

Wrestling: Ohio State Sending Nine To NCAA Championships, Mendez No. 1 At 141 Pounds



The NCAA championships field has officially been revealed and Ohio State is sending nine wrestlers to the tournament for the second straight season. The team will be represented at every weight class except 165 pounds.

Automatic bids were secured in the Big Ten tournament by Jesse Mendez (141 pounds), Dylan D'Emilio (149 pounds), Isaac Wilcox (157 pounds), Rocco Welsh (174 pounds), Ryder Rogotzke (184 pounds), Luke Geog (197 pounds) and Nick Feldman (heavyweight).

At large bids were announced Tuesday and Brendan McCrone (125 pounds) and Nic Bouzakis (133 pounds) will join the Buckeyes in the search for their first national title since 2015.

Mendez goes in as the favorite at 141 pounds after winning the Big Ten tournament, beating Iowa's Real Woods in the semifinals and Penn State's Beau Bartlett in the championship with late takedowns to take the lead in both bouts. Bartlett and Woods were the only two wrestlers in the country ranked ahead of Mendez by InterMat ahead of the conference tournament.

It will be an uphill climb for each of the other Buckeye grapplers, with Welsh receiving the next highest placement at 6th, and Feldman also getting into the top 10 with a No. 9 seed. Six Buckeye wrestlers will be the higher seed in their first match.

The championships will take place from March 21-23 in Kansas City, Mo., at T-Mobile Center.

Here's where each of the Buckeyes were seeded and who they will match up against in the first round of the tournament:

125 pounds: No. 4 Matt Ramos (Purdue) vs. **No. 29 Brendan McCrone**

133 pounds: **No. 16 Nic Bouzakis** vs. No. 17 Braxton Brown (Maryland)

141 pounds: **No. 1 Jesse Mendez** vs. No. 32 Kal Miller (Maryland)/No. 33 Todd Carter (Gardner-Webb)

149 pounds: **No. 14 Dylan D'Emilio** vs. No. 19 Joseph Zargo (Wisconsin)

157 pounds: **No. 32 Isaac Wilcox** vs. No. 33 Nick Stampoulos (Buffalo)

174 pounds: **No. 6 Rocco Welsh** vs. No. 27 Danny Wask (Navy)

184 pounds: No. 15 Reece Heller (Pittsburgh) vs. **No. 18 Ryder Rogotzke**

197 pounds: No. 10 Silas Allred (Nebraska) vs. **No. 23 Luke Geog**

Heavyweight: **No. 9 Nick Feldman** vs. No 24 Keaton Kluever (Hofstra)