

From: **Dave Hirsch** dhirsch@pac-12.org
Subject: **Valencia, Willits, Borrelli Capture Pac-12 Wrestling Honors**
Date: **March 29, 2019 at 1:30 PM**
To: **lanny@wrestlingusa.com**

DH



PAC-12 CONFERENCE

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For Immediate Release // Friday, March 29, 2019

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Valencia, Willits, Borrelli Capture Pac-12 Wrestling Honors



SAN FRANCISCO - The Pac-12 Conference has announced the 2019 Pac-12 Wrestling awards as voted on by the Pac-12 coaches. ARIZONA STATE junior **Zahid Valencia** (174) earns his third Pac-12 Wrestler of the Year award, while OREGON STATE's **Grant Willits** (141) was voted Pac-12 Freshman of the Year. STANFORD's **Jason Borrelli** was selected Pac-12 Wrestling Coach of the Year.

PAC-12 WRESTLER OF THE YEAR – Zahid Valencia, Arizona State – Valencia becomes the third Pac-12 wrestler to be named Pac-12 Wrestler of the Year three times, joining Cal State Bakersfield's Stephen Neal (1997-98-99) and Arizona State's Eric Larkin (2001-02-03). The junior successfully defended his NCAA title at 174 pounds, avenging an earlier season loss to Penn State's Mark Hall to finish the year with 31-2 record. The three-time All-American became the sixth Pac-12 wrestler to post back-to-back NCAA titles. The Bellflower, Calif., native successfully defended his Pac-12 title for the second time at 174 pounds and boasts a three-year record of 101-3. Valencia, a Interdisciplinary Studies major, posted a 11-0 mark by Major Decision, 4-0 by Technical Fall and was 11-1 in Falls. He was recipient of The Hammer award presented by *Amateur Wrestling News*. The award is presented to the wrestler who wins the national title at what the writers at AWN decide is the most competitive weight class.

PAC-12 FRESHMAN/NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR – Grant Willits, Oregon State – Willits, who hails from Pueblo, Colo., took top honors at the Pac-12 Championships at 141 pounds to qualify for the NCAA Championships. He finished the season with a 18-9 record overall and 9-3 in dual meets. Willits, a prospective mechanical engineering major, becomes just the third Beaver to be tabbed Pac-12 Freshman/Newcomer of the Year, joining Jed Pennell (2001) and Mike Mangrum (2010).

PAC-12 WRESTLING COACH OF THE YEAR – Jason Borrelli, Stanford – Borrelli was tabbed by his peers as Pac-12 Wrestling Coach of the Year. Borrelli led Stanford to its first-ever Pac-12 title as the Cardinal tallied 81.5 points to edge Arizona State (79.5 points) and Oregon State (77.5 points). The Cardinal posted wins over three ranked opponents this season (Northwestern, Utah Valley and Arizona State) to finish 9-4 and were 3-1 in the Pac-12 under Borrelli's guidance. Borrelli had five wrestlers advance to the NCAA Championships – Cole Tounnell (125), Mason Borrelli (123), Benjamin der Meeuw (140), Nathan Traylor (167) and

the NCAA Championships – Gabe Townsend (125), Mason Pengilly (133), Requir van der Merwe (149), Nathan Traxler (197) and Haydn Maley (HWT).

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VALENCIA, WILLITS, BORRELLI CAPTURE PAC-12 WRESTLING HONORS

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