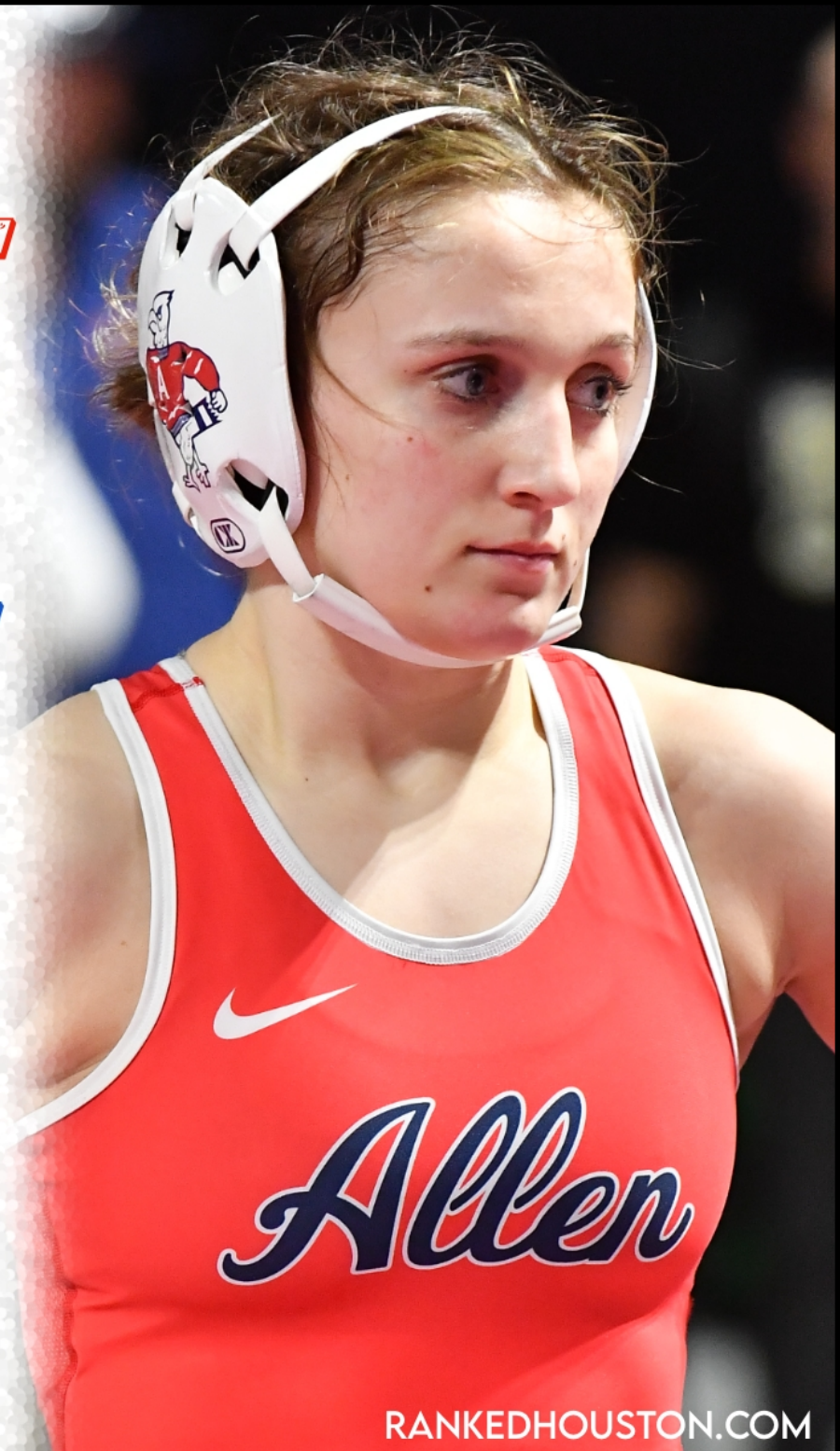


GRACE ROMANS

BUILDING A LEGACY BEYOND THE PODIUM



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At Allen High School, where the halls are packed with thousands of students and the wrestling mats echo with championship tradition, senior Grace Romans stands as one of the most driven and respected athletes in the program. A former state champion and the anchor of Allen's rising girls team, Grace enters her final season not just hungry—but hardened.





Wrestling wasn't always the plan for Grace. Her early years were focused on other sports while she sat in the stands cheering on her older brother Gabe, who wrestled with intensity and calm confidence. Though she watched countless matches, it wasn't until 7th grade that Grace dipped her toe into the sport herself. Surrounded by boys and unsure of her fit, she quickly realized she had a knack for it—and more importantly, a love for the individual challenge within a team environment.

"Over time, I fell in love with wrestling," Grace said. "After 8th grade, I made the decision to fully commit to it."

The decision paid off. By her sophomore year, she won a UIL State Championship at 107lbs. However, in her quest to repeat last season, Grace came face to face with Riley Rayome of The Woodlands—one of the top-ranked girls in the country—twice in the postseason. And while the outcomes were technically losses, the experience lit a fire that may define her final year at Allen.

