

# Mountain Hawks set for NCAA Championships beginning Thursday in Cleveland

[Lehigh NCAA Tournament Notes](#) | [Audio](#) | [Watch ESPN](#) | [NCAA Wrestling](#) | [Brackets announced](#)

BETHLEHEM, Pa. – After winning its 35th EIWA championship and first since 2006, Lehigh is sending 10 wrestlers to the 88th NCAA Wrestling Championships at Quicken Loans Arena. Lehigh scored 164.5 points at the EIWA Championships, its second-highest total in history and crowned five individual champions, its most since 2003.

Four of Lehigh's 10 qualifiers have wrestled at the NCAA Tournament previously, with senior Darian Cruz and junior Scott Parker earning All-America honors last year in St. Louis. Cruz won Lehigh's 28th individual national title at 125 last year and enters this year's tournament as the No. 1 seed as he bids to win a second title and become the 19th Lehigh wrestler to earn at least three All-America medals.

All five of Lehigh's EIWA champions earned seeds, with junior Ryan Preisch (No. 3 at 184) the second highest Lehigh seed behind Cruz. Freshman Luke Karam is seeded 13th at 141 after his third place EIWA finish. The Mountain Hawks finished 12th last year in St. Louis and have crowned 11 All-Americans over the last four seasons. Lehigh will also be seeking its first top 10 team finish since 2012.

In the last seven seasons, Lehigh has produced two NCAA champions, seven NCAA finalists and 19 All-Americans. The Mountain Hawks have had three or more All-Americans in five of the last seven NCAA Championships, with a high of four in 2012.

Powered by five individual champions, Lehigh claimed its league-best 35th EIWA championship and first since 2006 at the 114th EIWA Championships at Hofstra's Mack Sports Complex. Junior Ryan Preisch clinched the team crown for the Mountain Hawks, winning the fourth of Lehigh's five individual titles with a second period pin over Cornell's Max Dean at 184. Lehigh finished with 164.5 points, its second-highest point total ever, defeating Cornell by 18.5 points and snapping the Big Red's 11-year team title streak. Senior Darian Cruz became a three-time EIWA champion with a 1-0 decision over Cornell's Noah Baughman at 125, while junior Scott Parker made it back-to-back titles at 133 with a 2-1 decision over Cornell's Chaz Tucker. The Mountain Hawks' other two individual titles came from sophomore Jordan Kutler at 174 and freshman heavyweight Jordan Wood.

In all, Lehigh had nine place winners and automatically qualified nine wrestlers for the NCAA Championships. Junior Ian Brown added an at-large bid at 157 to give Lehigh 10 qualifiers for the first time in the qualification era. Other place-winners included freshman Luke Karam (third at 141), juniors Cortlandt Schuyler (fourth at 149) and Gordon Wolf (fifth at 165) and freshman Chris Weiler (sixth at 197).

Not only did Lehigh claim its first EIWA team title in 12 years, but the Mountain Hawks swept the four individual awards handed out at the tournament. Junior Ryan Preisch captured the Coaches' Trophy as

the tournament's outstanding wrestler and also won the Billy Sheridan Award for the most falls in the shortest time in the championship bracket, with three in 9:53. Senior Darian Cruz claimed the John Fletcher Award for most career team points earned at the EIWA Tournament, with 89.0 over four tournaments. For guiding the Mountain Hawks to the team title, head coach Pat Santoro was voted EIWA Coach of the Year by his peers for the fourth time. With Preisch and Cruz sweeping the three major wrestler awards, it marked the fourth time (and first time since 1986) that Lehigh swept all three.

Gordon Wolf will be the first Mountain Hawk on the mats Thursday as he drew a pigtail round matchup at 165 against May Bethea of Penn. Darian Cruz will be next against RayVon Foley of Michigan State at 125.

Lehigh has the sixth most NCAA Champions (28) and the eighth most All-Americans (147) of all Division I wrestling programs. The Brown and White have never won the NCAA Team Championship, coming as close as second in 1939, third in 1965, 1979 and a tie for third in 2004.

The Mountain Hawks finished 12th last year and will be looking to return to the top ten for the first time since finishing eighth in both 2011 and 2012. Penn State has won the last two team titles and six of the last seven overall. Big Ten champion Ohio State appears to be the biggest challenger to the Nittany Lions. Lehigh will be battling to reach the team podium (top four) for the first time since 2004.

The 88th NCAA Championships get underway Thursday at 12 p.m. from Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland. The opening round will feature pigtail rounds and preliminaries. The three-day tournament concludes Saturday with the national finals set for 8 p.m. Free live audio coverage of all of Lehigh's NCAA Tournament action can be heard for free at [Lehighsports.com/watch](http://Lehighsports.com/watch), while information on ESPN's expansive video coverage is listed below.

Event:	88th NCAA Championships
Dates:	March 15-17, 2018
Session 1:	Thursday, March 15, 12 p.m. (pigtail round, round of 32)
Session 2:	Thursday, March 15, 7 p.m. (round of 16 and wrestleback prelims)
Session 3:	Friday, March 16, 11 a.m. (quarterfinals and wrestlebacks)
Session 4:	Friday, March 16, 8 p.m. (semifinals and wrestlebacks)
Session 5:	Saturday, March 17, 11 a.m. (consolation semifinals and medal rounds – 3rd-8th)
Session 6:	Saturday, March 17, 8 p.m. (national finals)
	All session times listed are Eastern Daylight
Location	Cleveland, Ohio
Arena	Quicken Loans Arena (20,562)
History:	Lehigh's best finish was second in 1939. The Mountain Hawks finished 12th last year with two All-Americans and one individual national champion. Penn State is the two-time defending team champion.
Television:	Sessions 1, 3 and 5 live on ESPNU. Sessions 2 and 4 (semifinals) live on ESPN. Session 6 (finals) live on ESPN2.
Radio:	None
Internet:	FREE live audio of all Lehigh matches at <a href="http://Lehighsports.com/watch">Lehighsports.com/watch</a> Streaming video of entire tournament on ESPN3/WatchESPN.

--  
Steve Lomangino  
Director of Sports Communications - Lehigh University Athletics  
[slj304@lehigh.edu](mailto:slj304@lehigh.edu)  
610-758-3174



NCAA  
2018\_...tes.pdf

