

East Alton-Wood River Shot Put And Discus Thrower Jayden Ulrich Signs With Indiana University

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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WOOD RIVER - East Alton Wood River's Jayden Ulrich has done big things at East Alton-Wood River the past three seasons. Ulrich throws shot put and discus for the Oilers.

Now, Ulrich will get a chance to show off her talents at the next level, signing a letter of intent to attend Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, in a ceremony at EAWR Wednesday afternoon.

Indiana University is a Division I college and is in the Big Ten Conference. Last year, the Lady Hoosiers placed fourth in the Big Ten Conference Track and Field Championship. The Lady Hoosiers are coached by Ron Helmer.

Helmer has had 46 Big Ten individual champions. Helmer enters his 13th season as the men's and women's track and field coach.

Shot put and discus have been a big part of Ulrich's life. Ulrich captured an Illinois Elementary School Association state title in the shot put as an eighth-grader at East

Alton Middle School in 2017. Ulrich became East Alton's Middle School's first state track champion after winning the shot put in 36 feet, 10.75 inches at the state meet in East Peoria.

As a freshman with the Oilers Ulrich became the first Oiler female track athlete to medal at the state meet when she finished fourth in the shot put with a toss of 41-4.75.

As a sophomore, she captured a first-place finish at the Illinois State Track Meet in Charleston in shot put and she placed second in the discus. She threw 46 feet, 9.5 inches to win the championship in shot put. In the discus, she threw 139-11 to place second.

As a junior Ulrich's track and field season was canceled due to COVID-19. Since the winter sports are on pause for the 2020 season there is an uncertainty that when spring comes if track and field will get the go-ahead. Ulrich is hoping for a senior season so she can make it back to the state and finish a few more goals she has.

Ulrich also went to the New Balance Outdoor National meet in 2019 in Greensboro North Carolina and placed fifth and earned an All-American. Ulrich also has traveled to other out of state meets during her career.

"Leading to my college pick there was tons of research that went into my pick, I did virtual tours since I couldn't do in-person tours due to COVID-19. I am ready for this season I still have big numbers I need to get. I want to thank my high school and middle school coaches for pushing me to reach my goals. I also want to thank my mom, aunt, and grandma for always going to my meets and pushing me to do my best," Ulrich said.

"This has been an incredible journey here. Ulrich has been great to work with. She has worked harder than any kid I have ever coached. We have also had many laughs throughout this journey," EAWR Track and Field coach Russ Colona said.

