

Knox signs to wrestle at Kansas Wesleyan



Louisburg High School graduate Zach Knox (middle) signed his letter of intent on June 30 to wrestle at Kansas Wesleyan University. Sitting next to Zach is LHS head coach Bobby Bovaird (left) and Zach's mother, Shani Knox. Standing is Kansas Wesleyan head coach Jimmy May.

Zach Knox used hard work and relentlessness to propel him from the best junior varsity wrestler to team captain during his four years with the Louisburg High School wrestling program.

Knox plans on using those same two tools to further his wrestling and academic careers.

The 2015 LHS graduate signed his letter of intent on June 30 to wrestle at Kansas Wesleyan University, an NAIA school out of Salina. Knox signed his letter in front of his mother, Shani Knox, teammates, his high school coach Bobby Bovaird and new college coach Jimmy May.

"I am just very excited to have this opportunity," Knox said. "It was back and forth for me at first. I felt like wrestling in college, but at the same time I knew cutting weight all the time would take a lot out of me. In the final decision, I felt wrestling in college would be the best opportunity for me, not

only in wrestling, but with my studies and staying on course to what I want to be.”

Knox finished his Wildcat career with a 75-58 record and wrestled on the varsity level his final two seasons after being named the Louisburg JV Wrestler of the Year in 2012 and then earned the Workhorse Award in 2013 in his first year on varsity.

He finished with a 21-14 record his senior season and did work in the classroom as well. He was named to the honorable mention all-academic team by the Kansas Wrestling Coaches Association.

“From the very first time I stepped into the Louisburg High School practice room as a coach, he was there,” Bovaird said. “He started wrestling as a freshman and he was the only person in the class of 2015 that wrestled all four years for me. I am really excited for him to be able to move on to the next level.”

Knox will join a Kansas Wesleyan program that is in its infant stages. It is a new program that is led by coach May and won't begin actual competition until the 2016-17 season.

The year of practice time will allow Knox to work on his conditioning and get used to going up against other collegiate athletes before Kansas Wesleyan's first season. Joining a new program also reminds Knox of something close to home.

“It does bring some excitement to say I will be a part of the original wrestling program down there and it will seem a little bit like Louisburg when I first started with the program,” Knox said. “When coach Bovaird showed up, the program was kind of down but showed signs of coming back alive. I want to be a part of great college wrestling program too.

“The campus when I first got there was amazing. It is a small

school, but the atmosphere was great and it just seemed like the right fit for me. I am very excited to work with coach May. He has been through a lot of kids and I know he will coach me the way that needs to be coached and make me a better human being.”

Kansas Wesleyan isn't the first program May has started. He was first wrestling head coach at Baker University and helped build the program into a national power. In just his third year at Baker, May led the Wildcats to a No. 9 spot in the national rankings and had four all-Americans.

Although May is excited to have Knox on board, the Kansas Wesleyan coach knows wrestling is just a stepping stone to a brighter future.

“I coached high school wrestling for 32 years and it was the best years of my life,” May said. “I was able to reach out to young men and become an influence in their lives. Now I am doing it at a little different level, but it is still the same thing and I look forward to working with Zach.

“I would like to congratulate Zach on what he has accomplished. One of the landmarks in life is graduating high school and the next one to graduate college. That is my No. 1 goal, which is to get him through school. If there is nothing else that happens in his life, whether it is related to wrestling or anything else, getting that degree is the most important thing.”