

From: Rosenthal, Jeremy jr359@indiana.edu
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Contact: Jeremy Rosenthal (jr359@indiana.edu)

Spencer Irick Strives for Excellence on and off the Mat

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. – Growing up, Indiana wrestling student-athlete Spencer Irick would spar with his two brothers. His older brother Matt four years older and younger brother Andrew four years younger.

His father, Ed, an Emergency Room Doctor for nearly 30 years would tend to them when they got hurt.

“I remember I got a gash on my head and he stitched me up,” Spencer said. “I think we have all been stitched up on my kitchen table.”

Irick said he enjoys helping people and as he has grown up that realization has put him on a path to a career in medicine.

“The ultimate thing for me is that I enjoy helping people,” Irick said. “I enjoy doing the most for others. Changing the world. Doing what I can to help people is what I really want to do. I feel like the medical profession will help me do that.”

Irick, a biology major and chemistry minor, excels on and off the mat. The same competitiveness he brings to the mat is what he strives for academically.

“My motivation to succeed academically comes from the goals I set. In wrestling you might set a high goal, to win a NCAA Championship. My ultimate goal, I set it at 4.0. I want to strive to get the most out of my education and learn the most I can so when I need to apply that knowledge I can do it.”

“I like to get the most out of everything I do,” Irick added. “I treat school same way I treat wrestling. Sometimes I need to get in a little extra work because I know that is what others are doing.”

So far, Irick has lived up to his lofty goals academically. This year he was honored with prestigious Jack D. Tichenor Award, which is annually given to IU’s top male and female student-athletes that hold the highest individual cumulative GPA among the entire Department of Athletics.

IU Assistant Director of Academic Services and Certification Angie Krilich serves as the academic advisor for wrestling and has seen first-hand the dedication of Irick.

“Spencer is a phenomenal student,” Krilich said. “He is highly internally motivated to excel at every aspect of his studies. He often spends bus trips studying physics or chemistry when others might be talking or watching a movie.”

Irick draws inspiration and support from his siblings. His older brother Matt was a biology major and a member of the wrestling team and is currently enrolled in medical school.

In high school, Irick took several advanced placement classes and came into Indiana with 21 credits. Irick had already planned to go to IU, in part because of its strong academic reputation.

Irick is able to excel both on and off the mat and he credits IU head coach Angel Escobedo for creating a supportive culture that values a well-rounded student-athlete.

“This new culture that has been developed and is developing is special to be a part of,” Irick said. “Not only is he pushing us to be the best on the mat, he cares about all aspects. He is really good at focusing on our balance and academics.”

“Once wrestling is over most of the time you are not going to make a career out of it,” Irick added. “After you are done wrestling it is important to have those grades and connections to be able to lead the life you want to. He is putting a focus on school and doing the right things and being a good person.”