

Tigers' Amari Brooks Signs With Brown, Has High Expectations for Track and Field Season

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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EDWARDSVILLE – Edwardsville High track shot putter and discus thrower Amari Brooks is ready for the next level and will be attending one of the nation's top universities.

Brooks signed a letter of intent to attend Brown University in Providence, R.I., in a ceremony held Thursday evening at Edwardsville High, where he'll be a thrower for the Bears in the prestigious Ivy League.

Brooks is ready for the challenges ahead, both as a student and an athlete, and felt that Brown offered the best of both worlds.

"I'm really excited about it, because it's kind of like, especially like as a student-athlete, I've learned that I need to have that balance of both athletics to help me kind of like maintain school," Brooks said in an interview following the ceremony, "because I feel like, sometimes, school gets really, really stressful, so like having that perfect balance is really good. So I think that Brown is going to give me that opportunity that I want to have both the fun of competing as an athlete and getting a world-class education and, like, doing something really good with my life."

Brooks plans on majoring in biology at Brown, with his sights set on being a cardiothoracic surgeon in his future. He made his decision to attend Brown right before the application deadline.

"That was actually a really stressful process," Brooks said. "It was actually a week before the application deadline. I was debating between Brown and Cornell, and like, it was just really hard."

Brooks also considered New York University and Williams College besides Cornell before deciding on Brown. Brooks like the atmosphere on the campus in one of the major factors in making his decision.

"I just liked the atmosphere," Brooks said. "It was really like mellow, it was, like, less competitive. Cornell's definitely a really good school, and I loved it there, and they were like amazing. But I like the atmosphere at Brown. It was just really inviting, really comforting, and somewhere that I really wanted to be at for the next four years."

Brooks also was attracted to the throwing program on the track and field team for the Bears.

"I heard that they have a really, really good program," Brooks said. "Plus, like, their throwers up there, they get a lot of recruits, some of them from around the world. If I'm not mistaken, he said there's this one girl from Singapore. So they get world-class athletes, and like you get the best training there. So they'll give me exactly what I need as an athlete."

Besides the shot put and discus throw, Bears throwing coach Craig Kinsley is encouraging Brooks to try both the hammer and weight throws. Brooks has had some success in the hammer throw in the past.

“I did the hammer throw, and I actually did qualify for the Junior Olympics for it,” Brooks said with a smile and laugh. “But I just didn’t compete in it, because I just wasn’t as prepared then, but I’m definitely going to be practicing it this summer, working on technique and stuff so I’m not going there looking like complete, like a hot mess,” he also said with to the laughs of himself and his family.

Brooks qualified for the IHSA Class 3A state meet as a junior, winning a medal, and is looking forward to his senior season.

“Last year went pretty well,” Brooks said, “and I established a better bond with my team last year, just didn’t collect the throws somewhat. But this year, I’m definitely looking to see some big numbers, like I want to throw 62 this year (in the shot), and in the discus, I want to throw 180, 181.”

Brooks is planning on winning those events, and despite being 5’ 11” and 230 pounds, he relies on his technique to do well in both the throwing events.

“I just like really having to perfect my technique,” Brooks said, “because that’s really what I have, and that’s what I can control. And also my strength, so I’m always like in the gym or I’m just working on my technique 24/7, because those are the two things I can control.”

[Colin Feeney also contributed to this story.](#)