

Dan Bonte Finishes High School Career With 268 Wins

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For Dan Bonte, Garretson High, Garretson South Dakota, his final high school wrestling match came in the 140 pound championship match at the South Dakota Class B Wrestling Tournament. Bonte, with a pin, became a four-time South Dakota state champion but that is not the only story that goes with this remarkable wrestler. That pin gave Bonte a 268-15 win/loss record that breaks the old national record of 264 wins set by another South Dakotian wrestler Cory Wallman.

Like the majority of championship wrestlers, Bonte started at a young age watching and competing in wrestling. He got his first chance in high school wrestling when he earned the 103 pound varsity position at Garretson as a 7th grader. Although he lost nine matches that year he still managed to medal in the State B Tournament. The following year, Bonte was back at 103 pounds and won his first SD State B championship. Bonte went on to place 3rd at 112 pounds as a freshman, 1st at 119 pounds as a sophomore, 1st at 135

Dan Bonte, Garretson High, elevated the leg of Keith Feldhaus, Howard High, during their 140 pound championships match at the South Dakota Region 3B Tournament. Bonte went on to win the match and tie the national win record of 264 wins. Photo by Mike Smith/Matshots.

pounds as a junior, and 1st at 140 pounds as a senior.

Bonte's statistics do not stop in the win/loss column, he is an explosive wrestler from the neutral position and uses a firemans and Kelly series of moves to dominate from the feet. This technique has resulted in 526 career takedowns while giving up only 28. With 151 career pins and 1423 career team points, Bonte finished his high school senior year with a 52-1 record. To add to his athletic accomplishments Dan has kept his academic focus also by keeping 3.86 GPA at Garretson High School.

Widely known in the South Dakota area as a humble athlete, Bonte is also known for his tenacity as a competitor when on the mat. "I have always been a fierce competitor striving for success, but when I started wrestling varsity it really hit home on wanting to be successful," said Bonte who hopes to continue wrestling at a 4-year college, Division I or II. Bonte offers some simple advice to athletes and parents, "Wrestling is a great sport that not everyone can do. It is a sport in it's own class and anyone who competes in it should be proud of themselves and whatever achievements they may get. Don't let yourself get pushed too hard at an early age. Everyone wants to win, but you must have fun at the same time."

Bonte, the oldest of three boys, credits his coaches and family with his success. "I have been influenced by many great people throughout my career. My family has always influenced me in a positive way. My coaches: Jason Bohl, Jay Swatek, and Dan Bly have been great to me. I could not ask for better help in the room from such great guys. I also had role models throughout my career who have guided me such as Dan Gabel and Cael Sanderson."

With his high school wrestling career over, Bonte looks forward. "I plan on attending a 4-year university and majoring in Physical Therapy or Sports Medicine but first I plan on hitting the golf course real soon."

Sounds like a heck of a plan to me. Congratulations to Dan Bonte. 

Dan Bonte acknowledges the crowd as they give him a standing ovation following his win to tie the national career win record of 264. Photo by Mike Smith/Matshots.

