

The Path of a Wrestler

The making of a varsity athlete one season at a time

From the moment **Aiden Herbst '26** first stepped on the wrestling mat as a preschooler, he felt instantly at home. From the inspiration he got from his family growing up, he knew early on that wrestling was his sport.

"I grew up watching my older brother compete," Herbst said. "As soon as I was old enough to wrestle myself, I fell in love with the work, the grind, and the challenge."

For years, Herbst's path in wrestling stayed the same, until seventh grade, when he got the opportunity to wrestle on the high school varsity team. Right before the season began, a setback emerged.

"I broke my wrist in football right before what would have been my first varsity wrestling season, but I didn't let that stop me," Herbst said.

With hard work and determination throughout the next few years, Herbst pushed through the obstacles and continued to grow. His perseverance paid off.

"My ninth-grade season ended with a trip to the state tournament and competing at the Xcel Energy Center," Herbst said. "It was an unforgettable experience that fueled my drive even more."

The difficult road continued for Herbst.

"My 10th grade year brought another setback with a Meniscus injury," Herbst said. After months of relearning the rhythm of the sport, Herbst got the opportunity to compete in the section semifinals—falling just short of the win. The experiences grew, and so did his strength as an athlete and person.

Herbst expressed how everything changed for this year.

"This year is different," Herbst said. "This year, I am the hungriest for success that I've ever been. I've never been more focused, committed, or prepared."

To give his last high school season his all, Herbst quit football and is pouring his everything into wrestling.

"I'm ready," Herbst said. "More ready than I've ever been."

Story by Addilyn Gerads & Parker Youngquist

Aiden Herbst '26 drives forward and lifts his opponent off the mat.

Photo by Braxton Tecshendorf

Carter Peters '29

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Lucas Potter '27

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Charlie Knese '26

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Career Wins

How FAR I'll GO

All season long, every match, practice and sacrifice all went to the same goal of getting to Fargo for **Gabriel Roehl '27** and **Courtney Kotish '27**. Both of the wrestlers pushed through setbacks and exhaustion; they knew that every move mattered. By the end of their sophomore season, their dedication paid off with a trip to one of the biggest wrestling events in America.

Kotish ended her sophomore season fourth place at sections. After the school season, she took her trip down to Fargo, North Dakota.

"Over the summer I went to nationals in Fargo," Kotish said. "While I was there, I lost by two points to the #3 ranked girl nationally."

Meanwhile, Roehl also earned his spot at Fargo after a hardworking season.

"I went to Fargo for freestyle and Greco," Roehl said. "I went 2-2 for freestyle and 5-2 for greco. This made me two rounds from placing."

Both Kotish and Roehl said how much this helped them grow as athletes.

"It was a very good experience for me as a new wrestler," Kotish said.

"This was really good for me," Roehl said.

Their trips to Fargo started the beginning of their journeys as high level athletes, and gave them a taste of the dedication and the skill required to succeed. Both ended their season looking ahead, determined to build their experiences and come back stronger next season.

Story by Addilyn Gerads & Parker Youngquist

DIALING IN

"I do a lot of cardio, and I watch what I eat to make sure I'm on weight."

Dylan Keeler '28

"Before every meet, I eat little, get extra workouts in, and mostly drink water."

Maxwell Carter '26

"I make sure that I'm not hungry or thirsty before weigh-ins, so I limit food and drinks just enough to get rid of the feeling of hunger."

Matthew Babatz '27

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