

Scott Wins IWCOA Freshman-Sophomore State 120-Pound Wrestling Title, Is Stillwater Senior Living Male Athlete Of The Month For Warriors

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GRANITE CITY - It's been many years since Granite City High's wrestling program has produced an IHSA state champion, and it has been since 1965 when the Warriors were team co-champions. In 2022, Granite's wrestling program had an individual champion in Caleb Scott, who won the Illinois Wrestling Coaches and Officials Association state title in the organization's freshman-sophomore state tournament, held at Bank of Springfield Center in Springfield on March 12-13.

Scott had a record of 18-1 before suffering an upper-body injury just before Christmas, which kept him out of the lineup the rest of the year, coming back at the start of the IHSA tournament series, but was unable to compete. It makes the IWCOA title even more sweeter.

For his efforts on the mat this season, Scott has been named the Stillwater Senior Living Male Athlete of the Month for Granite City High School.

Scott, who wrestled for head coach John Venne, was very excited to have won the IWCOA championship for the Warriors.

"I love it," Scott said in a recent interview. "I've trained my whole life for this."

Although he didn't get to compete in the IHSA series, Scott's just as happy to have won the IWCOA championship as well, overcoming many obstacles to win

"It is what it is," Scott said. "I just had to get past that, go out and compete."

And that he did, winning the regional at Belleville Althoff Catholic, the sectional at Granite City and the state meet, where over 200 schools from across the state came to wrestle. Being a champion is something that Scott is very thrilled with.

"I really wanted to compete at the next level," Scott said. "Obviously, I'm happy and I love it. It's a great feeling to be sure."

Scott's father, Jeff, is also very proud of his son for his title.

"Definitely," Jeff Scott said. "I'm very proud of him. He's worked awfully hard, he's been wrestling he's been six years old, he took first in the regionals, sectionals, and state."

Jeff Scott also praised the IWCOA on their organization of the state finals and how things operated that weekend, looking back on how the organization ran the unofficial 2021 state tournament series after the IHSA canceled their series because of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

"They did a really good job during the tournament," Jeff Scott said. "They (the IWCOA) ran the whole tournament last year when the IHSA canceled their tournament because of COVID and they did a great job with it as well. It was a great tournament, and Caleb made it as a freshman to the state tournament as well."

The upper-body injury definitely put a hamper on Caleb Scott's season and he worked hard to rehabilitate and strengthen the area which was injured, allowing him to come back and take the title in what was essentially an all-comers tournament, with schools from all three of Illinois' wrestling classes competing as one. If he couldn't compete in the IHSA series, winning the IWCOA championship was as great a feeling.

"It was," Jeff Scott said. "He was really disappointed not being able to finish the season out, so this was the next best thing."

For Caleb's part, he agreed that winning the 120-pound title was very important in what turned out to be a big weekend for him.

"It's definitely a big thing," Caleb Scott said. "There were 208 teams in our division. It was my favorite tournament of the year."

Among all of the high school sports offered across the country, wrestling is by far sport in its purest form: a one-on-one competition where the wrestlers put it all on the line to win.

"You can't put your mistakes onto anyone else," Caleb Scott said. "It's up to you to put in the work."

Caleb is looking forward to wrestling in his final two years for the Warriors and compete in the IHSA state series, and plans on continuing wrestling in college. He carries a 5.0 grade-point average on the Granite City scale and plans on wrestling in college.

"I'm planning on attending a college for wrestling," Caleb said, adding that he hasn't yet decided on a school, but does have one in mind he'd like to go to.

"My favorite school is Penn State," Caleb said. "The Big Ten is definitely my goal."

In addition, Caleb is also planning on competing more in national tournaments. He and his family had just returned from a national high school tournament in Virginia Beach, Va., the biggest of its kind in the nation, going 5-3 in the tournament, with his losses coming to the state champions from New York, Florida, and Indiana.

As for the immediate future, Caleb is looking ahead to his junior season and competing in the IHSA series, and will be competing in larger weight classes as he continues to grow and strengthen himself.

"We just want to see what happens next year," Jeff Scott said, "as he gets stronger, bigger and as he's growing. He's only a sophomore, so there's plenty of room to grow."

As for past high school and college, Caleb would like to have the chance to compete in and represent the United States in the Olympics for wrestling.

"I haven't really looked that far yet," Caleb said, "but I would definitely love to represent the country. It definitely is a huge deal."