

# Even with college done, wrestler still craves the mat

By John Van Nostrand

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Ever since Colby's Eric Luedke walked off the wrestling mat for the last time of his collegiate career, he has been finding ways to return to the action.

He just can't call it quits — yet.

"I was sad," the 22-year-old said about that day in March. "It would be nice to have a career in wrestling. I have also thought about getting into chiropractic work, but I think I can get better in wrestling."

After finishing his career at the University of Iowa, Luedke is going to spend the summer helping with wrestling camps. He held his own camp at Colby High School, his alma mater, last week. He will eventually return to Iowa City and participate with camps and the Hawkeye Wrestling Club, a competitive group of former college wrestlers, funded by private donations.

Luedke said he is considering trying out for the American Olympic wrestling team for the summer games in 2008 in Beijing, China. He said he also thought about tryouts for America's World Team, a global, competitive wrestling organization. Trials are this month in Las Vegas, Nev.

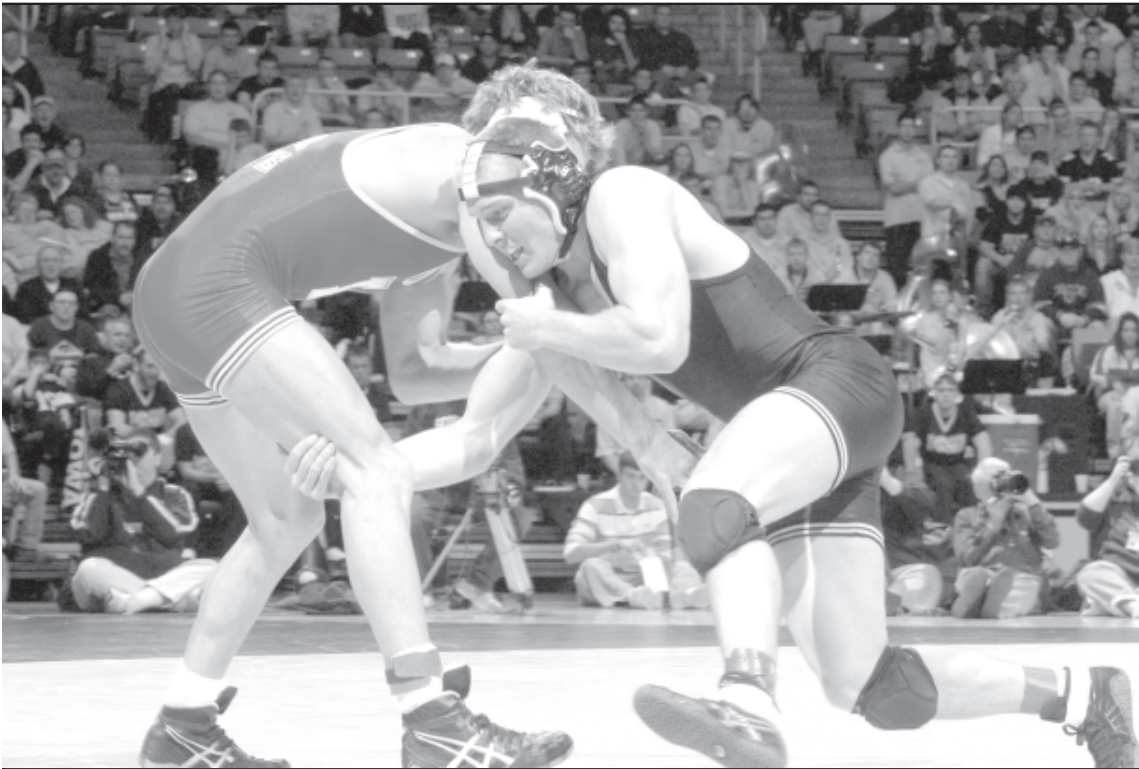
"It sounds pretty far-fetched now," he said about the Olympics, "but if I can continue to compete, I'll try it. This year is important."

Luedke can compete.

In his two seasons as a Hawkeye, he finished his career with a 56-19 mark, going 33-4 last season, in 174



Luedke



UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Eric Luedke battles with an opponent from Iowa State while he wrestled for the University of Iowa. Eventhough the Colby native's college wrestling career is over, he has not ruled out trying out for Olympics.

pounds. His first year at Iowa he placed eighth nationally at 165 pounds. He was named All-American during his two years at Iowa.

Before Iowa, he wrestled at Colby Community College where he won national championships both years. In 2005, he won the 165-pound weight class and finished with a 42-5 record. His first year at Colby, he won the 157-pound weight class and finished 38-5.

At Colby High, Luedke won a state title in 145 pounds as a senior. He placed second his junior and sophomore years and placed third his freshman year. His high school record was 144-12.

Luedke's success is not a surprise

to Colby Community College wrestling coach Steve Lampe, who recruited Luedke.

"The best thing about him was his incredible amount of work ethic. He had an incredible amount of drive too. Either a person has it or doesn't," he said.

