

Jorden Johnson Signs To Wrestle For SIUE, Cites Support Group Among Family, Coaches, Friends As Reasons For Signing

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July 10 2022 8:00 PM



EDWARDSVILLE - Jorden Johnson, who wrestled this past season for Edwardsville High School, has signed a letter of intent to wrestle for SIU-Edwardsville in a ceremony held at the school.

Johnson, who wrestled only one season for the Tigers, will bring a solid work ethic to the Cougars, and cited a vast support group for his reason for staying home and wrestling for SIUE.

"I think just the support group around, staying home," Johnson said during a post-ceremony interview. "We've got parents, we've got coaches, just the support here. The coaching staff, new coaches coming in, Daryl Thomas. You have coach (Jeremy) Spates there, you just have a good group of individuals at SIUE."

The Cougars do have a strong wrestling tradition going back many years, and compete in the Mid-American Conference, along with Central Michigan, Western Michigan, Northern Illinois, Ohio and Kent State, among other schools. The MAC has very good wrestling competition and Johnson is looking forward to competing next year.

"Yes, yes, I'm ready," Johnson said.

Johnson also considered Wisconsin-Parkside in Kenosha, Wisc., among others, but in the end, SIUE stood out among the other schools.

"It was a select few," Johnson said, "but SIUE just ended up being the best."

Johnson plans on majoring in nursing, but isn't sure which branch he'll concentrate on after graduation.

"I don't know for sure, yet," Johnson said, "but I know I want to get my BSN, that's for sure. But we'll see as we go along the way."

Johnson will bring a deep love for wrestling and a solid work ethic to the Cougars.

"I bring just a love for the sport," Johnson said. "I started the sport a little late, so I just think I bring the love for it, the passion, just the drive to get my teammates better and get everybody to wrestle around me better. I'm able to soak up information from my coaches and teammates, so I think I just bring a good athlete and a scholar at the same time."

Johnson described his senior season for the Tigers as a breakout season for him.

"I describe my season as it didn't end the way I wanted it to," Johnson said, "but it was kind of like my breakout season. I'm happy with my performance and everything happens for a reason. I felt like I got better from the start of the season until the end of the season, so I think it went well."

Johnson was late coming into wrestling and has much potential to do well at the next level.

"Jorden is kind of a late bloomer," said Edwardsville head wrestling coach Jon Wagner, "he started the sport a little late. He's going to be wrestling at SIUE, be given an opportunity to wrestle under Daryl Thomas, one of our other coaches along with Jeremy Spates and he's got great coaches there, too. He's going to continue to get better and better."

Wagner feels Johnson will be a major contributor to the Cougars.

"Well, he's strong, fast and physical," Wagner said. "Like I said, he's a sponge with the technique, he likes to learn techniques, so he's going to continue to learn from great coaches at SIUE, he's going to continue to get better, that's a guarantee."

Wagner also agreed that Johnson wrestling in the MAC will be a good thing for him as well.

"Right now, he's going to continue to develop there," Wagner said, "in a good conference. Like I said, SIU has, being in that good conference, along with having great coaches."

Johnson's favorite memory of wrestling for the Tigers was the long bus trips with the team, being able to bond with his teammates.

"Just the bus rides with the team," Johnson said, "a couple of hours away, we had to go wrestle. So I think the bus rides are the most memorable thing. Just the memories I made with my teammates and the coaches."

Johnson is looking forward to wrestle for the hometown team in college next season and thanked his family and friends for their support.

"I just want to thank all my support system," Johnson said. "I want to thank my uncle, my mom, my sisters, just my whole family and I want to thank my coaches, for sure. They've been there for me since the start. I want to thank my friends, just want to thank everybody that's been there for me. Just everybody," he said with a smile.

