

# Wrestling: NCAA Championships Seeding Announced



Ohio State has its marching orders ahead of the upcoming NCAA Championships, set to start on March 18 and carry through March 20 from the Enterprise Center in St. Louis. The NCAA announced seeding and brackets on March 10, giving the seven Buckeyes set to attend an idea of who they'll have to topple to claim an NCAA crown.

## **125 pounds**

Malik Heinselman checks in as the No. 10 seed, right around where he hovered in the 125-pound rankings for much of the season. It's a generous draw for the Buckeye, because he'll square off in the first round with No. 23 Robert Howard, a Penn State wrestler that Heinselman has beaten twice this season.

## **141 Pounds**

Dylan D'Emilio managed to just avoid the wrestle-off between the No. 32 and 33 seeds at 141 pounds, which sends its winner to take on top-seeded Jaydein Eierman of Iowa. D'Emilio sneaks in at No. 30, and will take on No. 3 Sebastian Rivera of Rutgers in the opening round. Rivera is 8-1 on the year and earned an 11-2 major decision over D'Emilio in their bout back in January. He finished in third-place at 141 pounds in the Big Ten, trailing Eierman and Penn State's Nick Lee, the No. 2 seed nationally.

## **149 Pounds**

Sammy Sasso is the top dog at 149 pounds, leaping North Carolina's Austin O'Connor, who spent the entire season atop the 149-pound rankings. O'Connor won the ACC at 149 as emphatically as Sasso won the Big Ten, but ultimately the committee gave the nod to a more difficult schedule and conference for the Buckeye standout. He'll take on either No. 33 Greg Gaxiola of Hofstra or No. 32 Andrew Alirez from Northern Colorado.

## **165 Pounds**

Ethan Smith was rewarded for his stellar Big Ten Championships performance with the No. 7 seed and a first round matchup against Andrew Nicholson of Chattanooga, who holds a 12-3 record. Nicholson won the crown at 165 in the Southern Conference and was named Most Outstanding Wrestler at the event.

## **174 Pounds**

A late season skid didn't seem to have much bearing on Kaleb Romero, who checks in as the No. 7 seed, drawing No. 26 Jackson Turley of Rutgers in the first round. Romero trails Michigan's Logan Massa (No. 5), Penn State's Carter Starocci (No. 3) and Iowa's Michael Kemerer (No. 1) who make up each of his losses this season. Romero hasn't yet wrestler Turley, who didn't place at the Big Ten Championships.

## **184 Pounds**

The committee was also kind to Rocky Jordan, who earned the No. 24 seed despite a 5-8 season. There may not have been a more difficult individual schedule in the country though, which helped Jordan's case. He'll match up with No. 9 Jeremiah Kent from Missouri, who holds a 9-1 record. He took second place in the MAC Championships, falling to Brit Wilson (Northern Illinois), who earned the No. 7 seed.

## **Heavyweight**

Last up is Tate Orndorff, the No. 21 seed at heavyweight. Despite his automatic qualification for the event, Orndorff's lack of offense hurt his resume, and he'll face off with No. 12 Christian Lance from Nebraska in the first round because of it. That's not great news for the Buckeye big man. He just lost to Lance in the fifth-place match at the Big Ten Championships, 3-2.