

= Ellis Coleman =

Ellis Coleman ( born August 16 , 1991 ) is an American wrestler from Chicago who won the 2012 U.S. Olympic Trials to compete for the United States team in the Greco -Roman 60 kg competition of Wrestling at the 2012 Summer Olympics at the 2012 Olympics . Coleman overcame challenging life conditions after being enrolled in youth wrestling classes . As a high school senior for Oak Park and River Forest High School finished third in the state wrestling championships . On several occasions , Coleman executed a takedown by jumping over his opponent and grabbing him as he flew over his back . Coleman is sometimes referred to as the Flying Squirrel for this takedown move that he has made famous .

= = Background = =

Coleman was raised by his single mother , Yolanda Barral , in Chicago , Illinois . Coleman describes his biological father , Lewellis Coleman , as a person who was " in and out of jail [ his ] whole life . " Apart from visiting him in jail , the only memory he has of his father is the time his father sold all the family 's televisions and the PlayStation for drugs . Federal records describe his biological father as a " career offender " with 19 aliases .

His mother raised the family , including Coleman 's brother ( Lillashawn ) and sister , in the Humboldt Park community area , then the West Side and finally Oak Park . Coleman describes his stepfather as a long -time gang member with an extensive criminal record . After enduring formative years with gunfights outside elementary school , home loss due to an apartment fire , and expulsion hearings , his stepfather , Mose Oliver , introduced him to wrestling to keep him out of trouble . Federal records confirm that Oliver is an alleged 1990s gang enforcer who served time from 2004 to 2011 for participation in Operation Day Trader . The wrestling started in about 2001 . By sixth grade both his father and stepfather were incarcerated and his father figure was his wrestling coach , Mike Powell . Coleman attended Ella Flagg Young elementary school . Barral raised her family with little assistance away from the gang influences of the West Side . She applied for section 8 assistance . Coleman , who was nearly expelled as a sophomore , graduated from Oak Park and River Forest High School in Oak Park , IL in 2009 . He has studied at Northern Michigan University .

= = Wrestling career = =

As a high school senior at the 2009 Illinois High School Association Class 3A tournament , Coleman endured his only loss of the season to Maxamillian Schneider of Lane Technical College Prep High School to finish third and end the season with a 49 ? 1 record . Following the loss , his heart rate reached 225 , necessitating treatment by paramedics .

In 2011 , a video of Coleman was posted to YouTube . Subsequently , Coleman gained a cult -following for the recording of him performing a move at the 2011 World Junior Championships that he calls " The Flying Squirrel " , which involves somersaulting over his opponent just before his takedown . He has performed the move at the 2009 Sunkist Open against Joe Betterman . He also performed the move against Iran 's Mehdi Zivvand at the 2011 World Junior Championships . Coleman claims he has used the " Flying Squirrel " move over a dozen times in competition . The move was ranked third on the ESPN 2011 Best of the Best Highlights . He appeared on ESPN 's morning shows , such as ESPN First Take . The move made him so famous that he received lucrative offers to begin a professional wrestling career , but he declined in favor of continuing his Olympic dream . Coleman credits his brother for the move .

Ellis defeated Betterman 2 to 0 at the finals of the 2012 U.S. Olympic Trials . Coleman had attended Betterman 's wrestling clinics when he was younger . Coleman is the youngest member of the American wrestling delegation going to the Olympics . After Coleman qualified for the Olympics , he realized that his mother , who works in customer service for the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority , could not afford to attend due to financial hardship . Coleman was living at the United

States Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs on a limited monthly stipend from the United States Olympic Committee and could not assist her . Powell rented Coleman 's family a one @-@ bedroom flat in London out of personal funds and the Oak Park High School wrestling program subsequently raised \$ 14 @,@ 000 to ensure that his mother , aunt and siblings could attend . Coleman dropped from the 66 kg division to the 60 kg division for the Olympics . Coleman lost in the first round of Olympic competition to Ivo Angelov of Bulgaria by a 3 ? 1 score .

2012 Olympic American gymnast Gabby Douglas also became known for the nickname " Flying Squirrel " . In an attempt to solidify his nickname while training in Colorado Springs , Coleman purchased a pet flying squirrel that he keeps in a cage and feeds apples . His Twitter handle is @ daFlyinSquirrel .