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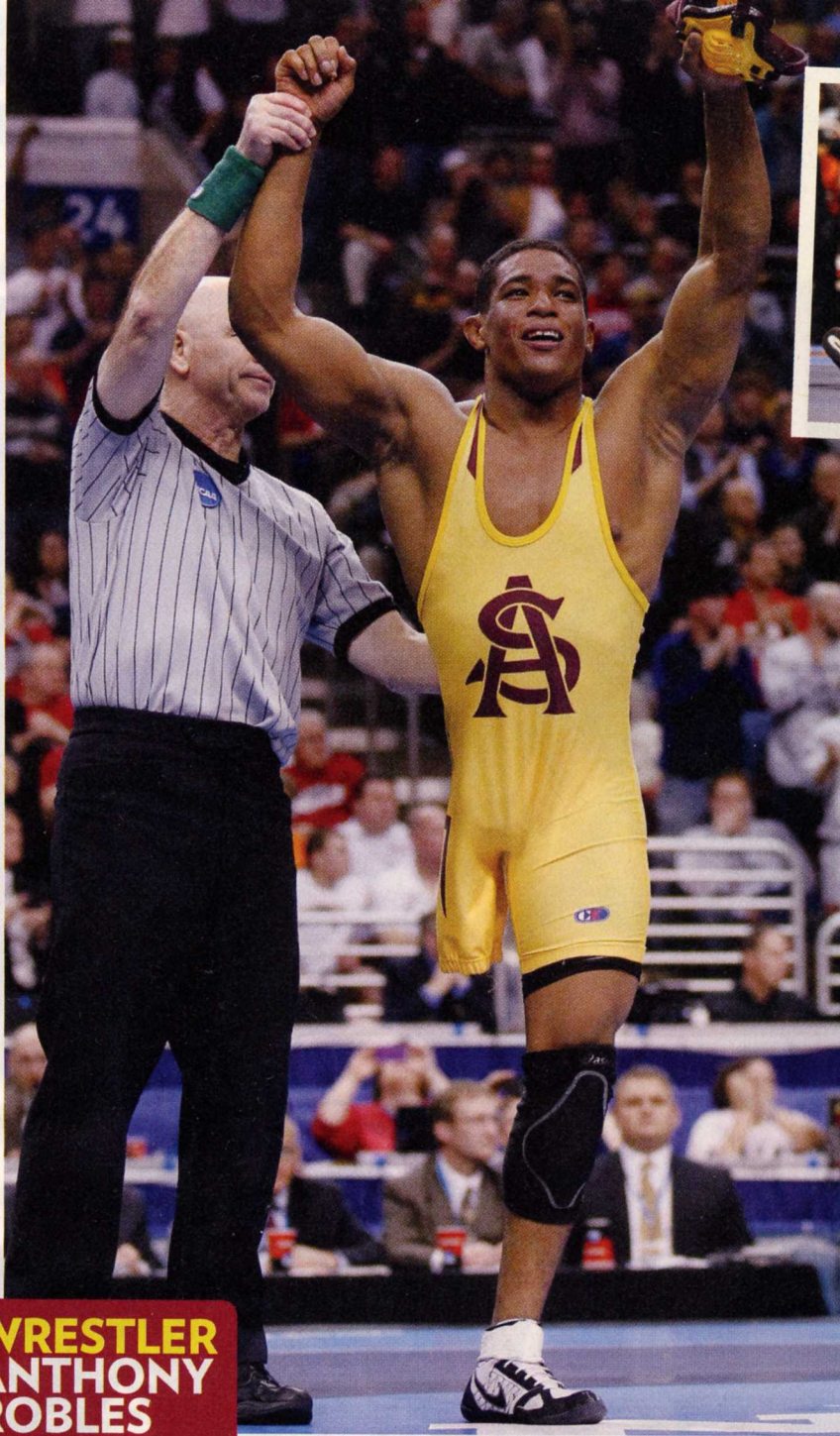
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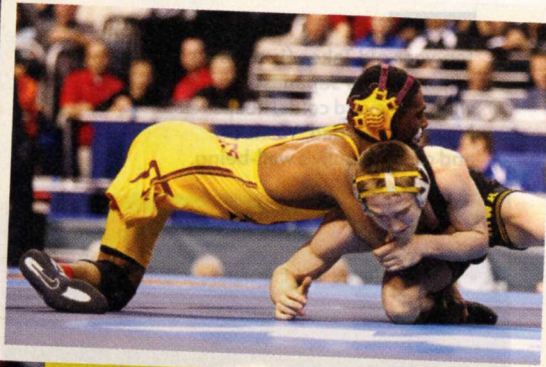
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**WRESTLER
ANTHONY
ROBLES**

AGAINST *the* ODDS

Despite being born without his right leg, the Arizona State University senior takes home a national title



"It's harder to balance," says coach Shawn Charles of Robles (in the March 19 title match). "But he's very strong for his size."

When he first started wrestling as a high school freshman, Anthony Robles wasn't exactly a force to be reckoned with. Born without his right leg and weighing just 90 lbs., "He lost almost every match the first two years," says his mom, Judy. "Nobody took him seriously." Now Robles has proven those naysayers wrong: The Arizona State University senior, now 125 lbs., boasted an undefeated 36-0 record this season, and on March 19 he took down his opponent with his astonishing upper-body strength—he can bench-press 305 lbs.—to win an NCAA championship title. "I'm so excited and relieved and proud," says Robles, 22. "I put a lot of pressure on myself to win this."

His determination to not be held back by his handicap was evident early on, when he ditched his prosthetic leg at age 5. ("It just slowed me down," he explains.) Nowadays he's gotten so fast on the crutches he uses to get around that he can complete an 8-minute mile. But it was in wrestling that he found his groove. "You didn't have to be the biggest or tallest guy out there," he says. "It was the one sport I could find a style that worked for me." Yet after he graduates with a business communications degree in May, Robles plans on trading the mat for the mic to become a motivational speaker. "My message," he says, "will be no matter your circumstances, you can be unstoppable."

By Liza Hamm