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@MizzouWrestling Adds Varona and Smith to Recruiting Class *Varona and Smith combined to win five state titles in high school*

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Mizzou Wrestling head coach **Brian Smith** added two talented wrestlers on Wednesday with the signings of Florida high school prospect **Elijah Varona** (Homestead, Fla.) and collegiate transfer **Colby Smith** (Wentzville, Mo.) from Appalachian State. The two wrestlers combined to win five states titles during their high school careers.

A two-time Florida 3A State Champion at South Dade High School, Varona will make the trek north to Columbia from the Sunshine state. Varona won back-to-back state titles as a junior and senior, first at 106 pounds, then at 113 pounds as a senior. In an act of perseverance, Varona won his final state title on a severely injured ankle, recording three falls and a major decision en route to a first-place finish.

“I chose Mizzou, because in order for a relationship to work, you have to have trust and genuine people,” said Varona. “In my recruitment, Mizzou showed me they have and with that, I’ll have what I need to succeed academically, as well as on that mat as I pursue national and world titles.”

After finishing his prep career, Varona earned a spot on the U.S. Junior Greco Roman National Team by finishing first in the 50 kg bracket at the 2017 U.S. Open. Varona will join fellow Tiger redshirt freshman **Wyatt Koelling** (Kaysville, Ut.) in Finland at the Junior World Championships in August.

“Elijah comes from a very good high school program,” said Smith. “To see how well he dealt with adversity to win his last state title was an amazing feat and something I really admired when recruiting him. He has a vast knowledge of the sport after wrestling year-round, comes from a great background and will continue to improve during his time with our program.”

Named the 2016 St. Louis Post-Dispatch All-Metro Wrestler of the Year, Smith won Missouri Class 4 State Titles as a freshman (120 pounds) in 2013, a junior (126 pounds) in 2015, and a senior (132 pounds) in 2016. He finished his high school career at Wentzville Holt High School with a record of 193-11. In his freshman campaign at Appalachian State, Smith posted a 27-11 record, including an impressive 13-3 mark in duals, and was an NCAA qualifier at 133 pounds. He also placed in four tournaments over the year, including an eighth-place finish at the Southern Scuffle and a runner-up finish at the SoCon Tournament.

“Colby is a kid who I have known for a long time with him coming to camp as well as me knowing his high school coach,” said Brian Smith. “He had a number of good quality wins this season and got himself to the national tournament, so we were pleased to hear he wanted to come back to our program. With Colby, we are adding another talented Missouri wrestler who has great mat awareness, good leg attacks and is extremely tough in the top position.”

“I have always known Mizzou has been a great program,” said Colby Smith. “Being back close to home and family has been a great feeling and has meant a lot to me. With all the resources and advantages Mizzou has to offer, I feel like I can succeed here. I am just excited to get to work.”

Smith will sit out of attached competition during the 2017-18 season due to transfer requirements and will have three years of eligibility remaining beginning with the 2018-19 academic year.

For all the latest on Mizzou Wrestling, stay tuned to MUTigers.com and follow the team on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) (MizzouWrestling).

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