I’m on deck on mat 5. It is the 2016 state semifinals. My opponent, at the time is the returning state champion of from the year before. Only thing running through my mind is what shots I am going to take and set ups to do them. As the match before me concludes, they call for the 113lbers to check in at the table that is before the mat. Strutting my way to the table, I feel the intensity of the Salem civic center. The whistle blows and we begin to scrap it out. Over the course of the next 6 minutes my opponent had scored 4 points to my 3. I had lost, I gave everything I had and fell short. The emotions that overcame me, knowing I wouldn’t be able to compete for a state title drove me to earning a 3rd place medal and fire to come back the following year with vengeance.

My sophomore year has started, and from the very moment I came off the mat from the year prior losing in the state semifinals; I told myself I was coming back the next year at the same weight and taking out anyone in my path. Over the course of my offseason heading into my sophomore year, all I thought about was that match I lost. It replayed in my head over and over again like a broken record. That loss took me to another level of determination. I was determined to win. That’s all I could think about; getting my hand raised after every match. I learned to keep wrestling and always stay on the offensive. My mental toughness and pride were really the biggest indicators to myself that I was going to accomplish something great. It’s February 18, 2017 and I’m in the state finals. The match starts off fairly slow, I’m getting a feel for my opponent and seeing what tendencies he may have. I get a takedown in the first period and hold him down for the remainder. The second period is about to start and my opponent chooses to start in the bottom position. I hold him down for the entirety of the period, but during the second I locked my hands (which is illegal to do) and I gave up 1 point. The score is now 2-1. The beginning of the third period has started and I had chosen to start on bottom in hopes of receiving an escape point. I was trying my hardest to build position and get out but I couldn’t get away. There is 40 seconds left on the clock and my opponent let me up and immediately got back in on a shot and I was in good position to defend the shot. I did so and managed to get my way out of bounds to reset in the middle. The clock read 20 seconds, I was feeling a rush of emotions knowing I am 20 seconds from a lifelong dream that started when I was first starting out in the sport. My opponent took a shot on me and fell to his hip I hipped over him and put him to his back to rack up two points for the takedown as well as 3 near fall points for holding him on his back for 5 seconds. The ref blows the whistle and every single corner of my body was filled with a feeling only one experience firsthand. I got up and gave the crowd a flex, at that very moment the crowd gives out a loud roar. Tears are in my eyes and at that moment all I can think of is the amount of work I put in for this moment. It was all worth it.