



## Talegate Featured Athlete: Braxton Garner, Auburn High School

Vince Lombardi, former Green Bay Packers head coach, once said, *"The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand."* For Auburn High School junior Braxton Gardner, hard work, dedication, and determination shape his everyday life, both on and off the mat.

With a GPA of 4.0 and a dream to be an doctor, Braxton not only excels on the mat but in the classroom. His rigorous course load includes AP and advanced classes, which heightens the dedication that he applies to all areas of his life. Braxton prioritizes his schoolwork, even if it means staying up late or missing social events. His focus on academics shows a mature understanding of long-term goals.

Wrestling in the 144-class last year, Braxton beefed up and is now competing in either 157 or 165 this year for Auburn head wrestling coach Taylor Register.



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His journey in wrestling began unexpectedly, when he decided to start the sport "on a whim" in 8th grade. As he spent more time at practice, his love for wrestling deepened. However, his freshman year posed a significant challenge after a tough season. The ability to face hardships and use them as motivation is a skill many strive for, and Braxton rose to the challenge.

During the offseason, Braxton went back to basics, focusing on refining small, precise movements instead of relying on "flashy" techniques. His dedication to perfecting the fundamentals, coupled with the support and motivation of his teammates, shaped his growth as a wrestler. By approaching his sport with a humble and prepared mindset, Braxton avoided the pitfalls of rushing into success, instead working patiently toward his goals. This approach paid off when he qualified for state during his sophomore year.

"I had lost a lot of my confidence in those first few losses," he says, "but staying dedicated and reminding myself of my goals helped me through those hard times."



Looking ahead, Braxton plans to attend college to pursue a pre-medical degree. After graduating, he hopes to take a gap year to teach English in Spain, broadening his horizons before diving into medical school. His ultimate goal is to become an orthopedic surgeon, a profession where he can combine his passion for science and helping others with the same determination that drives him as an athlete. **TG**

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