

## University at Buffalo Wrestler Graduates After Suffering Spinal Cord Injury

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Dan Bishop; Photo Courtesy: University at Buffalo website

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AMHERST, NY - Without a wheelchair or a walker, University at Buffalo senior wrestler Dan Bishop confidently walked Sunday across the red carpet during the school's commencement ceremony just as he had vowed to do two months ago after sustaining a life-threatening spinal cord injury.

Bishop called it an emotional experience and everything that he had envisioned as he was joined by his parents, teammates, and friends on Sunday. "Today's one of the best days of my life," Bishop said. "Even before the accident, it's something I've been looking forward to for so long. And now after the accident with that being my biggest goal to actually get up and walk across the stage, it's going to be one of the biggest days of my life, ever."

At first Bishop's doctors and therapists were cautious. They told him he might have to be pushed across the stage in a wheelchair. Then his therapist told him he may have to use a walker. But Bishop was determined to reach his goal. "I was like I'm going to do it, you watch. And I just kept telling him and then I got rid of the walker and here we are."

Bishop's recovery has been remarkable since he was briefly paralyzed from the neck down after being hurt while competing in a 125-pound semifinal match at the Mid-American Conference championships at Central Michigan on March 6. He had emergency surgery after sustaining a fracture between two vertebrae and damage to a major artery.

Bishop's father Norm Bishop said the University at Buffalo community has been like a family to them during their ordeal. "From the basketball team, softball team, baseball, everybody supported him and kept telling him to hang in there and keep striving and it just pushed him along. It's a big family. Teachers, everybody."

Dan Bishop said the accident has changed his life and has made him a better person. And on this Mother's Day, he said he couldn't think of a better gift for his mother Kathy than seeing him walking across the stage to get his degree. "I don't think I could get her a better present."

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