

08/28/2009

Huskie Wrestling Family,

The Huskie wrestlers had a great summer. Here is the recap:

- The Car Wash was a huge success. Thanks to all those who helped support our summer adventures. Special thanks to the [Valentini's](#) who came, once again, and BBQ'ed for the team as they worked diligently to get cars almost clean.
- Seven Huskies attended the U of I camp in Champaign with [Coach Messer](#). [Cameron Harris](#), [Michael Woulfe](#), [Frankie Picchiotti](#), [Chorino Watson](#), [Nate Crain](#), [Colin Rogers](#) and [Nick Ver Halen](#) represented the Huskies well during the competition camp, and gained valuable experience .
- Huskies were instrumental parts of 3 Team Illinois National Champion Dual meet teams. [Sammy Brooks](#) was a key member of the Cadet Greco and Freestyle teams that won the National Championship. Sammy had the key win in the Greco-Roman finals for team Illinois, throwing his opponent with just seconds left in a match for the ages. [Nick Dardanes](#), [Chris Dardanes](#), [Ellis Coleman](#), [Danny Martin](#), and [Benny Brooks](#) were all members of the Junior Greco-Roman team that dominated their way to the national title.
- At the individual nationals (Fargo), the Huskie were well represented as well. The Huskies, no surprise here, had the most participants of any school in the state. Fargo is the pinnacle of high school wrestling. It is where the best go to test their skills, and where those who want to be the best go to see their future. [Cameron Harris](#), [Chris Dardanes](#), [Nick Dardanes](#), [Ellis Coleman](#), [Sammy Brooks](#), [Benny Brooks](#), [Danny Martin](#), and [Eddie Guen-Murray](#) all qualified for Team Illinois and made the trip to Fargo.
 - [Cameron Harris](#) did not win a match in Fargo, but earned a huge amount of experience as he trained with Illinois best through out the camp and got witness how the top guys do things. Cameron was our most dedicated freshman in the off-season. His will be a household name in Illinois wrestling in the years to come. We are very proud of Cameron!
 - [Eddie Guen-Murray](#) won his first national level match in Fargo! The Fargo experience will pay-off for Eddie in the future as well as we expect big things from Eddie in the years to come.
 - [Danny Martin](#) suffered an injury in his first match. Danny is a former Fargo Greco-Roman All-American and was definitely a contender as a repeat as an AA barring injury. While it is not the way Danny wanted to go out, we are proud of Dan and his hard work. For 4 years, Danny was the epitome of the "Life" we ask our Huskie wrestlers to live. His legacy in the program is huge.
 - [Benny Brooks](#) also ran into some bad luck at the tournament. A favorite to All-American (top 8) in Greco-Roman, Benny did not pass through skin check due to a rash. In Freestyle, Benny just missed All-American honors. Benny had a great spring and summer and will be ranked at the top of his weight class preseason.
 - [Ellis Coleman](#) wrestled in just the Greco-Roman tournament. He made the finals for the 3rd year in a row. Ellis won his second National Title, dominating his competition. In 9 matches, Ellis conceded only 2 points and outscored his opponents 121 – 2. The finals match was like man vs. boy as Ellis was on the mat for less than 2 minutes. Ellis graduates as the Huskie first 4 time All-American.
 - [Chris Dardanes](#) wrestled in just the Freestyle tournament, and had a great tournament. Chris beat several nationally ranked guys on his way to a All-American 4th place finish. Chris had a great spring and summer and is among the most highly sought after recruits in the country.

- [Nick Dardanes](#) also wrestled in the Freestyle tournament. Nick earned All-American honors, finishing 2nd. Nick, like his brother, worked tirelessly this spring and summer and was just ranked 2nd in the country at 135 lbs. by Flowrestling.
- [Sammy Brooks](#) also had a great summer. Sammy became the first double Fargo All-American (he earned AA honors in both freestyle and Greco) in the history of our school! Sammy finished 2nd in both styles as just a first year Cadet. Sammy made weight 4 times and wrestled 18 matches in 6 days in Fargo, against the nations top wrestlers. Ridiculous.

[We will be selling bake goods at the Farmers Market next Saturday, September 5th. Our goal is to make enough money to finance a trip to the preseason nationals in Iowa over Halloween weekend. We are in need of Bakers! Anyone interested in helping out with the baking of cookies, brownies, etc. please contact Coach Powell \(\[opwrestling@gmail.com\]\(mailto:opwrestling@gmail.com\) or 773 715 9952\). The Huskie grapplers will reap 100% of the profits from the sale of all baked goods.](#)

Health Update:

First, I would like to thank Colleen Biggins, Lisa Evans, Bill Young, Amy Stanis, Linda Carlson, Margret Collins, and Brendan Lee for putting on such a wonderful and successful fundraiser in early June. Further, thank you to everyone who came out to the fundraiser. The healing power of that kind of love and support is immeasurable. The night of the fundraiser was perhaps the most humbling moment of my life. They raised over \$12,000 for the Myositis Foundation and were able to help me with medicals bills as well. I count myself among the world's luckiest men to have such wonderful and selfless people as colleagues and friends.

I am well on the road to remission. Blood test scores have been low and the doctors are allowing me to work out regularly. It is a delicate and timely process and a nice lesson in patience and persistence. I have gained considerable weight and strength back and have a list of lofty physical goals, including taking Sammy Brooks in a wrestling match by Jan. 30th! I water skied a couple of weeks ago and have been golfing regularly (goal here- shoot 40 at Columbus Country Club by end of fall). The fight is not over, but I'm winning for sure.

From the deepest parts of my shallow being, thank you to everyone who has called, emailed, wrote (Frank "Crazy Legs" Guenther actually hand wrote a letter), created art work, made peace cranes, etc. in support of my battle. While I have not been very good about responding, I listened to every voicemail, and read all correspondence. It has provided me with great strength throughout.

We have big plans for the preseason and lofty goals for the 2009-10 campaign. Plan now to come out and see the defending State Champs in action!

In Relentless Pursuit,
The Huskie Coaching Staff