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AIA FEATURE STORY By: Don Ketchum

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## MESA'S MONTANO AIMS FOR ANOTHER WRESTLING TITLE

PHOENIX, AZ (February 18, 2009) – Mesa High School's Victor Montano won a state individual wrestling championship a year ago at 119 pounds, but he wasn't satisfied.

Entering his senior season in 2008-09, he trained over the summer with Anthony Robles, a two-time former state champion who now is at Arizona State.

Asked if Robles gave him any advice about earning another title, Montano said, "He just said to keep your cool and work hard."

Montano will attempt to put that advice to the test beginning Thursday (Feb. 19) when the Class 5A Division I individual tournament begins on his own home mat at Mesa. The event switches to Jobing.com Arena in Glendale for the final two rounds on Friday and Saturday.

Montano also helps give Mesa a strong chance to win the team title at a separate meet on Feb. 28 at Phoenix Shadow Mountain.

More than anything, Montano wants to match Robles with his second title "and stand above the rest."

He went up one weight class, to 125 pounds, and posted a 36-1 record. As the top seed, he will be difficult to keep from his goal.

"I think most kids get really antsy before their matches in the state tournament. That's what I used to do. But now I treat it like a regular match. I try to keep my cool," Montano said.

Mesa coach Bob Williams acknowledged Montano's mental approach, and said there is a physical difference, primarily with his quickness.

"He's already there in the right spot before they (opponents) even know it," Williams said.

The margin of victory for Montano in most of his matches has been by a pin or a major decision.

He rarely tries to wait until late in the match to take control of the situation. He is more likely to work on his opponent early.

"I go off your momentum," he said. "I try to have a lighter touch. If you get too tied up, that can only get you in trouble."

Consistency is one of the keys, according to Williams, "Coming out every time and being the same as much as possible."

Montano also is trying to be as consistent as possible in the classroom.

"I wouldn't say I'm at the top of the list, but I do all right. I'm a good student. I pull mainly Bs," said Montano, whose favorite subjects are American Government and Economics.

He can take comfort in a good support system from his family. He said he has about six at every match, “and they’re usually the ones who are screaming the loudest.”

Loud and proud, especially if Montano wins another title.

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