The number of high school students that play football in the United States is approximately 1.084 million. Out of that number only 6% get to play college football this is according to a survey conducted by CBS.

This past summer, senior defensive end Eli Adams stepped closer to having his lifelong dream come true when he committed to play football at Virginia Tech.

Eli Adams was born on Oct. 24, 1999; since he was a little kid football was always part of his life.  His father and older brother played football, so the sport was already a huge part of his family.

Adams played along with his older brother DaNeil Adams during his ninth and 10th grade years in which they won state both years.

“I enjoyed it because he always pushed me to be more competitive.” Adams about the time he played along his brother.

Their father, Daniel Adams, who is first cousins with Rock Hill legend Jeff Burris was a great part of the 1989 Northwestern team. That team was legendary for winning the school’s first state championship. Mr. Adams played an unforgettable game at that championship in which he ran for two touchdowns to beat Lancaster.

Adams claims that his father is always talking about that game and growing up he always watched his games on tape.

Adams grew up waiting anxiously for his time to play the sport he loved. Two of his favorite memories go back to when he was just five years old, one of them being when he got his first set of football equipment, his other memory being attending his first football practice in small fry football for the then Belleview Red Devils.

At that young age of five Adams already knew that his dream was to play college football for a Division 1 division one school. The vision of playing college football was so great for Eli that he even promised his grandma that one day he would be going to college to play football.

When Adams was eight years old, he joined a travel football team, the Rock Hill Cowboys. It was at the time that he came together with Derion Kendrick, Jamari Currence, Scott Robinson, BJ Davis, and Steve Gilmore. During that time they won the Southland Conference Championship 2012 going city to city.

Being interviewed about how close this Stallion team has been all through school, Adams realized that first ever Cowboys team was the base of the four-time defending state champion Stallions. This little band of brothers jelled as a team under Thomas Richmond, who has been coaching NOW for 23 years. Among the players he coached when they were young kids are former Stallions Stephon Gilmore and Montay Crockett, both currently in the NFL.

When he and his wife Gwen formed the organization, who their players end up as people, as citizens, was the priority, he said.

“We don’t judge the Cowboys on what what we are achieving right now but on what our players are doing 10 years later,” Richmond said in a phone interview.

His first generation of Cowboys as ten years later Adams, Kendrick, Currence, and Robinson are already committed to play college football at Virginia Tech, Clemson, James Madison, and South Carolina State in that respective order. Gilmore and Davis also hold offers from Division 1 schools but have not made a decision on what school they want to attend next fall.

This band of brother’s has been together since they were part of the Rock Hill Cowboys. Since then they have won Middle School District, City, Region, and three State Championships

After dominating Middle School football for Saluda Trail they finally moved to the biggest stage in Rock Hill which is High School football.

Adams remembers going down to Columbia to watch the star studded Northwestern team that had players with the names of Mason Rudolph and Dupree Hart. The Trojans went on to win the game against Stratford and the State Championship. At that moment Eli promised himself that he would be there to play for a State title the next four years with the Stallions.

His freshman year Adams played for the 9th grade team and remembers when he was moved up to varsity for the playoffs, he recalls that as his favorite memory from his freshman year. Adams and Kendrick actually played and were an important part of the defense. Kendrick even started for four of the five games as the Stallions went on to win the State Championship.

His sophomore year Adams played an enormous role on the back to back championship. In May of 2016 Adams received his first college offer to play football at South Carolina, he says that is a moment he will never forget because he achieved his goal that motivated him to work hard every day.

Throughout his junior year Adams received multiple division one offers from NC State, U Mass, Virginia Tech and other schools.

On June 10, 2017 Adams made the decision to commit to Virginia Tech. Adams said the community atmosphere at the school is what set Virginia Tech above every school he was considering.

Committing to Virginia Tech meant a lot he said, “It is a personal goal for me but it means a lot more that my family doesn’t have to pay for my education”.

Adams is trying to enjoy the time he has left with his friends and family before he goes off to college in January.

After a long day and tough practice Eli and his closest friends whom he considers his brothers, like to go to Chicken Shak where he always orders four honey hot tenders and fries. This group of friends that have been together since they played for the Cowboys love spending time together and talking about old times.