

1. What year did you graduate? What sports did you play? Any accolades?

I graduated in 2015. From freshman to senior year, I participated in football, wrestling, and track.

**TJ placed in the State Track meet in 2013 in the 4x100m relay (9th) and 4x400m Relay (4th) and in 2014 in the 4x100 Relay (7th), was a State Football Qualifier in 2014, and a State Wrestling Qualifier in 2014. He chose not to include that information, but it is worth mentioning.*

2. What do you do now? Provide some background information.

I currently work for the Weld County Sheriff's Office. I have been employed since 2018. For six and a half years, I worked in detentions. I worked in housing units/pods watching over inmates. This included feeding, helping distribute medication, enforcing the Weld County handbook, and providing safety for all inmates. I am currently in the Courts Division. I am responsible for transporting inmates from the county jail to the courthouse. I take inmates to the courtrooms and supervise the inmates, along with civilians in the courtroom. We also go to different counties and states to drop off/pick up inmates.

3. How did balancing three sports with academics teach you time management and prioritization?

Being involved in different sports all year, my number one priority was always academics first. My parents instilled in me the importance of putting in the hard work in the classroom and to always listen to my teachers. I would like to give a shout-out to Mrs. Weddle. This amazing lady pushed me to be the best student I could be. Without her, I don't think I would've ever been valedictorian for my class. My wrestling coach, Roy always told his wrestlers, "Good person, good student, good athlete." It was always in that order. The teachers and coaches of North Park have always wanted their kids to be successful and are always willing to help as long as you put in the effort. I learned how to prioritize my homework, eating healthy, getting enough sleep, and going to practices with 100% effort every day. Because of my time management and prioritizing, I was successful in the classroom, on the football field, and on the wrestling mat.

4. How did playing different sports help you adapt to new challenges and situations?

Playing multiple sports helped me adapt to challenges that came along throughout my high school career. Being with different coaches, each had their own way of instilling mental toughness and self-discipline. Roy Gollobith was the coach who helped me understand that sports doesn't just make you a good athlete. He taught me that wrestling isn't just a sport. The sport itself helped shape me into the person I am today, and I use what I learned on the wrestling mat in real life situations. Regardless of winning or losing, I learned to embrace it all and continue to work hard and grow as a person. My senior year was not ideal for most athletes. I was out half the football season with a shoulder injury, and then I broke my ankle in my first match of the wrestling season. I was not able to finish the wrestling season or participate in track. Being in sports helped me keep a positive mindset and find a way to get better every day on, and off the field. All of these sports taught life lessons, and I will always be thankful for being in three sports. As bad as I wanted to wrestle my senior year, I had to accept reality but I didn't stop there. I changed my ways of thinking and did what I could do, which was to support my teammates and to spend extra time studying.

5. Did playing multiple sports help you develop a broader skill set, such as agility, coordination, or speed? If so, how did those skills benefit your other sports?

Being in different sports helped me grow as an athlete. They helped me stay healthy and to be in the best shape I could be. Track helped me become faster on the football field. Coach Catie's stretching sessions in track helped me be more flexible even though I hated stretching. sigh... (It was worth it). Football helped me attack in wrestling instead of being defensive and waiting for the opponent to make the first move. Hall of fame NFL player, Ray Lewis, said because he wrestled growing up it helped him become one of the most dominant linebackers in NFL history. Being a three-sport athlete helped me minimize some of my weaknesses by focusing on certain skill sets. These sports helped me become faster, stronger, and helped with technicalities.

6. How did your athletic experiences contribute to your ability to handle pressure and stress?

Being in three sports helped with my confidence as I was involved in pressured situations. One of my favorite memories was my sophomore year in wrestling. I was in regionals, and I was down by one point. If I lost, I would have gone home and my season would be over. If I won, I placed my ticket at the Pepsi Center for the state tournament. With seconds left, near the edge of the mat I needed a

takedown to get two points. I went for a double leg, but had to be mindful of staying in bounds. As I took my opponent down, I dragged my toes to stay in bounds to finish the takedown with time closing. Staying mindful and calm, I took advantage of the stressful situation and came on top.

I encourage kids to participate in as many sports as they can. Listen to your parents when they tell you to be careful what you wish for when you tell them, "I can't wait to grow up." Because of these sports, I gained unbreakable friendships. I have memories that will never be forgotten. Sports, especially wrestling, helped me with life lessons. From what I went through in the wrestling room, nothing will be more challenging than surviving a wrestling practice with Coaches Roy and Austin. Being in law enforcement, there have been many tough days and stressful situations. Because of my teachers, parents, and coaches I was able to handle those situations successfully. I learned from them and continue to keep that positive mindset. I keep my warrior mentality that I learned from sports. You have the rest of your lives to be an adult. Get out of your comfort zone and play in as many sports as you can. You will thank yourself one day.