

# Collins excited to join Benedictine wrestling program



***Louisburg's J'Lee Collins is ready to make new strides with the Benedictine College wrestling program.***

As a freshman in high school, J'Lee Collins started to grow to fond of the sport of wrestling, but it certainly started out as a rocky relationship.

Collins missed his freshman season due to a knee injury, but for the next three years he got all he could out of the sport.

The hard work and determination on the mat earned him a spot on a college roster. Collins signed with Benedictine College earlier this year and will join the Raven wrestling program.

“I have wanted to wrestle in college since my freshman year of high school, although I never thought it would happen,” Collins said. “To make it official in front of my friends and family was very exciting. It almost felt like I was proving myself to be an athlete who was capable at competing and the next level.”

Collins, who was a state qualifier this past season, was offered a spot with the Benedictine program and the school just seemed to fit not only what he wanted athletically – but academically as well.

“Benedictine just seemed like a very nice school,” Collins said. The team seemed to be like a family and everyone I talked to was a good person. One of the key factors besides the people for me was the campus. I absolutely love the campus and how it is so scenic.”



**Louisburg's J'Lee Collins signed his letter of intent to join the Benedictine College wrestling program. Seated next to**

***J'Lee are his parents Justin and Missy Collins. Standing (from left) is Louisburg wrestling head coach Bobby Bovaird, J'Lee's siblings Jacinda, Justin and Maliya Collins, along with Louisburg assistants Shane Miller and Shawn Crossley.***

As for what he hopes to achieve when he arrives at Benedictine, he knows he will have to work hard – just like he did almost four years ago as a freshman in high school.

“The coaches at Benedictine are kind and funny people,” Collins said. “I’ve spent a lot of my summer getting to know coach (Gregory) Barner and many of my upperclassmen. They were all very nice to me and seemed to be going the extra mile. I see myself wrestling JV or unattached this season, although if I have to redshirt I wouldn’t be upset because I could build my skill and be a better wrestler for the following season.”

Collins had a special senior season that ended with a berth in his first state tournament. He finished his Wildcat career with 60 wins.

He also is No. 4 in program history with 148 career takedowns, No. 13 with career nearfall-3 (29), No. 11 in career nearfall-2 (23), No. 12 with career reversals (40), No. 10 with career match points (561), No. 3 with season takedowns (69), and No. 10 with season match points (243). He led the team this year with the most tech falls (1) and the most decisions (5).

“My time with the Louisburg wrestling team was amazing,” Collins said. “I will definitely miss the coaches and teammates. Throughout my three years of wrestling in high school, and two years in middle school, I began to love the sport. It eventually became my favorite and I decided to walk away from track and football to practice my wrestling and help me become a better wrestler. Louisburg definitely helped build my love for the sport.”