Ethan Hinebauch carries on family tradition in Havre
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Wrestling fans all over the Hi-Line and beyond have known for years about the Hinebauch legacy.

It started with older brothers Eric and Evan, continued with little brother Eli, and is on full display in Great Falls this weekend as Ethan pursues another championship to add to the family's burgeoning trophy case.

What folks might not realize, though, is that Hinebauch patriarch Randy, who operates the home place farm near Chinook, was a high school basketball – right, basketball – player at Turner.

"You know what, I didn't even know that," said MSU-Northern head coach Tyson Thivierge with a laugh. "That's amazing. I didn't have a clue. But I know Randy's one of the toughest ones there."

Ethan, a senior 165-pounder, is a three-time NAIA All-American. He said his father deserves much of the credit.

"Dad's done it very well," Ethan said. "He's taught us how to work and to respect work."

But a basketball player? What the heck?

"He was an athlete," Ethan said with a grin. "No doubt about that. There was five boys in that family, too."

Eric wrestled at Chinook High and for the University of Great Falls. Evan eventually transferred to Havre High, joining the fine Blue Pony program of coach Scott Filius, and Ethan and Eli followed. They combined for many high school championships and all matriculated to Northern.

Though Eli's career was cut short by an injury, Evan became a four-time All-American and national champion for the Lights. Ethan, a national runner-up last year, is poised to become the sixth four-time All-American in Northern history.

The boys began wrestling as youths and quickly found their niche.

"It's competition," said Ethan. "We've all stuck with it."

A few scraps growing up with his brothers?

"Yep," Ethan said. "We learned how to fight, that's for sure."

Evan, now an assistant to Filius at Havre High, seems to have been the toughest in the family.

"Debatable," said Thivierge. "I think Ethan might be, pound-for-pound, the strongest."

For the record, Ethan didn't argue either way. But he shook his head when asked about big brother Evan.

"It normally takes two of us to take him down," Ethan grinned. "But it's been done."
He shook his head when offered congratulations on his achievements to date.

"Well, I have one more in mind that I need to achieve," he said. "My goal is to be on the top of the stand this year."

Ethan has the career record for pins at Northern, with 89. The previous school record was set by Columbia Falls prep great Caleb Schaeffer, now the University of Great Falls head coach, with 85. Schaeffer also is the school's all-time leader in wins with 165.

Ethan started this season with a record of 109-17 and seems destined to finish his career in the neighborhood of 150 victories.

Not that he's keeping track.

"No idea," he said when asked his record this season. "All I know is I have three losses. I'm hoping not to have any more."

Evan and Thivierge are among five four-time All-Americans in MSU-Northern history, a list that also includes former C.M. Russell High star Turk Lords, who won an amazing four NAIA national championships, former Havre prep ace Kyle Fisher and Emmett Willson of Shepherd.

The Hinebauch boys have given Great Falls fans fits for years.

"It seems like we can't get the best of them. We've struggled wrestling those guys," Schaeffer said. "They've been fierce competitors."

Brotherly love? Of course. And there's another quality, too.

"Hard-headed arrogance," Ethan said with a smile.

Said Thivierge: "He's a great leader, very vocal with the guys. Just an intelligent kid who's a lot of fun to be around. He's been great for this program. And so was Evan."

Thivierge is from Washington state and had one brother. He said it sparked plenty of competition.

"When there's four brothers growing up together you're bound to be tough," said Thivierge. "Ethan's the second to youngest and I'm sure he took a lotta flak growing up. They just all want to one-up the other one. That's a nice competitive household."

Northern's mat family will be different next year.

"It's gonna be a weird feeling not having a Hinebauch," Thivierge said. "For seven years now I've had one on the roster. It's going to be a different atmosphere around here without one."

Ethan will miss it.

"I'm guessing I'm not gonna leave the competition," he said. "I'm gonna miss it, but I'm gonna still be around it."

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