

# Hupp earns spot on Oklahoma State football team



After months of training, Luke Hupp, a Louisburg High School graduate, earned a walk-on spot on the Oklahoma State football team last August. Hupp, who will redshirt this season, will lineup as a 'Cowboy Back' which is hybrid position of a fullback and tight end.

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Luke Hupp made quite the jump in the football world in the last year, and did all of it without playing a single snap.

Hupp, a 2014 Louisburg High School graduate, went from intending to play football at Fort Scott Community College to finding himself on the campus of a Division I program in a matter of months. It turned out to be quite the journey for Hupp as he transformed himself to compete at the highest level.

He saw his hard work pay off when he was told in August that he was invited to walk-on to the Oklahoma State football program and officially became a member of the Cowboys.

"I just realize how blessed I am to have this opportunity," Hupp said. "A lot of kids, especially from small towns like Louisburg, don't get to experience what this is like and play at this level. I am not where I want to be yet, though. I want

to eventually get on the field.”

Hupp’s road to Oklahoma State started in Fort Scott, where he originally signed to play football out of high school. However, when Hupp arrived, he was having second thoughts and wondered about giving up football entirely.

“When I left there I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do,” Hupp said. “I just wanted to take some time to think about things. Football is one of the things I truly did love and sometimes it takes you awhile to realize that.”

His love definitely came back to him, but Hupp had to work for it.

When he realized he wanted to play football again, Hupp went to train at Simoneau Sports Performance in Overland Park, a training facility that is run by the former Kansas State linebacker Mark Simoneau.

For the next seven months, Hupp made the trek almost every day to train and get in better shape. While he was there, he would train alongside NFL players like Andy Studebaker, Chase Coffman and Ryan Mueller.

“It was great training against those guys because I would just push myself to try and keep up with them because I knew I would be facing that type of competition at Oklahoma State,” Hupp said. “They gave me a little bit of advice on what to expect, but just training with him helped me out a great deal.”

At the same time, he was checking out possible programs to walk-on to and Hupp had family in the Stillwater, Okla., area.

He contacted the Oklahoma State coaches and sent them film but never heard anything back. Hupp sent them another email, and again, nothing.

That didn’t stop him.

"I think I probably emailed their recruiting coordinator every day," Hupp said. "I know they probably gets lots of email from kids with film so they have to pick out who they pay attention to, but I wanted them to know that I was going to school here and that I was serious. This was something that I really wanted."

Hupp's persistence paid off as he was one of 110 players that were invited to the walk-on tryouts. The coaches recorded his 40 time, bench press numbers and also did some route running drills among other things.



**Hupp was welcomed to the Oklahoma State football team and given his own locker for earning a walk-on spot.**

Based on the sheer number of participants, the odds were stacked against Hupp. Then a few days later, he received a phone call.

Hupp got the news he was waiting for as he was officially a member of the Oklahoma State team. He was one of just seven players to earn walk-on spots.

"I was just very excited to get the call," Hupp said. "I was beyond thrilled. But after I hung up the phone, it was strictly business right after that. I didn't want to celebrate too much because this was just one step on where I want to go, and that is on the field. Honestly, the whole time I was thinking that I had no other option but to make the team."

The joy of making the team was quickly doused when he went to his first college football practice against some of the top players in the Big 12 Conference and the nation.

"I hadn't put on the pads since I left high school probably," Hupp said. "Then when I get there, it is an eye-opening experience. The hardest hit I ever got in football in high school – that is what it is like every time they hit you in college, if not harder."

As for his spot on the field, the Cowboys have slotted Hupp as a "Cowboy back" which is a hybrid fullback and tight end in their offense. He is one of nine players on the roster at that position.

The coaches also told Hupp that he will redshirt this year to help him get acclimated to Division I football.

"I just need to keep working hard and getting stronger," Hupp said. "It is very hard to be a college football player because you are either in class, practice or in the weight room. There isn't much time for anything else. I just love it down here. The atmosphere around the program is great and they are excited for football."

"I am in it for the long run. I put in a lot of hard work to get to this point and I want to keep going and eventually see the field one day. I have been given a good opportunity, and I am not going to give this up."