

# Edison wrestler dominates in three sports

by Marla Khan-Schwartz  
Edison senior Shean'Aerial "Nari" Miller is headed to the state high school wrestling tournament after a first place finish at the Feb. 19 women's wrestling tournament. Currently ranked first in the state in her weight class, Miller's journey with the sport began when she was a freshman. The ten-time lettering athlete didn't know much about wrestling when she began training but began the arduous workouts and practices that eventually secured her title as captain of the team.

Now four years later, she's been accepted to every college she's applied to, with many of them offering fully paid tuition for her to wrestle. Although Miller says hard work and motivation have led to her wrestling success, she's also thankful for those who have supported her through her journey.

"It's been really hard, but I can say it was a joint effort with everyone," said Miller. "At the end of the day I'm the only one who gets my hand raised, but I wish they could raise everyone's hand who has been involved and invested in me and put time into me. I'm grateful for it. I'm a better person, athlete, and student."

According to data collected by the National Wrestling Coaches Association and the USA Wrestling Girls High School Development Committee's state high school associations, female participation has tripled within the last decade. Miller wrestles male peers 99% of the time and even though there are other female wrestlers who also wrestle male peers, Miller dominates in the upper weight class and defeats most of her competition.

Miller resides with her family in the Humboldt neighborhood in North Minneapolis and enrolled at Edison because she had stepsiblings already attending. She says her mom and family have helped her reach her goals with enthusiasm, but also help



Nari Miller wrestles, plays football and runs track and field for Edison.  
(Photos by Mike Madison)

Miller stay accountable with her goals. Her daily schedule can sometimes start with a 6:45 a.m. morning workout, followed by school and ending after 8 p.m. wrestling club practice.

Even though Miller's schedule is rigorous throughout the week, her willpower keeps her going. "Getting up is the hard part but once you get up and start running, I am motivated," said Miller. She says her school, sport and home life balance are achievable because of the boundaries she sets with herself and the others in her life who support her.

"Nari's journey shows what someone can accomplish when they are willing to venture out of their comfort zone, be open to new experiences, take advantage of every opportunity that is presented to them, and never let anything deter them from the path leading to their goals," said Miller's wrestling coach, Troy Wel-

lington. "Wrestling is a sport that strengthens you both mentally and physically. Nari was a strong-willed individual before she ever joined. There is nothing she isn't capable of accomplishing."

Miller plans to attend Texas Woman's University to major in business and someday open her own candy store in Northeast Minneapolis. She says the memories of her own store visits as a child resonate with her.

"I still get happy when I think about how I lit up," says Miller. "That's one of my favorite memories as a child and I'd love to give somebody else that type of memory too. You walk into that [candy] store and it's like every kid's dream. I want to give kids that [memory] too."

On top of

serving as the wrestling captain, Miller has also captained both the football and track and field teams at Edison. She played starting linebacker and play caller positions in football and was all district in track and field. Of the three, she says wrestling in particular helps build confidence. "The physical demand of wrestling makes you mentally stronger and tougher."

"Nari is an exemplary teammate," said Edison Principal Eryn Warne. "She is encouraging and inspiring and keeps her teammates accountable academically, athletically and personally. She is

a natural leader."

Recently a recipient of the Athena Award, Miller was deemed the top female high school athlete in the metro area. She has goals to compete on a world level and ultimately as an Olympian in the next summer games but does want Northeast residents to remember her and says, "I'll be back."

The State High School Wrestling Tournament is scheduled for March 5 at Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul. Miller competes in Class AA, Section 5. More info on the Edison wrestling team: <https://edison.mpls.k12.mn.us/>



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