

The Will To Succeed

Out of nowhere came Ike Okenwa, a promising young athlete from Missouri Baptist University, St. Louis, Missouri

By: Princess Ezenwa Okenwa

Walking into the Regional Tournament of the NAIA, in Cumberland, Tennessee was a one chance shot for Ike Okenwa to go to the National Tournament. Determined to wrestle and win in the National Tournament, Ike set out to go over the only hurdle left to making his dream come true. "In order for me to qualify for the National Tournament, I had to place fourth or higher, which is something I hadn't done at a tournament all year." Ike stated.

Ike breezed through the Regional Tournament with two pins in a row which put him in the semi-finals against a tough competitor. At the conclusion of a hard fought

match, Ike lost a close 3-2 decision which put him in a do or die situation for third place. "On my way stood a two time All American that I'd already wrestled and lost to before, but at the end of the match, I proved to be the superior wrestler, winning by pin fall." Ike continued.

At the National Tournament, Ike won his first two matches. The first match was won by a major decision (10-3) and the second by a close 6-1 decision. "That put me in the quarter finals against the defending two-time National Champion. I lost to him (5-0) but gave him his toughest match of the tournament seeing that he pinned everyone else that he wrestled." Right after

Ike lost, severely distraught because he did not wrestle to the best of his ability, Ike vowed "Next year I'm determined to win. I could have beaten him but was nervous because it was the first time wrestling him." He concluded.

Ike's next wrestling match was a determining factor to becoming an All American. "I won by major decision, making me an All American." Ike lost his next match to the wrestler who ended up placing third. In the last match of the Tournament, Ike wrestled for 7th place honors and was rewarded after pinning his opponent in the first period to end his season.