

Hinz on the Rise

Will Hinz (11) displays his passion for climbing

By Victoria Derdoy

Staff

Will Hinz (11) steps into the climbing gym, lays his bag down and slips on his climbing shoes. As sunlight shines through the window, Hinz rubs his chalky hands together, takes a deep breath and approaches the wall, ready to take on his next challenge.

Hinz began rock climbing at age 9, after being inspired by a neighbor. What began as a casual activity quickly evolved into a passionate commitment. Hinz now finds himself training four to five times a week at Upper Limits, and has competed at both regional and national competitions.

“Once I started competing, I started doing really well and got sucked into it,” Hinz said. “I remember one year specifically, I had a bad performance at regionals, and then I [realized] if I want to be serious, I [had] to lock in and turn it up a bit.”

In addition to Hinz’s physical preparation, he notes some important mental techniques as well. He focuses on keeping a positive mindset by meditating before competitions and continuously works on stretching and flexibility.

“Being present in moments of execution is super important,” Hinz said. “A huge part of performance in climbing is having a positive mindset, which is a technique you work on and refine.”

Hinz’s commitment to his physical and mental preparation has paid off, as he has competed at the national level six times. Despite hitting a two-year rough patch where he did not qualify, the grind did not stop. This past season, Hinz won divisionals, out of only nine divisions in the entire country.

“With any sport, there’s going to be challenges to get to the top level [and]

it’s super difficult,” Hinz said. “The hardest part for me is understanding that I’m on my own path and I’m on my own journey. If I do what I’m supposed to do, maintain a positive attitude and believe in myself, then I’m [going to] get to where I want to be.”

Although climbing is an individual sport, the climbing community is very close-knit and focuses on being supportive and uplifting each other. Having traveled to many states and meeting people from all over the country, Hinz cherishes the positive climbing community and the lifelong friendships he’s built. In addition to these out of town friendships, although Hinz and Dorian Bunic (11) didn’t initially meet through climbing, they have gotten closer from spending hours together training, competing or just hanging out. Bunic admires Hinz’s determination and resilience.

“No matter what gets thrown in his way he always has a positive outlook. He takes every failure and turns it into an opportunity for learning and growth.”

Dorian Bunic

(11)

With every day, Hinz continues to set new goals and standards for himself, as well as learn new lessons. He would like to someday compete at a World Cup, and with his positive outlook and dedication, he’s not just climbing walls, but reaching new heights in life.

“[Climbing] is my passion, and it’s what I love,” Hinz said. “I’ve learned to be more present and grateful, [and] that results come with hard work.” **P**

Will Hinz (11) climbs at Wild Iris Climbing Area in Lander, Wyoming. Hinz has traveled to over six states for climbing. “I have a bunch of friends in the East Coast because we see each other once a year at nationals,” Hinz said. (Photo illustration by Brennan Robinson and Victoria Derdoy)