

Sasso Wins Big Ten Championship, Romero Runner-Up



Ohio State wrestling's 149-pound mainstay stands alone atop the Big Ten conference.

Sammy Sasso, ranked No. 3 in the nation at 149 pounds, won individual gold Sunday at the Big Ten Wrestling Championships in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to highlight a fourth-place team finish from the Buckeyes.

Sasso defeated Minnesota's No. 15 Michael Blockhus in sudden victory 7-5 in the championship match to win the crown. It's the second conference title of Sasso's career, joining a victory in 2021. Sasso has also finished second in the conference tournament twice in 2020 and 2022.

His route to the championship bout included victories over Iowa's No. 6 Max Murin and Michigan's No. 30 Chance Lamer.

Ohio State redshirt senior Kaleb Romero, ranked No. 5 at 184 pounds, also made the conference championship match in his bracket but came up short in a major decision against the No. 1 wrestler nationally in his weight class, Penn State's Aaron Brooks.

Brooks came away with a 12-2 victory to end Romero's run with a silver medal, but the Mechanicsburg, Ohio native did beat Minnesota's No. 9 Isaiah Salazar just to get to that point.

In total the Buckeyes collected 99 points as a team, finishing behind conference champion and national No. 1 Penn State (147), No. 2 Iowa (137.5) and No. 4 Nebraska (104.5).

Perhaps the team's biggest blow came not in any defeat it may have been handed in the tournament, but before it even began when senior Malik Heinselman, ranked No. 10 in the nation at 125 pounds, went down with an injury that took him out of the tournament.

In all, seven Buckeyes qualified for the NCAA Tournament based on their result at the Big Ten Championships. Carson Kharchla and Ethan Smith each posted third-place finishes at 165 and 174 pounds, respectively, while Jesse Mendez, Dylan D'Emilio and Tate Orndorff all made the national championships based on their conference tournament results at 133, 141 and heavyweight, respectively.