

SPORTS

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Surrounded by teammate Mathew Witthar, left, grandmother Dixie Wayman, center, and sister Molly Angle, right, Clayton Singh embraces family and friends after winning his fourth state wrestling title on Saturday at Mizzou Arena.

JENNIFER MOSBRUCKER/Missourian

Grit, guts and angels

BY BRILEY EILERS
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Ask Clayton Singh who comes to his wrestling matches, and he'll probably say the usual: mom and dad.

But, if you ask him again, Singh will mention a small group of people watching that will never miss a match again.

Singh, a Kearney senior who claimed his fourth state title Saturday after defeating Grain Valley's Trent Star by fall in just 58 seconds, has faced more adversity — "bumps in the road," as he calls it — than most.

On Dec. 26, 2017, Singh's girlfriend Brianna Luft,

along with her sister Aria Luft, mother Lisa Luft, and friend Selena Senzee, died in a car accident.

His mother Krista Singh, said she wasn't sure her son would be back for his last year of prep wrestling after the accident.

"At first, after everything happened, I was kind of like, 'Uh, I don't know if he'll be able to make it,'" she said.

In Singh's mind, though, he was always coming back. But that didn't stop the first few matches from being more emotionally challenging than expected. He couldn't come back from early deficits and finish off matches.

"Looking up in the stands

and them not being there, it took a few matches for it to really sink in," Singh said.

Somehow, he entered the state tournament with a 49-7 record.

But his mom knew exactly what got him through it.

"Just, a lot of grit and guts," she said, pausing. Someone sitting next to her suggested angels.

"Angels," Krista Singh echoed.

After his quick fall, Singh completed a backflip. A yell escaped from his lips.

"They are there. They're watching. They're cheering," he said after winning. "They'll never miss another one of my matches ever again."

Tolton's Mauller and Jacques finish prep career perfect at State Championships

After winning his fourth state championship, Brock Mauller raised his arms in the direction of the cheering, light-blue-clad Tolton fans in Mizzou Arena as if to say, "That's all you've got?" They celebrated even louder than before.

Don't blame the Trailblazers' fans for being less than normally ecstatic. They have been in this spot three times before — all with Mauller on the mat. With his defeat of Seneca High School's Dayton Fields — 12-4 by major decision — in the Class 1 152-pound weight class, the Tolton senior became one of only 29 wrestlers in MSHSAA history to win a state title in all four years of his or her high school career.

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Close shots don't geaux in for MU in Baton Rouge

BY ALEC LEWIS
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They call them free throws for a reason, and Missouri's men's basketball team has often thrived shooting the shots from the line that sits 15 feet away from the hoop in this 2017-18 season.

It did not Saturday.

Against LSU, a team that won its previous three conference games at the Pete Maravich Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Missouri shot 7 of 17 from the charity stripe. The black-and-gold Tigers fell 64-63, ending their five-game win streak.

"Tough loss," Cuonzo Martin said in a postgame interview on the Tiger Radio Network. "This loss was tough. We didn't play good basketball."

Missouri (18-9, 8-6 SEC), a team that shot 75 percent from the foul line leading into Saturday's matinee showdown, had a chance to win the game against LSU (15-11, 6-8) down the stretch.

With five seconds remaining and Missouri playing defense down a point, freshman forward Jontay Porter, who finished with nine points, tipped an inbounds pass. Senior guard Kassius Robertson recovered the ball and attempted a floater. The ball clanked around the rim, bounced off, and junior guard Cullen VanLeer attempted a putback.

It was off. "We're normally a good free-throw shooting team," Martin said, "and (with all of the misses Saturday) we paid for it."

There were 19 lead changes and 13 ties in a game that came down to the wire. Senior guard Jordan Barnett, who finished with a team-high 18 points, buried five 3-point buckets in the second half to keep Missouri in it.

On the other side, LSU guard Tremont Waters — a terrific talent at 5-foot-11 — willed his team at every opportunity. The freshman scored a game-high 21 points, including a pivotal go-ahead floater over Porter and off of the glass with 19 seconds remaining in the game.

The shot proved to be the difference.

