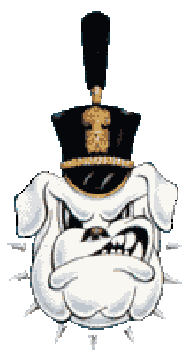


The Citadel

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The Citadel Wrestling Places Fourth at All-Academy Championships

West Point, N.Y. – Fifth year senior Darius Caldwell placed second at 184 pounds and six other Bulldogs placed to lead The Citadel to a fourth place team finish at the All-Academy Wrestling Championships on Saturday at the U.S. Military Academy.

Caldwell, who entered the tournament as the second seed, opened the tournament with a 14-6 major decision over the Merchant Marine Academy's Troy McGuiness. He then defeated Navy's Casey Caldwell, the eventual third place finisher, with a 3-2 decision. In the championship bout, Army's top seeded Scott Ferguson took an 8-2 decision to end Caldwell's title hopes.

At 125 pounds, sophomore Tyler Sim won his first match by pinning the Coast Guard Academy's Alex Gebhart at 4:08. Sim then lost his second round match to top-seeded Fernando Martinez of Army by a 12-4 major decision. Sim bounced back to defeat Air Force's Andrew Zwirlein 6-5 and then won the third place match with a 10-5 decision over third-seeded Jeremy Adams of VMI. The victory also avenged Sim's 2-0 loss to Adams earlier in the season.

Junior Anthony Easter overcame a 3-1 first round loss to VMI's Tyler Anthony by winning a 4-2 decision to eliminate Norwich's fourth-seeded Brian Zane. Easter then won the third place match when he took a medical forfeit from Anthony to defeat the two-seed in the pairs' second match of the day.

At 141 pounds, freshman Kip Thompson lost his opening round match to Merchant Marine's James Beshada and was eliminated by Navy's Caleeb Levee in back to back major decision losses, 11-2 and 15-3.

Redshirt freshman Derek Royster won his opening bout at 149 pounds with a 12-3 major decision over Norwich's Ryan Crosby. Royster then lost a 15-7 major decision to top seed and eventual champion Bryce Saddoris of Navy. Royster was eliminated when Air Force's Chris Szabolcs pinned him at 3:15 in his third match of the day.

The Bulldogs' 157 pounder, freshman Keith Koziel, lost his opening match to Army's Christian Snook by a 13-5 major decision, but bounced back with a pin of Coast Guard's Fran O'Brien at 4:16 and a 6-2 decision over Air Force's Tony Dorward to get into the third place match. In the consolation final, Merchant Marine's Scott Lowe edged out Koziel by a 7-6 decision to give Koziel fourth place.

Freshman Brendan Prince opened with a 4-3 loss to Navy's Jason Coyne at 165 pounds. He then won by a 23-7 tech fall at 7:00 over Norwich's Matt Valnoski, and won by medical forfeit over VMI's Jayme Gordon to reach the third place match. Coyne edged Prince by one point for the second time in the tournament to win the third place match, 5-4.

At 174 pounds, freshman Derek Sickel lost his opening match to Air Force's Tyler French by an 11-2 major decision. Sickel was then eliminated when Coast Guard's Kevin Robinson defeated him, 4-2.

Fifth year senior John Buck started his day with a 22-5 tech fall over Norwich's Jordan Ferguson at 6:45. Buck then lost an 11-6 decision to top seeded Matt Parsons of Navy. Buck then won a 10-2 major decision over VMI's Ronnie Ellsworth to advance to the third place match. In the consolation final, Merchant Marine's Eric Vincent defeated Buck by a 7-3 decision.

In the heavyweight division, redshirt junior Aaron Brown won his first round match with a 3-2 decision over VMI's Leon Barrow. Brown was then pinned at 0:38 by eventual champion Ed Prendergast of Navy. Brown came back to record a fall of his own in his third match as he pinned Merchant Marine's Judson Connell at 0:25. In the third place match, Air Force's Anthony Stegeman defeated Brown by a 5-1 decision.

Army won the team tournament, followed by Navy, Air Force and The Citadel. Merchant Marine, VMI, Coast Guard and Norwich rounded out the field.

Navy's Matt Stolpinski was named the Most Outstanding Wrestler after winning his fourth-straight individual title at 174 pounds.

The Citadel will return to the mat on Saturday, Feb. 9 when they host SoCon rival Appalachian State at 2 p.m. in McAlister Field House.

14th-Annual USAA Academy Wrestling Championships

Team Scores

1. Army 111.0; 2. Navy 106.0; 3. Air Force 54.5; 4. The Citadel 49.5; 5. Merchant Marine 43.0; 6. VMI 34.0; 7. Coast Guard 5.0; 8. Norwich 1.0.

Championship Bouts

125 - #1 Fernando Martinez (Army) maj. #2 Joey Boone (Navy), 12-3

133 - #1 Joe Baker (Navy) maj. #3 Whitt Dunning (Army), 10-2

141 - #1 Matthew Kyler (Army) dec. #3 Jake Kriegbaum (Air Force), 10-3

149 - #1 Bryce Sandoris (Navy) dec. #2 Casey Thome (Army), 6-3

157 - #2 Spencer Manley (Navy) dec. #1 Christian Snook (Army), 4-1

165 - #2 Stephen Crozier (Air Force) pin. #1 Vincent Renaut (Merchant Marine) 4:14

174 - #1 Matt Stolpinski (Navy) pin. #3 Ryan Mergen (Army) 2:22

184 - #1 Scott Ferguson (Army) dec. #2 Darius Caldwell (The Citadel), 8-2

197 - #2 Richard Starks (Army) pin. #1 Matt Parsons (Navy) 6:06

285 - #1 Ed Prendergast (Navy) dec. #2 Nathan Thobaben (Army), 5-3 (OT)

(# before each name is seed for the championship)