

## THE CALIFORNIA WRESTLING PAGE

By

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**2019 STATE CIF TOURNAMENT** California high school wrestling enters a new era in 2019 by adding girls wrestling in combination with the boys wrestling at the CIF State Tournament. That's correct, the girls and boys will be wrestling at the same time in the same venue (Rabobank Arena in Bakersfield) at the state tournament. In addition, wrestling will start on Thursday and continue on Friday and Saturday with boys and girls wrestling. The Championship finals will be held on two mats; one for boys and one for the girls. We will not have an elevated stage as has been used in the past for the boy's championships. In addition, the tournament has been moved up one week from the first weekend in March to the last weekend in February. Therefore, the tournament will be held February 21, 22 and 23, 2019. There are many final details to be finalized such as weigh-in times, start times each day, etc.

**Coaching Change:** Two major coaching changes have taken place this year. Greg Varela, the successful coach at Gilroy High School as moved to Los Gatos High School replacing Ricardo Garcia. This change was not done without controversy, which has yet to be settled. Verela has led the Gilroy team to 12 straight CIF Section Championships and Gilroy has won 16 consecutive section championships in a row. Gilroy should be one of the favorites to capture the CIF State Championship as they return 12 starters after placing second at the 2018 state championships. Replacing coach Varela at Gilroy will be former collegiate standout and UFC

Light Heavyweight Champion, Daniel Cormier. He was also a NCAA Collegiate All-American wrestler.

The second coaching change is that long time legendary coach Wayne Branstetter of Poway has retired. Wayne has always been a class act and he will be missed. John Myers, who has been an assistant coach at Poway since 2002 should make an easy transition as the head coach.

Menlo College Wrestling: Two girls from Selma High School who were four-time state champions have chosen Menlo College to further their wrestling careers. Gracie Figueroa and Alleida Martinez will team with five returning NAIA All-Americans. They are Iman Kazem, Solin Piearcy, Evonne Evien, Precious Bell, and Angela Peralta. Alleida Maritnez received the Tricia Saunders High School Excellence Award at the 2018 National Wrestling Hall of Fame Banquet in June. Coach Joey Bareng is very optimistic about the 2018-2019 Girls Wrestling Season.

Boys coach, Joey Martinez returns two All-Americans and a quality group of recruits.

Menlo College has recently added a new wrestling room with three mats on the floor plus wall mats as well as a beautiful athletic office facility. Keith Spataro, former wrestling coach and now the athletic director and vice president in charge of admissions has done an outstanding job of securing the best athletic facilities for both the boys and girls wrestling teams.

Wrestling Weight Certification: The CIF has eliminated the urine testing for hydration option from the weight certification process. Not all CIF Sections will be eliminating the urine testing but some CIF Sections such as the Central

Coast Section will not be testing the wrestlers for hydration by taking a urine sample. I have been an active coordinator of the weight certification process since it was started 10 years ago. It was a surprise to me to learn that the urine testing has been eliminated since checking to be sure that all wrestlers were hydrated at the time of their test was an important factor. It is of my opinion that the CIF is concerned about the administration of the urine tests and wanted to avoid any legal concerns. Weight certification testing takes place between mid-October to January 15<sup>th</sup>.

California Wrestling Hall of Fame The 2019 CWHOF Banquet will be held on Saturday, May 11, 2019 at the Sacramento Elks Club. Ten individuals will be inducted into the hall of fame and ten individuals will receive the Lifetime Service Award. The selection process is taking place at this time. Honorees will be announced in October.