



Contact Information:
Dusty Young
Associate Director
Phone: (505) 923-3110
Fax: (505) 923-3114

NMAA RECOGNIZES SPIRIT OF SPORT RECIPIENT

Albuquerque, N.M. – Ace Whitson, a freshman at Logan High School, has been selected as the recipient of the 2022 New Mexico Activities Association Spirit of Sport Award. The NMAA Spirit of Sport Award was created by the Association to recognize those individuals who exemplify the ideals of the spirit of sport that represent the core mission of education-based athletics.

Ace lost the lower half of his right leg in a near fatal accident while putting up fencing on his property. “It was Labor Day two years ago,” described Ace. “We have a hydraulic tapper for our poles. We were tapping one of them in and it broke off the tractor and I was in line with it.”

“The pipe broke his leg severely,” described his father Wade. “It was a terrible accident. We’ve often said that if Ace hadn’t jumped to the left, we would have been going to a funeral instead of the hospital.”

“It was painful, the worst pain I’ve ever felt,” said Ace.

“They told us we would have to do surgery, but they wouldn’t schedule the surgery until the swelling went down,” said Wade. “They were unaware that he had compartment syndrome, and, in hindsight, we should have been on a helicopter and headed to Dallas immediately. He lost circulation to that leg for far too long.”

Doctors had to deliver the news to Ace that there was no way to save the lower part of the leg. “They came to us and said, ‘We’re going to have to amputate, there’s no way around it,’” said Wade. “The physical pain was unreal, I’ve never seen a human being go through that kind of pain,” added Wade.

No amount of pain would keep Ace from walking, running, and riding again. “I just knew that I could because everybody was so positive around me and I figured I had to be positive too,” he said.

After weeks of challenging rehab and physical therapy, Ace was back at it. Last year, he suited up for football in the fall and basketball in the winter. “The first time I ever watched him play basketball, you couldn’t tell he didn’t have a second leg,” said Logan High School athletic director Billy Burns. “The fact that he didn’t stand out, it really is amazing.”

Ace turned in his helmet and shoulder pads this fall to make a run at rodeo. Getting back on the horse took a literal and motivational meaning. “To not dwell on things that have happened in the past and to keep moving on,” Ace said. “It’s something you have to get past, and you can’t let it stop you,” said Ace.

A video and story recognizing this amazing student-athlete can be accessed from the NMAA website at the below link:

<https://youtu.be/rnKf23qkpu0>

The 2022 New Mexico Activities Association Spirit of Sport Award was presented to Ace and his family at the NMAA/NMADA Fall Leadership Conference Lunch Banquet on Monday. Ace was given a special plaque to commemorate his selection. He will now be nominated for the National High School Spirit of Sport Award that is given out by the NFHS each year.

For more information pertaining to this release, please contact Dusty Young, NMAA Associate Director at (505) 977-5385 or dusty@nmact.org.