

NATIONAL WRESTLING COACHES ASSOCIATION

NWCA Release

2017 NWCA National Duals Championship Series pairings set

Eds: Note correction on TV outlet for Penn State-Oklahoma State. Will be tape-delayed via Fox College Sports.

Social Media Shortlink: <http://bit.ly/NWCAduals2017>

Manheim, Pennsylvania -- The National Wrestling Coaches Association and the National Duals Selection Committee is pleased to announce the matchups for the 2017 NWCA National Duals Championship Series presented by Theraworx and the United States Marine Corps.

In the second year of this format, teams from the Big Ten Conference will face off with non-Big Ten teams in a showcase weekend of college wrestling dual meets. Last season, eight Big Ten teams hosted events around the country. In 2017, the Big Ten will be visiting college campuses in the ACC, Big 12, EIWA, EWL and Southern Conference.

The showcase dual will be on February 19 in Stillwater, Oklahoma, as No. 1 Oklahoma State (14-0) will host No. 2 Penn State (13-0) in a battle of the last two unbeaten teams in Division I. The dual is a rematch of last year's National Duals championship match won by Penn State 29-18 in Penn State's sold-out Rec Hall. Oklahoma State holds a 13-7-1 all-time lead in the series, including an 8-2 mark at Gallagher-Iba Arena.

"We're extremely excited to again see two of college wrestling's premier

programs square off for a national dual meet championship," said NWCA Executive Director Mike Moyer. "Penn State's recent run has the college wrestling scene buzzing with their high-scoring style of wrestling. When you pair that with the storied program at Oklahoma State and legendary coach John Smith, we have the makings for an amazing finale to the dual meet season."

Oklahoma State won the Big 12 regular season, going 6-0 in duals within the recently expanded conference. Penn State went 9-0 in the Big Ten to win the regular-season championship and earn the right to face the highest-ranked non-Big Ten team for the National Dual Series championship.

The showdown in Stillwater will be one of eight featured duals on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

"The National Duals Selection Committee really should be commended after they faced numerous challenges," said Moyer. "When setting matchups, you had to be aware of the host institutions challenges with facilities and putting events on an open spot in the busy weekend calendar. You also had those concerns from visiting teams as it related to travel, missed class time, previously scheduled dual meets, and other challenges as it relates to preparing for the NCAA postseason. The committee worked through those challenges to accommodate the teams' needs as well as to pair teams up as competitively as possible."

On Friday, No. 17 South Dakota State (13-4) will host Purdue (8-7) at Frost Arena. Earlier this season, South Dakota State set its school record for wrestling attendance with 4,087 fans coming to watch the Jackrabbits dual against Iowa. Coach Chris Bono's team is 0-2 against the Big Ten this season - a 29-8 loss at home against Iowa and a controversial 18-17 loss at Minnesota back in November. South Dakota State finished the regular season second in the Big 12 with a 7-1 conference mark. Purdue was 10th in the 14-team Big Ten Conference. This will also be the first meeting between the two schools. The match will start at 7 p.m. Central and will be carried online at Flowrestling.org.

Two familiar squads will renew their wrestling vows as No. 11 Lehigh (9-4) will host former EIWA foe and 12th-ranked Rutgers (12-4) at Grace Hall at 7 p.m. Eastern. Last season, Rutgers defeated Lehigh 18-15 in the NWCA National Duals Series at The RAC in Piscataway, N.J. Rutgers, in just its third year in the Big Ten finished with a 6-3 conference record, good for fifth overall. Lehigh

Big Ten, finished with a 6-0 conference record, good for third overall. Lehigh finished its season with a 7-1 record in the 16-team EIWA. The Mountain Hawks were also the top team from schools in the Patriot League all-sports conference. Traditionally, Lehigh's owned the series, holding a 42-3 all-time mark. Rutgers, however, has won two of the last three meetings. The match will be carried online by Trackwrestling.com.

No. 7 NC State (12-2) will use newly renovated Reynolds Coliseum to host No. 16 Michigan (8-6) on Friday at 7 p.m. Eastern. The Wolfpack were one of the big stories to emerge out of last year's National Duals Series as they traveled to Iowa and knocked off the Hawkeyes after finishing second in the ACC. The Wolfpack will now host a young but talented Wolverine squad coming off a 4-5 Big Ten conference record. In the only other meeting between the two schools, Michigan won a 27-16 dual in Ann Arbor in 1993. Fans can watch this match online with ACC Network Extra via ESPN3.

"Friday night will be an exciting way to kick off the weekend," said Moyer. "The crowds and energy Coach Bono has been able to bring in at South Dakota State have been great for wrestling and exciting to watch. Lehigh and Rutgers came down to the wire last year and that's a great regional matchup and the job Pat Popolizio has done at NC State is amazing. We've seen how formidable his teams can be, putting solid dual meet teams on the mat the last two years. He's really got that Pack Mentality working down there in Raleigh."

