

Witte will add toughness to UNI wrestling team

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 09 November 2011 12:11 - Last Updated Wednesday, 09 November 2011 12:13

Zach Witte will bring talent to the University of Northern Iowa wrestling team next year. He'll bring dedication. He'll also bring a high degree of toughness.

How tough?

Witte is so tough, he played the last two games of the football season at Cedar Rapids Prairie this year with a broken arm. And he didn't even know it.

Witte signed his national letter-of-intent with UNI Wednesday morning with his left arm in a sling, courtesy of an injury he suffered in mid-October at an informal wrestling workout.

"It's really not a big deal," he insisted. "I just fractured off a little chunk."

He thought he hurt a ligament, so shrugged it off and kept playing football. As it turned out, he broke an edge of the ulna (outside) bone in his arm.

He'll have a hard cast installed Monday, then will have X-rays Dec. 5 to gauge his recovery. If all goes well, he hopes to be wrestling again by mid-December.

"I won't miss much at all," he said.

Witte won the Class 3A state title last season with a 38-0 record at 145 pounds. He plans to wrestle at 152 pounds this season and will be aiming for 149 at Northern Iowa.

Witte has compiled a 113-7 record at Prairie as a freshman, sophomore and junior. He finished second at the state tournament as a freshman in 2009, then did not qualify for state as a

Witte will add toughness to UNI wrestling team

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 09 November 2011 12:11 - Last Updated Wednesday, 09 November 2011 12:13

sophomore.

"After that," he said, "I was not going to let anything bad happen again. I'm always hard on myself, I guess."

He was driven to succeed last season.

"My goal the whole year - I even said it publicly - was to be a state champion," he said. "And after doing so I felt a great accomplishment."

Prairie Coach Blake Williams admires Witte's determination and effort.

"He's got a mentality where he hates to lose. He really hates to lose," Williams said. "That has really driven him."

Williams thinks Witte can have an outstanding career at Northern Iowa, especially once he concentrates on wrestling during the entire year. "The sky's the limit," he said.

Witte is excited about wrestling for Doug Schwab, who's in his second year as the head coach at Northern Iowa. Schwab won an NCAA title at Iowa and wrestled at the 2008 Olympics in China.

"He's earned all my respect, that's for sure," Witte said. "He brings a lot of excitement to the room."

"He's done a lot for that program already, and I want to be part of it. He's got something going. Something big, I think, and I'm going to be part of it."