"I once heard a coach from Northern Iowa talk about chasing losses—seeking out the toughest matches, win or lose, because that's where real growth happens," Grace said. "The bigger the tournament, the farther you travel, the better the competition—and that's exactly what I want."

Instead of cutting back down to 107 pounds for an easier path, she stayed up—specifically to get the match she wanted.

"I chose to stay up because I wanted the match against Riley," she said. "I needed to know how I stacked up against one of the best in Texas."

What she learned was that she belongs among the elite. Grace went the distance with Rayome—twice—becoming one of the only girls in the entire state not to get pinned or tech-falled by her all season.

"Finishing second wasn't the goal, but I have nothing to be upset about," Grace said. "I'm very proud of myself."

But Grace isn't defined by titles alone. She's proud of other milestones that speak to her consistency and dedication—like reaching 100 career wins, never being pinned in a UIL match, and never missing weight.

That last point, in particular, carries more weight than most might realize.

Grace explained: "In wrestling, team scores often come down to just a few points, and I could never forgive myself if we lost a championship because I missed weight and my potential points didn't count. Beyond the team, I also want future coaches to know they can count on me and know I will follow through on my word. I gave my coach my word that I would make weight—and I take that commitment seriously," she said. "I remember when my brother missed weight once at Tulsa Nationals. That was a missed opportunity we'll never get back, and it stuck with me."

Her brother's example—his calm demeanor, focus, and quiet resilience—helped shape Grace into the competitor she is today. "Whether it was grades or racing down the street, I always believed I could do whatever he did—just a little better," she said with a smile. "That rivalry fueled us both."

So did her parents. Her dad, a coach-turned-superfan, taught her fundamentals and leadership. Her mom, ever the supporter, ensured Grace had everything she needed—along with a comforting hug at just the right time.

But Grace's wrestling journey is just as much about the team as it is about family.

In a school as large as Allen, standing out isn't easy. Yet Grace and her teammates have built a name for themselves in a sport where recognition is earned, not given. With a dedicated girls coaching staff, their own wrestling room, and a culture built on grit and camaraderie, Allen Girls Wrestling is beginning to rival college-level programs.

Grace is proud to help lead that charge.

"As a senior, I'm excited to build strong team unity," she said. "My mentor, Jasmine Robinson, led by example—always from the front. I plan to lead with that same mindset: strong-willed, aggressive on the mat, and fully focused."

Jasmine, a four-time state champion, didn't just win—she inspired. Grace recalls traveling with her to Women's Nationals, where Jasmine introduced her to coaches and high-level competitors, making her feel welcome in a world of elite wrestling. That generosity left a lasting impact.

"I love watching my teammates do well, especially knowing everything they go through outside of wrestling," Grace said. "I think that's what being a leader is—cheering others on and helping them shine."



This summer, Grace has been training alongside a core group of club teammates—Cora Hayes, Jordyn Parker, Riley Drennan, Addi Hunt, Aro Ogle-Garza, and the Skelley twins, Jaelyn and Tayla. “We’ve been pushing each other all summer,” she said. “I know these ladies are going to make a big splash this season.” She’s also excited for incoming freshmen like Laila Abarca and Ambi Adame, who are already showing impressive work ethic.

Grace knows that a team state title doesn’t happen by accident—it takes 5 to 7 girls performing at their peak and scoring at state. That’s where her focus lies now.

“I’m hungry for another team title before I graduate, and I’m committed to doing everything I can to help make that happen,” she said.

Off the mat, Grace’s life is just as intentional. She bakes cookies, pies, breads, and cakes to cater local events—and uses that talent to serve a deeper purpose. One of her regular clients is a local judge who runs a program to help military members transition to civilian life. Grace bakes for their graduation ceremonies and was even honored at one event for her contributions.

“Baking is personal,” she said. “It’s a way I can show appreciation and offer comfort. It’s about connection, respect, and giving back to those who’ve given so much.”

That balance between athletic excellence and personal fulfillment is something Grace works hard to maintain. “Wrestling takes a lot of time and energy, but I know I can’t let it be the only thing that defines me,” she said. “My relationship with the Lord, family, friends, and school matter too.”

Through it all Grace points to her support system for helping her reach her goals. “I’m incredibly thankful for the coaches who have guided me throughout my wrestling journey—Coach Josh Brining, Coach Donny Whitted, and Coach Enrique Menendez. Each of them has played a key role in pushing me through different stages of my career, helping me grow both on and off the mat.”



“I’m also deeply grateful for my parents and siblings. They’ve been there through every high and low, cheering me on in both my victories and my setbacks. Their unwavering support means the world to me.”

Now, with one season left, Grace is going all in. Her goal is to improve 1% every day, reach 100 career falls, and secure a full academic and athletic scholarship. But more than anything, she wants to elevate the team around her.

Her journey—from watching her brother wrestle to becoming a leader in one of Texas’ most storied programs—is marked by grit, gratitude, and grace.

“I’ve seen how much one person’s example can impact an entire team,” she said. “I just want to be that example for the next girl who’s watching—just like I once was.”