

## SIMLEY HIGH SCHOOL'S GAVIN NELSON RECEIVES 2023 APOLLO AWARD

Senior Gavin Nelson received Simley High School's 2023 Apollo Award. The award is given to the top male athlete each year, as selected by Simley's head coaches. It recognizes achievement in athletics, academics, and leadership throughout high school. Gavin finished his distinguished career as a high school student-athlete with state championship titles in two sports.

In wrestling, he earned six letters, won five section championships, earned five All Conference and All State honors, and was crowned individual state champion three times. He was part of five state championship teams, and he led Simley's nationally-ranked team this year as a captain. Gavin also took his talents abroad. As the best wrestler in the country in his age division, he wrestled as a member of United States teams at two world championships.

In his nomination of Gavin, Simley Activities Director and Head Wrestling Coach Will Short also noted his character: "He is kind and supportive to all the guys on the team. He has also helped with middle school and elementary wrestler development."

Gavin has committed to wrestle for the University of Minnesota, one of the nation's top collegiate wrestling programs.

He has distinguished himself in Spartan Football, too, where he earned four letters. During his career, he rushed for more than 3,000 yards, scored more than 30 touchdowns, made 131 solo tackles, and scored a defensive touchdown. A captain this year, his coaches credit him with leading Spartan Football to its first state championship in school history. Gavin was key to the team's come-from-behind victory at U.S. Bank Stadium against last year's champions. This school year, he was named Most Valuable Player.

"Gavin has been an invaluable member of our team and is a huge reason we've had the success that we did the past few years," Simley Football Coach Chris Mensen said. "Gavin's leadership skills and ability to build up those around him are what separate him."

Congratulations to Gavin for his impressive achievements, and good luck to him as he starts at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities this fall!