

Kostis Signs With App State

Written by Mike Kelly
Wednesday, 16 April 2014 13:13

Like his older brother before him, Watauga High senior Demetre Kostis will officially sign his national letter with Appalachian State University.

Kostis, who nailed down WHS' first state championship in wrestling since 2006, will follow in his older brother's footsteps. Savva Kostis, a state-place finisher both his junior and senior year at WHS in 2007 and 2008, turned in a solid career under JohnMark Bentley at App State, and now his younger brother, Demetre, hopes to duplicate that success.

"I picked up a lot of technique from (Savva)," Kostis said. "He focused all of his energy on me when his college career was over. He's been a great teacher for me over the years. He was a two-time, state-place finisher. He never won a state title, but he knew what it took to get me there. And he concentrated all of his efforts to make me that much better. He worked me everyday. He pushed me hard, so he knew I could get that state title."

Kostis fulfilled his dream by knocking off Garrett Hinson of Fayetteville-Jack Britt in the Class 4A 132 pound state championship match. He nosed out Hinson 2-1 in the finals. He became WHS' first state title holder since Travis Coffey (112 pounds) and Jacob Earp (130) both did it in 2006. He also became WHS' first state-place finisher since 2008.

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He finished off a fabulous senior year with a 56-1 record. Kostis was 106-3 the last two years, and he was a phenominal 174-21 in his career.

"It's a great feeling when you get your hand raised by the official at the end of a match," Kostis said. "It's a great reward for all the hard work you put in. It's a demanding sport, but I love to do it. I just have a drive to be successful at it. It takes a lot of personal sacrifice to be good at this sport. It's awesome to be a great wrestler, especially one who has a state championship.

"Think about all the great wrestlers in college, who don't have a state title. It's a good feeling to realize I'm a state champion, and all my hard work and extra time I put in, brought me a lot of success. Winning a state title is a great way to finish my high school career."

And now he has a chance to continue his run at Appalachian State, and he also gets a chance to wrestle for a great coach in Bentley.

"I liked North Carolina State and Appalachian State," Kostis said. "They're both big time wrestling (Division) one schools. And I'm thankful for the chance to do this at the next level. It was a difficult decision, but App is close to home and my brother went there (so did his father). Plus, coach Bentley is a very successful coach. My older brother did pretty well wrestling for him."

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"JohnMark can be demanding," Savva Kostis said. "But he knows how to push the right buttons. He was real demanding on me, but he made me a much better wrestler in college. Thanks to him, I had a very good career."

And the tougher the better for Demetre Kostis. Afterall, he comes from a successful wrestling family that doesn't shy away from hard work.

"(Bentley) can teach me more technique that will make me even better," Demetre Kostis said. "This sport demands a lot from you. It takes a lot of determination and dedication to be successful at it. I did a lot of work this summer getting better on my feet. And I worked on my quickness and being more aggressive. Not being aggressive cost me at states last year. And coming in, I was an underdog through the entire state tournament. But I knew that if I kept wrestling hard, this was going to pay off. And I'm going to continue training hard."

"They underestimated me at states. I just decided to give it my best shot and go at it as hard I could. What woke me up was beating the (Kollin Wade) from Cary in the semifinals. He was tough, he was quick. But when I beat him (5-4), my confidence really shot up, and I knew I had a pretty chance to be a state champion."

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And, as the old saying goes, the rest is history.

Photo Courtesy: Demetre Kostis, Stephanie Kostis