

# Three Buckeyes Advance To Semifinals On Day One Of Cliff Keen Invitational



The Buckeyes were back on the mat for the first time since their two perfect dual wins over Columbia and Hofstra on Nov. 19. They are in Las Vegas, N.V., for the Cliff Keen Invitational, a two-day tournament full of talent from schools across the country.

No. 7 Ohio State did well as a team Friday with three wrestlers moving on to the semifinals that will take place on Saturday. Five made it to the quarterfinals, but two couldn't make it out with a win.

The Buckeyes performance was enough to put them in second place as a team going into the final day. The semifinals will begin at 1 p.m. with the championships starting at 6 p.m.

Each team could only assign one wrestler to each weight, similar to postseason tournaments. Here's a look at how the Buckeyes did on day one:

**125 pounds:** Brendan McCrone has impressed early on as a redshirt freshman and worked his way up to No. 23 in the country at 125 pounds by InterMat. He kept that going in his first bout, taking down Malik Hardy from The Citadel by pin, only needing 1:27 to do so.

McCrone lost in the round of 16 to No. 11 Jore Volk out of Wyoming in a close decision, falling 4-2. That would take him out of the championship bracket, but he still another chance in the consolation bracket where he won 13-0, and 5-3 before falling 11-7.

**133 pounds:** Nic Bouzakis was the only Buckeye to lose in the first round after being unable to escape for much of the battle. He dropped the match 11-3 to Stanford's unranked Tyler Knox.

He would bounce back in the consolation bracket with two straight 21-4 tech fall wins, an 18-4 major decision win and a 24-6 tech fall win. He needs two more wins to make it to the 3<sup>rd</sup> place match on Saturday.

**141 pounds:** Jesse Mendez continued to dominate his competition, showing why he's currently ranked fifth in the country. He cruised through day one, winning in the round of 32 in the second period by tech fall, 19-4 in 3:42.

In the round of 16 it was more of the same when he needed only 1:32 to pin Jaden Pepe of Harvard.

That took him to the quarterfinals, which began at 9 p.m. Friday, but taking a few hours off didn't ruin the groove he was in, winning by tech fall again 18-1 over Vince Cornella from Cornell to advance to the semifinals.

**149 pounds:** Four wrestlers at 149 pounds in the tournament had to wrestle once to try to get into the round of 32, and Dylan D'Emilio was one that got an extra match. In his first, he led the day off with a 13-3 major win over Jack Crook (Harvard).

He followed up with a pin in the round of 32, beating James Latona from Navy in 4:14. His 11-2 major decision win over Richard Fedalen from Columbia took him to the quarterfinals where he would win by decision over Jackson Arrington of N.C. State to advance to the semifinals on Saturday.

**157 pounds:** Gallagher forced a tech fall in the first round at 157 pounds. He won 21-5 and it took him until the third period, but he still ended the match early at 6:13.

The next round was much more hard fought against Ryder Downey from Northern Iowa, who the Buckeyes have a dual against later this month, Dec. 19. He was down 5-4 in the third period, and after suffering a late takedown he lost 8-5 to Downey.

In the consolation round of 16, Gallagher picked up a 14-4 major decision win, a 10-1 win, and a 6-5 decision victory to advance to Saturday. He also needs to win two matches to make it to the third place bout.

**165 pounds:** With Bryce Hepner back from injury the 165-pound weight class has been unsettled, but Isaac Wilcox got the start in Las Vegas. He won his first bout by decision over Jaxon Garoutte 5-2, earning two team points for advancing a round.

In the first period of the next round there was no score, and the second period only had an escape point from Matthew Olguin. Wilcox chose down to start the third period and was able to quickly escape to tie it up at one, but they needed extra time to decide. Wilcox lost 4-1 with a takedown 31 seconds into the sudden victory period.

He won his first consolation match by major decision over Kyle Mosher of Columbia. He would lose 16-6 in the next round, ending his time on the mat at the invitational.

**174 pounds:** Carson Kharchla finished his first round quickly, taking down Cortilius Vann and only needing the first period to do so. He got the pin and the bonus points in 1:32 to move on to the next round.

In the round of 16 he had two takedowns in the first period to take a 6-1 lead but didn't need any more time, pinning Adam Thebeau in 2:12 to move on to the quarterfinals.

There he won 6-0 by decision over Austin Murphy of Campbell to be the third Buckeye wrestler to move on to the semifinals.

**184 pounds:** Gavin Hoffman wrestled at 184 pounds for the Buckeyes. In just his third match after the switch from 197 pounds where he wrestled last season, he needed a sudden victory period to beat Kingsley Menifee from Morgan State 12-9.

After he moved on, he faced off against Sam Fisher from Virginia Tech and won a low scoring 2-1 bout

in the third period. In the quarterfinals he lost in a sudden victory round to Sam Wolf from Air Force.

**197 pounds:** Luke Geog also won his first match by tech fall, 19-4 in 6:51. He lost a close match to Max Shaw 5-4 in the round of 16, so he didn't advance to the quarterfinals. Geog was pinned in the round of 16 consolation round in 5:58.

**Heavyweight:** Nick Feldman started the day with a 17-2 tech fall to advance to the round of 32 where he forced a second straight tech fall, winning 19-4 in just 2:17 over Harvard's Jeff Crooks.

Feldman won by decision in the round of 16 to move on with a 8-1 victory over Lewis Fernandes of Ithaca.

He lost in the quarterfinals by major decision to Younger Bastida from Iowa State who is No. 7 in the country on InterMat. In the consolation bracket, he won his only match on Friday 19-3 to advance to Saturday.