






## FIGHTING ILLINI WRESTLING

# Five Illini Wrestlers Begin NCAA Championships Thursday

## *Isaiah Martinez seeks third NCAA title*

**CHAMPAIGN, Ill.** – Five Illinois wrestlers head to Cleveland, Ohio for the 2018 NCAA Wrestling Championships, Thursday, March 15 through Saturday, March 17, inside Quicken Loans Arena. No. 1 seed [Isaiah Martinez](#) (165 pounds) leads an Orange and Blue squad that also features No. 10 [Emery Parker](#) (184), No. 11 [Mike Carr](#) (141), [Dylan Duncan](#) (133) and [Travis Piotrowski](#) (125). The three-meet will be broadcast on the ESPN family of networks in its entirety with finals on ESPN2 on Saturday at 7 p.m. central time.

NCAA Wrestling Championships	
When	Thursday, March 15 - Saturday, March 17
Where	<a href="#">Quicken Loans Arena</a> // Cleveland, Ohio
Meet Information	<a href="#">Championship Central</a>   <a href="#">Brackets</a>
Tickets	<a href="#">thegarena.com</a>
TV	Sessions 1, 3 and 5: ESPNU   Sessions 2 & 4: ESPN   Session 6: ESPN2
Follow Live Online	<a href="#">ESPN3 Stream</a>   <a href="#">TrackWrestling Hub</a>
Team Information	<a href="#">Meet Notes</a>   <a href="#">Season Stats</a>   <a href="#">Media Guide</a>   <a href="#">Quick Facts</a>
Social Media	<a href="#">@IlliniWrestling</a>    <a href="#">#Illini</a>    <a href="#">@Illinwrestling</a>    <a href="#">Facebook</a>    <a href="#">YouTube</a> 

## Illinois Probables

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Wt.	Ranking	Wrestler	Record	Year	Notes
125	-/19/18	<a href="#">Travis Piotrowski</a>	17-8	So.	Second NCAA appearance, 1-2 last year
133	19/15/-	<a href="#">Dylan Duncan</a>	20-7	r-Fr.	5-1 record at BIG Champ., placing 3rd
141	11/12/15	(11) <a href="#">Mike Carr</a>	17-5	r-Fr.	Winner of 13 of last 15 matches, 2nd at BIG

165	1/1/1	(1) <a href="#">Isaiah Martinez</a>	14-0	r-Sr.	2x NCAA Champ, 3x NCAA Finalist, 14-1 record
184	7/5/7	(10) <a href="#">Emery Parker</a>	21-3	r-Jr.	Upset No. 6 Myles Martin in 2017 quarters

## Schedule & Streaming Information

Big Ten Championships TV & Live Stream (All Times Central)		
Session 1   March 15   11 AM - First Round	ESPNU	<a href="#">ESPN3</a>
Session 2   March 15   6 PM - Second Round	ESPN	<a href="#">ESPN3</a>
Session 3   March 16   10 AM - Quarterfinals	ESPNU	<a href="#">ESPN3</a>
Session 4   March 16   7 PM - Semifinals	ESPN	<a href="#">ESPN3</a>
Session 5   March 17   10 AM - Place Matches	ESPNU	<a href="#">ESPN3</a>
Session 6   March 17   7 PM - Finals	ESPN2	<a href="#">ESPN3</a>

## Quick Hits

- \*24 times an Illini has been crowned a national champion, including four times in the last five seasons.
- \*Illinois' three All-Americans in 2017 made it 26 straight years with at least one All-America honor.
- \*Head coach [Jim Heffernan](#) has guided the Illini to three top-10 finishes at NCAA Championships in his eight seasons, highlighted by seventh place in 2012.
- \*Illinois enters NCAA Championships with five wrestlers ranked by either InterMat or WIN Magazine, three in the top-10: No. 1 [Isaiah Martinez](#) (165), No. 7 [Mike Carr](#) (141), No. 8 [Emery Parker](#) (184), No. 19 [Dylan Duncan](#) (133) and No. 19 [Travis Piotrowski](#) (125).
- \*[Isaiah Martinez](#) is seeking to become the 31st wrestler, and first Illini, to win three NCAA wrestling titles. Martinez is a three-time finalist, carrying a 14-1 record, in his career at the Championships.
- \*Martinez became the 16th wrestler to win four Big Ten titles, joining head coach [Jim Heffernan](#) (1983, 85-87) as the only wrestler/coach combo to accomplish the feat.
- \*Martinez is tied for 11th on Illinois' all-time wins list with 112 career victories. The redshirt senior is three wins away from cracking Illinois' top ten list.
- \*[Mike Carr](#) became the first Illini freshman since [Isaiah Martinez](#) in 2015 to reach a Big Ten final, taking runner-up at 141 pounds. Fellow freshman [Dylan Duncan](#) placed third at 133 pounds.
- \*The Illini return three wrestlers from the 2017 tournament: [Isaiah Martinez](#) (165), [Emery Parker](#) (184)

and [Travis Piotrowski](#) (125).

### Five Illini Earn Automatic Bids to NCAA Championships

Five Illini earned automatic qualifying bids to the NCAA Championships, four reaching placing in the top-five at Big Ten Championships. [Isaiah Martinez](#)'s record fourth Big Ten title led the Illini, while [Mike Carr](#) placed runner-up at 141 pounds and [Dylan Duncan](#) battled back to place third at 133. [Emery Parker](#) rounded out the placers with a fifth-place honor at 184 pounds, while [Travis Piotrowski](#) earned the ninth automatic bid at 125 pounds.

