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Subject: IlliniWrestling: Barone, Gunther Receive At-Large Bids To NCAA Championships  
Date: March 12, 2019 at 3:25 PM  
To: undisclosed-recipients;



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, March 12, 2019**

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**FIGHTING ILLINI WRESTLING**

**Barone, Gunther Receive At-Large Bids To NCAA Championships**

*Six Illini will wrestle at NCAA Championships, beginning March 21 in Pittsburgh.*

NCAA Release

**INDIANAPOLIS** - Redshirt juniors [Eric Barone](#) (157) and [Joey Gunther](#) (165) received at-large bids to the NCAA Championships for their weight classes, as the NCAA announced the 45 at-large selections for nationals Tuesday afternoon. Six Illini have qualified for this year's NCAA Championships in Pittsburgh, with Barone and Gunther now joining Illinois automatic qualifiers [Travis Piotrowski](#) (125), [Dylan Duncan](#) (133), [Mike Carr](#) (141) and [Emery Parker](#) (184). The 2019 NCAA Championships will be held Thursday, March 21 through Saturday, March 23 at the PPG Paints Arena in Pittsburgh, Pa.

The NCAA Division I Wrestling Committee met on Monday to select the remaining 45 at-large qualifiers. At-large selections were made based on head-to-head competition, quality wins, coaches ranking, results against common opponents, RPI, qualifying event placement and winning percentage.

Barone qualifies for NCAA Championships for the second time in his career, with his first nationals appearance coming in the 2016-17 season at 149-pounds. This year at 157-pounds, Barone went 16-11 in the regular season, with notable wins over No. 5 Ke-Shawn Hayes (Ohio State) at the Cliff Keen Invitational on Nov. 30, 2018 and No. 5 Kaleb Young (Iowa) on Jan. 25 vs. Iowa. Barone finished the regular season ranked No. 10 in the Coach's Poll at 157-pounds and No. 16 in the RPI rankings.

This is the third time Gunther has qualified for nationals, after qualifying in 2016-17 (165) and 2017-18 (174) while at Iowa. Gunther finished the regular season tied for the team-lead in wins with 16, compiling an overall record of 16-10. Gunther ended the regular season ranked No. 14 in the RPI rankings and No. 20 in the Coach's Poll at 165-pounds.

Brackets and seeding will be announced on NCAA.com at 5 p.m. CT on March 13. All weight classes will feature 33 wrestlers.

**Illini Qualifiers:**

- 125- [Travis Piotrowski](#) (Jr.)- 3x NCAA Qualifier
- 133- [Dylan Duncan](#) (r-So.)- 2x NCAA Qualifier
- 141- [Mike Carr](#) (r-So.)- 2x NCAA Qualifier
- 157- [Eric Barone](#) (r-Jr.)- 2x NCAA Qualifier
- 165- [Joey Gunther](#) (r-Jr.)- 2x NCAA Qualifier

165- [Joey Gunther](#) (r-Jr.)- 5x NCAA Qualifier

184- [Emery Parker](#) (r-Sr.)- 3x NCAA Qualifier

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