After the game, Martin said he was upset with his team's opening 10 minutes. Late in the first half, inside the team huddle, LSU coach Will Wade was upset, too.

"You can't leave No. 3," he yelled, referencing Missouri senior guard Kassius Robertson. "You can't leave him. He's killing us."

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Meet Kansas City's Tigers representative

KCSP radio host isn't afraid to show his passion for MU sports on air

BY DILLON SMITH
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Carrington Harrison didn't think Norfolk State was worthy of a preview on KCSP (610 AM) in Kansas City.

"No, they're a 15-seed. Missouri's going to smash them and play Florida in the second round," Harrison told weekend host Nick Wright. "We can do something on Florida if you want, but not Norfolk State."

As many fans dressed in black-and-gold did that day, Harrison found himself unexpectedly glued to a tiny television. Norfolk State's Kyle O'Quinn filled up the stat sheet. The Spartans shot lights out. Phil Pressey missed a buzzer-beating 3 and Missouri lost.

"I basically stopped working that day," Harrison said. "I couldn't focus. They lose and I'm just devastated. I'm crushed."

That was our Final Four year. That was our squad. I was so mad at Missouri for losing that game."

Harrison could only stay in the dark from the obligatory heckling he'd face from his co-workers for so long.

Danny Parkins, his co-host, was not in the studio that day. He was in the airport watching the final 10 minutes of the historic upset. He'd have no qualms making fun of Harrison for the loss. And then doing it again. And again.

"I just remember thinking it was going to be great for the

show and it was," Parkins said.

Harrison had never attended an NCAA Tournament game involving Missouri. He envisioned being in the stands for the anticipated second-round matchup with Florida.

"But they lost," Harrison said. "But they lost."

'I knew that's how I had to get a job'

Harrison is a Missouri fan who didn't want to go to MU. The 300-seat lecture halls didn't fit him and supporting the Tigers on the field or court wasn't reason enough.

"I didn't want to go there just because I liked their football and basketball team," Harrison said.

Instead, Harrison attended Missouri Southern State University, a small, public, state university in Joplin.

During his time as a Lion, Harrison developed a skill for talking into a microphone. He worked virtually every MSSU basketball and football game and hosted a coaches show every Thursday.

In the summer of 2010, entering his senior year, Harrison sent emails to his hometown sports radio stations — KCSP and WHB (810 AM). He heard back from KCSP and earned an internship with Wright, who later joined Fox Sports.

News of Big 12 Conference realignment dominated the summer season and Harrison was determined to be the home of news about Nebraska leaving for the Big Ten and Colorado for the Pac-12.

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WOMEN'S BASETBALL



OLIVIA LIU/Missourian

Missouri forward Jordan Frericks, left, attempts to grab a rebound against Illinois forward Alex Wittinger during a Dec. 22 game at Mizzou Arena.

No. 13 Tigers could jump into second place in SEC

BY ERIC LEE
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The Missouri women's basketball team has had no shortage of big games this season.

On Jan. 7, the Tigers downed then-No. 4 South Carolina. Three weeks later, they played the Gamecocks again before hosting No. 2 Mississippi State. But none of these games may be as big of a matchup as the one right in front of Missouri.

At 1 p.m. Sunday, the No. 13 Tigers, riding a four-game winning streak, host No. 11 Tennessee. The game will be broadcast on ESPN.

Both teams are 21-5 overall, 9-4 in the Southeastern Conference and are part of a five-way logjam for third place in the

GAME INFORMATION

No. 13 Missouri vs. No. 11 Tennessee

When: 1 p.m. Sunday

Where: Mizzou Arena

Watch: ESPN

Listen: 100.5 FM, 105.1 FM, 1580 AM; MUTigers.com

league standings. A win for either team would be a crucial step toward earning a double-bye in the conference tournament, which is less than two weeks away.

Both teams also have star players in Mercedes Russell and Sophie Cunningham. Russell, the

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MISSOURI BASEBALL

The Tigers lit up Florida International for 22 runs Saturday and locked up their first series win of the season

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OLYMPICS

American Chen lands six quadruple jumps in competition for first time in figure skating history on Saturday

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