Saturday's only dual will see Eastern Wrestling League champion and 24th-ranked Edinboro (8-5) host third-ranked Iowa (12-2) at McComb Fieldhouse at 7 p.m. Eastern. The Fighting Scots went 6-0 in league competition, while the Hawkeyes were 8-1 in the Big Ten, finishing second behind regular-season champion Penn State. Iowa is 7-0 all-time against Edinboro. Flowrestling will carry the stream of this dual.

"There's a lot of history between these two programs," said Moyer. "When Edinboro made its commitment to its wrestling program in the 1980s, there was a lot of Iowa influence there. It's also a great David and Goliath type of story with Iowa from the Big Ten and Edinboro, a small Division II school in Northwest Pennsylvania. Wrestling fans know Edinboro as a Division I force in wrestling, but for everything else, Edinboro is Division II. As far as the matchup goes, Edinboro had the opening for a Saturday dual and that's what Iowa was looking for and our committee, with all the moving parts with scheduling, felt

looking for and our committee, with all the moving parts with scheduling, felt this was the best way to accommodate."

Sunday's finale features four big duals, highlighted by Penn State at Oklahoma State at 3 p.m. Central and streamed live on Flowrestling and aired on television tape-delay by Fox College Sports.

Sunday's action will begin in Ithaca, New York, as No. 8 Cornell (12-2) comes out of the EIWA and the Ivy League to host No. 4 Ohio State (11-2) at 1 p.m. Eastern at the Friedman Center. The Buckeyes have been ranked in the top four all season long and finished third in the Big Ten during the regular season with a 7-2 conference record. Cornell dealt with a number lineup combinations this season and managed to carve out an 8-0 record in the EIWA. The Big Red also won their 15th straight Ivy League championship and have won 78 straight duals against Ivy opponents. After 13 prior meetings, the series is tied at 6-6-1. The dual will be streamed live by Trackwrestling.com

Southern Conference regular-season champion and 20th-ranked Appalachian State (13-2) will have a rare opportunity to host a Big Ten school as the Mountaineers will face Indiana (9-9) at 3 p.m. Eastern Sunday at Varsity Gym in Boone, N.C. This is a rematch from last year's National Duals Series. Last year in Bloomington, Ind., Appalachian State came away with a 21-13 victory. While Indiana struggled with a 2-7 mark in the Big Ten, the Hoosiers were solid in non-conference competition, going 7-2. Coach JohnMark Bentley's squad has gone 25-6 in duals over the past two seasons. This will be the third meeting all-time between the two schools with each team winning once. This match will be streamed live by Trackwrestling.com

The last dual to start on Sunday will be at Cassell Coliseum in Blacksburg, Va., where fifth-ranked Virginia Tech (17-1) will host sixth-ranked Nebraska (12-3) at 7 p.m. Eastern. The Hokies captured the ACC regular-season championship with a 20-14 win over NC State on February 11. They also lead Division I with 17 dual meet victories this season. Nebraska comes in after losing its last two duals of the regular season to finish fourth overall in the Big Ten. The Huskers did go 6-0 in non-conference action. Virginia Tech has never beaten Nebraska in three tries. Fans can watch this match online with ACC Network Extra via ESPN3.

The Pac-12 Conference opted not to participate for the second year in a row as

its conference tournament is a week before the other Division I conference qualifiers. Stanford, Arizona State and Oregon State all finished 4-1 in conference.

The Mid-American Conference will not be represented this season. Northern Iowa upset Missouri 25-10 on February 12 to claim the regular season MAC championship. Unfortunately, Northern Iowa is unable to participate due to unforeseen circumstances.

**NWCA National Duals Championship Series
presented by Theraworx and the United States Marine Corps**

[Event Information](#)

Friday, February 17

#12 Rutgers at #11 Lehigh, 7 p.m. Eastern

#16 Michigan at #7 NC State, 7 p.m. Eastern

Purdue at #17 South Dakota State, 7 p.m. Central

Saturday, February 18

#3 Iowa at #24 Edinboro, 7 p.m. Eastern

Sunday, February 19

#4 Ohio State at #8 Cornell, 1 p.m. Eastern

#2 Penn State at #1 Oklahoma State, 3 p.m. Central

Indiana at #20 Appalachian State, 3 p.m. Eastern

#6 Nebraska at #5 Virginia Tech, 7 p.m. Eastern

The NWCA brings the wrestling coaching community together to advance the sport and ensure that current and future generations have the opportunity to engage in a safe and educationally based wrestling experience. This is primarily done by strengthening existing programs, creating new programs, and providing coaches with progressive educational opportunities.

