

# ODU Athletics

## Wrestling

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## ODU Wrestling Preview

**NORFOLK, Va.** - Old Dominion University wrestling returns five starters from a season ago and will break in five new starters in 2010-11. The Monarchs will rely on seniors **James Nicholson** and **Kyle Hutter** to help the underclassmen throughout the season.

ODU went 10-6 last season and had three Colonial Athletic Association champions. James Nicholson is the only returner of that group, and will look for his fourth-straight CAA title at 125-pounds.

"We have a young group that we want to get consistent daily improvement from," ODU head coach Steve Martin said. "We're looking for our older guys to lead by example on and off the mat to help the team with the adversity that is going to come throughout the season."

The Monarchs will once again face one of the toughest schedules in the country, facing nationally-ranked Central Michigan and Iowa State on the road, while hosting top-20 teams Virginia and Virginia Tech. All four of those squads have agreed to home-and-home matches with ODU, continuing the tough competition in the coming years.

"Throughout our dual meets and tournaments, we're going to see 80 percent of the kids in the top-20," Martin said. "That is going to prepare us for the end of the year when it counts the most."

Below is a preview of this year's squad by weight class.

### 125

Nicholson returns for his senior season and ranks as one of the top wrestlers in ODU history. With 103 career wins, he is 35 short of tying Chris Brown for the school record in wins, which Brown set last year in his All-American campaign.

With his three CAA championships, the Des Moines, Iowa native is one of just 13 wrestlers to have won three conference championships and could become just the second CAA wrestler to become a four-time champ.

"We expect him to contend for a national title, he needs to be able to maintain his weight to perform at a high level," Martin said.

Nicholson went 32-3 last season, went 15-0 in dual matches and was 8-0 against CAA opponents.

Nicholson will get competition from redshirt freshman Eric Dunnet. He went 8-4 wrestling last season unattached and was highly decorated coming out of Pine Hill High school in New Jersey, ranking No. 15 at his weight class.

"Eric placed high in tournaments last year, he needs to improve his technique, but he has the potential to reach the podium."

### 133

Hutter, a two-time NCAA qualifier returns after redshirting last season. The Mokena, Ill. native went 25-1 last season wrestling unattached and has defeated nine NCAA qualifiers in his career. He capped last year's solid season by placing second at the University Nationals and qualifying for the World team trials.

"Kyle has defeated several NCAA All-Americans, including beating Boise State's Andrew Hochstrasser (Ranked No. 1 at 133) at the University Nationals, showing that he can compete at the highest level."

While Hutter redshirted last season, Justin LaValle started at 133 and earned valuable experience, going 17-13 and earning fourth-place at the CAA Tournament.

Martin expects to redshirt LaValle, but he could be called into action at any time during the season.

### 141

**Brennan Brumley** returns after a solid first season as the starter at 141. Brumley defeated two NCAA qualifiers and had two four-match winning streaks before his season was cut short in February due to an injury.

Senior transfer **Jayk Cobbs** will look to battle Brumley for the position. Cobbs, a transfer from Duquesne, where he was twice the runner-up at the East regional, wrestled for Martin at Great Bridge high school.

"Brennan had a solid year last year, we expect big things out of him," Martin said. "He will be pushed by Jayk, which will benefit both of them."

### 149

With last year's starter at 149, **John Nicholson**, moving up a weight class, redshirt freshman **Chad Lowman** and senior **Joey Metzler** will battle for the starting job at 149-pounds.

Lowman gained experience last season as a redshirt, going 12-8 wrestling unattached.

Metzler is the more experienced collegiate wrestler, having taken third-place at the 2009 CAA Tournament.

"Joey has proved himself at this level, finishing third at the CAA's in 2009," Martin said. "Chad knows how to wrestle, we've seen him do it in the practice room, now he needs to go out and prove it on the mat."

157  
Sophomore **John Nicholson** will step up a weight class and take over at 157-pounds. He went 23-8 last year at 149 and moves up a weight class this season.

"John can get to the podium, he needs to manage his weight and be able to wrestle for seven minutes," Martin said. "His motor will allow him to beat a lot of people, he has the potential to beat anybody."

165  
Senior **Dan Rivera** will step in and replace 2009 All-American Chris Brown. A native of Winter Springs, Fla., Rivera went 9-10 in limited action last season and has a career record of 23-43.

"Dan is a fifth year senior that hasn't lived up to his potential yet," Martin said. "He's worked on his training, he knows he can do it, he just has to prove it."

174  
ODU will be looking to replace another senior at 174 after the graduation of Eric Decker. Redshirt freshman **Billy Curling** and true freshman **Tristan Warner** will compete for the starting spot.

Curling redshirted last season and went 4-6 wrestling unattached. Warner was a top recruit at his weight class coming out of Cumberland Valley high school in Pennsylvania, the same school that 2008 ODU national runner-up Ryan Williams went to.

"Tristan has a slight edge right now, but Curling is right there and ready to compete at this level. This weight is too close to call right now.

184  
**Joe Budi** returns for his third season as a starter at 184-pounds after just missing qualifying for the NCAA Tournament his first two years.

"Joe has to be more consistent, if he can do that he can get to the podium," Martin said.

A native of Appleton, Wis., Budi has compiled a 43-33 career record and has a fourth and third-place finish at the CAA Tournament.

197  
ODU took another hit with the loss of four-year starter, Jesse Strawn. Strawn returns as a student assistant coach and will mentor freshman **Jacob Henderson**.

Henderson was a two-time Ohio state runner-up and is ranked in the top-20 by USA Wrestling Magazine.

"We expect Jacob to qualify for the National Tournament. He has to improve his technique, but we know he is a competitor and will fight for the full seven minutes," Martin said.

Freshman **Eric Bach** provides depth behind Henderson. Bach was a regional champion and state place-winner for Kittatinny Regional (N.J.)

285  
Sophomore **Grant Chapman** returns at 285 but will be pushed by newcomer **Matt Tourdot**.

Chapman went 14-23 in his first season as a starter last year, but was picked as the preseason favorite at 285 this season.

Tourdot is coming off a stellar high school career, where he went 50-0 as a senior at Sparta high school in Wisconsin.

"Chapman has a slight edge here right now, we'd like to see more scoring offense from him," Martin said. "Matt is ready to compete at this level, we saw that with the close match (2-1) between him and Grant at the Blue/Silver match."