Lampe said it's common for high school wrestlers to want to wrestle at a Division I college program, like Iowa. Lampe persuaded Luedke to come to Colby first. Who else was at Colby benefited Luedke.

Muzaffar Abdurakhmanov won back to back national titles at Colby in 2003 and 2004. After Colby he wrestled for American University in Washington D.C.

"That was a perfect thing for Eric," Lampe said. "He had an amazing partner."

Luedke and Abdurakhmanov met in the second round of the NCAA national tournament in 2006. Abdurakhmanov won 8-7. Lampe said the loss did not change Luedke's determination.

"Luedke still had the drive to compete and beat Muzaffar," he said. "Luedke can take a beating for days and days and still come back at you."

Expectations, and interest, in Iowa wrestling are high. About 14,000 fans watched Iowa and Iowa State face off last season. From 1974 to 2006, the Hawkeyes won 20

national championships. Fifteen of those were under head coach Dan Gable from 1976 to 1997, when he resigned. He came back last year as an assistant coach.

Luedke had a different head coach in his two years at Iowa. Jim Zalesky was coach his first year, Tom Brands the second year. Both wrestled under Gable and won national championships. Even though Iowa did not win a national championship during Luedke's time, he said the program still strives for them.

"There were some long, hard workouts," Luedke said. "Two and half-hour practices were common. That was tough to get used to," he said.

Luedke, who he said still keeps in touch with Lampe, said Lampe's practices were not as long or intense. But being a part of Lampe's program still has benefits.

"Colby college is well known in wrestling," Luedke said. "Everybody knows who Lampe is."

Lampe and Gable were wrestling teammates at Iowa State University.

While at Iowa, Luedke said he has met other wrestlers who started in community college programs before transferring. Luedke said wrestlers from community colleges seem to be the punchline of jokes. Junior college wrestlers have been stereotyped as not being as good or strong as four-year college wrestlers.

Luedke said he tries to squash that stereotype and supported the former community college wrestlers. His success at Colby college and what he did Iowa helps the cause. Lampe agrees about the value of community college wrestling transfers, especially comparing to wrestlers straight out of high school.

"Transfers from junior colleges



Lampe

“... I doubt they have another one.”

Steve Lampe

Colby Community College wrestling coach on Colby High graduate Erick Luedke

are two years older and have experience. Others, from high school, may be on the bench for two years, maybe three," he said.

Luedke has two brothers who know wrestling. Older brother Zach wrestled at Colby Community College and younger brother Brent is a senior at Colby High. Eric and Brent have one rule.

"We talk about wrestling but we never compare each other," Eric said. "He's got to have his own goals."

Lampe said it will be hard to compare anybody to Eric.

"Eric was the first Colby High School wrestler to be a four-time All-American wrestler. He was twice at Colby college and twice at Iowa. I doubt they have another one."

## K-18 II battles Oberlin

Colby's K-18 II baseball team split a doubleheader Thursday against Oberlin in Colby.

Oberlin won game one 36-6. The game was called after three innings. Colby managed five hits and was led by Konnor Kriss who had two singles and four RBIs. Jordan Rasmussen, Troy Koon and Nathan Quagliano each had a hit. Braden Sager had a RBI.

Dalton Snyder took the loss for Colby. He shared the pitching duties with Rasmussen and Quagliano. Oberlin had 19 hits. Colby had eight errors.

Strong winds hampered play.

Colby bounced back winning game two 11-10. Colby's five run third-inning was the difference.

Colby had nine hits. Kriss, Braden Sager and Snyder each had two hits. Rasmussen and Ketchum also had hits.

Snyder hit a triple and led the team with four RBIs. Kriss and Sager each had two RBIs. Marcus Colson drove in a run.

Sager pitched a complete game of five innings. He struck out nine and gave up seven hits. Colby had two errors.

## Spurs win game one

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — LeBron James finally scaled the big stage, and like a bunch of burly bouncers, the San Antonio Spurs tossed him off it.

Welcome to the NBA finals, young fella.

James couldn't solve San Antonio's stifling defense and the pick-and-rolling Spurs, as fundamental and selfless as ever, outclassed Cleveland in an 85-76 victory in Game 1 on Thursday night.

Tim Duncan had 24 points, 13 rebounds and five blocks, and Tony

Parker added 27 points and seven assists for the Spurs, who began their quest for a fourth championship since 1999 with a defensive clinic on James and the Cavs, making their first appearance in the finals.

With the eyes of Texas, a curious hoops nation and the world upon him, the 22-year-old James, who has rarely failed to rise to any occasion, flopped like never before.

James shot just 4-of-16 from the field and finished with 14 points and six turnovers in 44 minutes.

## Royals take shortstop

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — There was pandemonium at the Mike Moustakas house.

The husky shortstop knew that setting California high school home run records had made him a hot topic among major league scouts. But not until his name was called on television Thursday afternoon did he know the Kansas

City Royals would make him the overall No. 2 selection in baseball's June draft.

"Everyone just started jumping up and screaming. It was unreal," he said. "A lot of phone calls came in, a lot of text messages. Everybody was giving me hugs. It was unreal. It couldn't have worked out any better."

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