

SIUE gets national attention for its 2018 wrestling recruiting class

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EDWARDSVILLE – Two national wrestling publications have listed SIUE as having one of the top 2018 recruiting classes.

Both Intermat and Flowrestling ranked SIUE in the top 25 nationally.

SIUE wrestling Head Coach Jeremy Spates announced eight more standouts to the 2018 recruiting class. Austin Andres (Wichita, Kansas), Nick Bleise (Brighton, Michigan) , Aric Bohn (Eagle, Wisconsin), Coleman Brainard (Rolla, Missouri), Colton McKiernan (Richmond, Michigan) Honor Nguyen (Geneva, Illinois), Sergio Villalobos

(Woodridge, Illinois) and Ryan Yarnell (Imperial, Missouri) join the Cougar family this fall.

"We are very excited about the national rankings and our incoming class," said Spates. "We believe we have added a number of wrestlers who will help us compete in the Mid-American Conference and also on a national level."

Andres set the Goddard High School record for career victories with 161.

The projected 184-pounder won the Kansas state championship at 182 pounds his senior season after placing third in 2017, fourth in 2016 and fifth in 2015. He also was named to the Senior Honorable Academic Team in 2018.

Andres was a four-time member of the Freestyle/Greco National Team for Team Kansas.

The son of Kim and Ashtin Andres, he intends to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering.

Bleise took third place in the 152-pound class at the Michigan state championships. He took seventh his junior season. He is the son of Carl and Kathleen Bleise.

Bohn was ranked 18th nationally after winning the 2017 Wisconsin state championship in the 220-pound weight class. He also won the state title his junior year. He is the son of David and Marry Bohn.

Brainard was a four-time state place winner at Rolla High School. He culminated his prep career with a second-place finish at the state championships his senior season after placing sixth in 2017, third in 2016 and second in 2015.

A projected 141-pounder, Brainard set the school record for career wins at Rolla.

McKiernen is a projected 285-pounder for the Cougars and was runner-up in the 189-pound MHSAA Division 3 individual wrestling championship. He placed all four years at state during his prep career, finishing second during his junior season, third his sophomore season and eighth his freshmen season.

McKiernen is the younger brother of current SIUE wrestler Jake McKiernen and the son of Lynn and Bonnie McKiernen.

Nguyen wrestled 132 pounds and was a standout at Geneva High School. He competed for Coach Tom Chernich, who wrestled at SIUE from 1991 to 1994. He is the son of Katie Nguyen.

Villalobos was a two-sport All-State competitor in wrestling and football for Downers Grove South High School.

The 2018 state runner-up at 195 pounds, Villalobos also placed third in his weight class at the state championships. He set school records for wins and falls at Downers Grove South.

Villalobos also was named All-State as a nose guard in football his senior season.

The son of Sergio and Hilda Villalobos, he intends to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering.

Yarnell went undefeated at 53-0 and won a Missouri state championship his senior season at Windsor High School.

The career wins leader at Windsor with 164, Yarnell also placed third at the state championships. A projected 184-pounder, he competed three seasons with the Thoroughbred Wrestling Academy and seven years with Eierman Elite Wrestling.

The son of John and Stacie Yarnell, he intends to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering.

These four join the group, which were announced last fall: Saul Ervin (Morganfield, Kentucky), Austin Macias (Burlington, Illinois), Justin Ruffin (McDonough, Georgia) and Aaron Schulist (Eagle, Wisconsin).

Ruffin was ranked 25th and Schulist 90th nationally at any weight class, according to national recruiting rankings.

"Not only is this group great wrestlers, they are great young men as well," Spates added. "It's going to be fun working with them for the next few years."