

THE SECOND WIN

Jiu jitsu provides unique form of stress release

by **MOLLY CROUCH**
copy editor

Crouched in a predatory stance, her feet tactfully dance around the blue mat. Eyes trained to follow her coach's movements squint to calculate her next move. Fiery red hair with a bright blue stripe that matches her spirit springs free from her ponytail. She's waiting for her window. Sophomore Michayla Hellums suppresses a wicked grin as her coach's familiar banter goads her to attack.

Hellums' grandfather, Tony Hellums, presented her jiu jitsu classes on her tenth birthday. Jiu jitsu is a Brazilian martial art, which is an evolution of grappling and ground fighting. The goal of jiu jitsu is applying pressure to joints and looking to submit an opponent through either joint locks or choking. Hellums trains at Texarkana Combat Sports with her coach, Craig Campbell. After finding her niche, Hellums is now an advanced green belt in jiu jitsu and competes in the expert level at North American Grappling Association tournaments.

"This is what I love doing with my life and what I want to do," Hellums said. "This is like my

release and how I get away from frustrations of life. I come in here, and it all just disappears."

Hellums isn't the first person in her family to join the martial arts community. Her mother, Toni Marracino, has a black belt in Tae Kwon Do, and her grandfather was a coach.

"She's always had the physical attributes," Tony Hellums said. "I used to coach years ago, so I saw it in her and just liked [her] to try it. She won't tell you, but, when she got up there, she started beating all the boys who had been here for years. That's when we knew we had something."

Hellums contends in about three or four grappling tournaments a year. They can be won by a point system, but Hellums prefers concrete evidence to eliminate any doubt about the winner of the match. Her signature take downs are usually arm bars.

"Based on a lot of the fights I've seen, and when you leave it up to a decision, it's not always a guarantee," Hellums said. "I've gotten into the habit of submission so people know for a fact that I won that match, that I deserve to win. I typically go for the submit as quickly as I can. If I have to score points, I will, but I

like to submit."

When Hellums first began to train, another woman at her gym introduced Hellums to Ronda Rousey. Rousey's ambitious career has motivated Hellums' to strive to become a professional fighter and sparked her new kick boxing workouts.

"I saw [Rousey] and was like, 'She's going into the UFC. I think I could do that,'" Hellums said. "That's what I push for. Everything she did, I think I could do that. But maybe I could take it further."

Losing a match or game is never ideal for any athlete. Hellums is no different, but her grandfather's mantra has strengthen her mentality.

"It makes me nervous because the thought of letting someone down because of a loss," Hellums said. "It's not even letting [my family] down really, but letting myself down. I have to get over it and come back and train for the next match. My grandfather calls it the 'second win.' It's when you go back in after a loss and hold it together to win the next match."

Campbell has coached Hellums for the past two years. He foresees a successful future for her, including the possibility of Adult Worlds and becoming a

photo by k. moreland



FIST BUMP Sophomore Michayla Hellums practices her jiu jitsu moves with Coach Craig Campbell.

name for Texarkana.

"I think a lot of people forget, even [those] who train here, that she's not an adult. She's a young lady in high school, and, within the jiu jitsu community, it's very rare for a girl her age to be beating boys," Campbell said. "This is not a sport that your

weakness can hide in. And for her to be as active as she is, I think it's impressive that she comes in 3-5 times a week and gets physically beat up. It's a testament to her will. She's our barometer; people either continue after they get beat by Michayla, or they never come back."

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