because the only way you get better is by competing against good guys in the room."

Jacob Garcia, a fellow senior, also felt the camp was beneficial.

"This was a great time for me to come out here and get some work in," Garcia said. "I'm doing everything that I can to get in shape for the wrestling season. This is my last year and I'm in it to win it (a state championship)."