### RPI and Coaches' Rankings

Five Illinois wrestlers were ranked in the RPI or Coaches Poll Rankings heading into conference tournaments. Wrestlers must have wrestled at least 17 matches to qualify.

Wrestler	RPI	Coaches' Poll
<a href="#">Travis Piotrowski</a>	18	19
<a href="#">Dylan Duncan</a>	21	18
<a href="#">Mike Carr</a>	7	11
<a href="#">Isaiah Martinez</a>	--*	1
<a href="#">Emery Parker</a>	10	8

\*Has not met 17-match minimum for consideration

### Illinois NCAA History

24 times an Illini has stood atop the podium at NCAA Championships, including four in the last five seasons. Since coach [Jim Heffernan](#) arrived as an assistant in 1992, the Illini have had at least one All-American in each of the last 26 seasons. With three Illini reaching the podium last season, the Illini again enter with three wrestlers ranked in the top-eight of their weight classes. Illinois' best team finish under head coach [Jim Heffernan](#) came in 2012 when the Orange and Blue placed seventh.

### Martinez Seeks Third NCAA Title

A three-time finalist at NCAA Championships, redshirt senior [Isaiah Martinez](#) seeks to become the 31st three-time national champion, and the first Illini to reach three crowns. Martinez won national titles at 157 in each of his first two seasons, including the first undefeated freshman season since 1999, before placing runner-up last season at 165 pounds. With a third title, Martinez would also become the first Illini wrestler to win a NCAA Championship at two different weight classes. Also aiming for a third career national title in Cleveland will be 149-pounder Zain Retherford (Penn State) and heavyweight Kyle Snyder (Ohio State).

Martinez would also become just the fifth three-time NCAA champion to also be a four-time finalist, first since Lincoln McIlravy (Iowa, Class of 1997). Ohio State's Kyle Snyder could also join the list, placing runner-up at 197 pounds as a freshman in 2015.

runner up at 137 pounds as a freshman in 2015.

### Three-time NCAA Champ and Four-time Finalist

Lincoln McClravy (Iowa, 1997): 1st, 2nd, 1st, 1st

Ed Banach (Iowa, 1983): 1st, 1st, 2nd, 1st

Lee Kemp (Wisconsin, 1978): 2nd, 1st, 1st, 1st

Dick Hutton (Ok. State, 1950): 1st, 1st, 2nd, 1st

### **Martinez Wins Historic Fourth B1G Title**

[Isaiah Martinez](#) became the 16th wrestler, and the first Illini, to win a Big Ten title in all four years of eligibility. Martinez joins his head coach, [Jim Heffernan](#), who did so at Iowa 1983, 85-87, to form the first coach/wrestler combo to win four titles each. Martinez finishes 14-0 all-time at the Championships. Ohio State's Nathan Tomasello also earned his fourth conference crown at the meet.

### Four-Time Big Ten Wrestling Champions:

Verne Gagne (MINN), 1944, 47-49

Arnold Plaza (PUR), 1947-50

Joe Scarpello (IOWA), 1947-50

Tom Milkovich (MSU), 1970-73

Mike DeAnna (IOWA), 1977-81

Ed Banach (IOWAA), 1980-83

Barry Davis (IOWA), 1981-85

Duane Goldman (IOWA), 1983-86

[Jim Heffernan](#) (IOWA), 1983, 85-87

Mark Ironside (IOWA), 1995-98

Kellen Russell (MICH), 2008-12

Ed Ruth (PSU), 2011-14

David Taylor (PSU), 2011-14

Logan Stieber (OSU), 2012-15

Nathan Tomasello (OSU), 2015-18

[Isaiah Martinez](#) (ILL), 2015-18

### **Freshmen Phenoms**

Redshirt freshman [Mike Carr](#) (141 pounds) and [Dylan Duncan](#) (133 pounds) continue push their way into the national spotlight after both had impressive Big Ten Championships. Carr, who had moved all the way up to No. 11 at 141 pounds prior to the conference tournament, built his winning streak to 11 matches, highlighted by an upset of No. 8 Nick Carr in the semifinals, before falling in the title bout. Like Carr, Duncan has come on late in the season, surprising multiple higher seeds to take third place after entering as the No. 7 seed. Both ranked by InterMat, Carr at No. 8 and Duncan at No. 19, the Illini freshmen duo will look to continue their emergence in Cleveland.

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## **Parker's Wins 15 Straight Matches**

Picking up a 5-2 decision against No. 9 Nick Gravina (Rutgers), Parker won 15 straight contests from December 1 to March 3. Outscoring his opponents 132-61 during the 15-match stretch, Parker defeated five ranked opponents in the process. Parker's 21 wins this season lead the team, while his 35 dual team points finished second only to Isaiah Martinez (53). No. 1 Bo Nickal snapped the streak in the Big Ten 184-pound semifinal on Saturday, March 4.

For complete coverage of Fighting Illini wrestling, go to [FIGHTINILLINI.com](http://FIGHTINILLINI.com) and follow @IlliniWrestling on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/IlliniWrestling) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/IlliniWrestling).



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