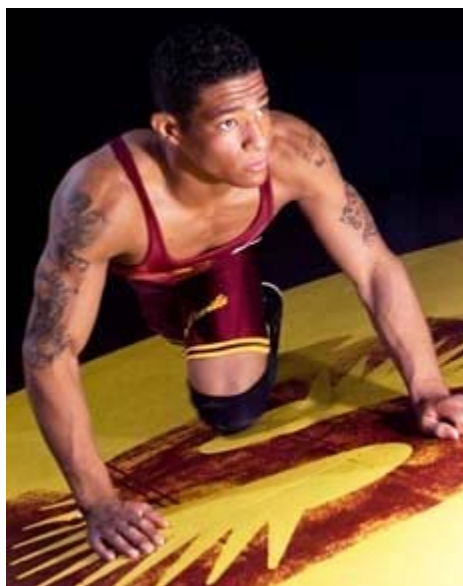


Anthony Robles, Arizona State University  
March 27<sup>th</sup> Speech and Clinic  
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Shawn Charles had heard about the legendary work ethic of Arizona State's Anthony Robles. He heard about the kid who could cover a mile in just eight minutes – on crutches. And about the kid who walked across the wrestling room on his hands. And the kid who – never, under any circumstances – took a shortcut. But when the first-year Arizona State coach saw first-hand just how hard Robles worked, Charles was blown away. "It's pretty amazing, the things he can do," Charles said. "We run stadium stairs and he goes right up them with everybody else on the team. Whatever we are doing, he is right there doing. "He never asks for a pass – on anything." That's one of the big reasons why Robles, who was born without a right leg, is one of the top contenders to win a stacked 125-pound weight class this season. The junior from Mesa, Arizona, is ranked third nationally and has compiled a 24-2 record this season after placing fourth in the NCAA tournament as a sophomore. Robles became a fan favorite at the NAAs the past two seasons. He drew a standing ovation for his performance last season. "It was awesome, hearing people cheer me on," he said. "It was a great experience. I put my heart into my matches, and I think the fans knew I tried my best. I want to thank them for their support. Hopefully, a lot of people will be cheering me on again this year." Robles' amazing story continues to gain nationwide acclaim. ESPN cameras followed him throughout the NCAA tournament in 2009, and SportsCenter ran daily segments on how Robles was doing in the tournament. Cameras followed seemingly his every move as Robles made his way around the arena on crutches before and after his matches. "It was a great experience for me, but it was a little stressful at times," he said. "They wanted to interview me when I was warming up before my matches. And they wanted to interview me right after I came off the mat after I lost in

the semifinals. But it was good exposure for wrestling, and I will do whatever I can to help the sport. It's an honor to get that kind of attention." Robles lost to Indiana's Angel Escobedo, the 2008 NCAA champion, 4-2 earlier this season in the finals of the Cliff Keen Las Vegas Invitational. Robles also lost a close match to Escobedo in the 2008 NCAA tournament. "He's a tough wrestler," Robles said. "I have a few things to work on before I wrestle him again. Hopefully, it will be a different story at nationals." In addition to Escobedo, 2009 NCAA champion Troy Nickerson of Cornell is in the strong 125 class. Iowa freshman Matt McDonough is another top contender. McDonough is unbeaten at 125. "It's a very strong weight class," Robles said. "But everybody is tough when you get to nationals. You need to be ready to scrap." Barrel-chested with Popeye-sized forearms, Robles is much stronger than the other wrestlers in the 125 class. He has the upper body of a 165-pounder, but is able to wrestle 125 since he is missing a leg. He said his natural weight typically stays between 125 and 130. He is lethal in the top position and piles up points rapidly by turning opponents to their backs. He also is difficult to take down as he wrestles down on one knee in a stance that is low to the ground. "My opponents have tried a lot of different strategies against me," he said. "I just try to stay focused and wrestle the style that works for me." Robles fell short of placing at NAAs as a freshman before taking fourth in the NCAA Championships last season in St. Louis. "Anthony definitely has the drive, ability and work ethic to be a national champion," Charles said. "If he gets in a groove, he can win a national title." Robles continues to excel in the classroom at ASU. "School is going well," he said. "I had a 3.0 grade-point average last semester and I'm trying for a 4.0 this semester." Charles said Robles could be a force on the international level in freestyle wrestling. "He has great leg attacks and he's tough to score on," Charles said. "And he's very tough on top. The sky's the limit for him in freestyle. He's a pretty amazing individual. I think he can do anything he sets his mind to in this sport." Robles' achievements have caught the attention of U.S. National Freestyle Coach Zeke Jones, an Arizona State alumnus. "Anthony has done a super job of creating a wrestling style that suits his physical attributes," Jones said. "His ability to attack the legs, defend his leg and the run behind, hit a great sit out from bottom, and dominate wrestlers from the top position has been impressive. But probably the most important attribute has been his character and leadership in a Sun Devil singlet. He's a bright and humble young man, and I look forward to him trying out for the United States Wrestling Team." Even with all the attention he receives, Robles manages to stay humble. "Anthony's a great role model and such a great person," Charles said. "He signs autographs, and handles himself really well. He's overcome his share of obstacles, and deals with everything very well. It's hard for anyone else around him to complain when you see how hard he works and what a great attitude he has." Robles fell one win short of the NCAA finals last season. "I'm excited to get back to the big show," he said. "It's great wrestling in a big event like that with the crowds and the atmosphere. I have no regrets from last year. I tried my best and I gave it all I had. I came up a little short, but I was an All-American for the first time. "My goal when I came to Arizona State was to be a national champion. I'm going to work as hard as I can, and hopefully I can make it to the top."