



UTAH VALLEY WOLVERINES



Five Wolverines head to Cleveland for NCAA Championships
3/13/2018 | Wrestling

UTAH VALLEY AT 2018 NCAA WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Thursday, March 15 - Saturday, March 17

Cleveland, Ohio | Quicken Loans Arena

TV: ESPN Family of Networks

Live Video: [ESPN3 / WatchESPN](#) (Every Match of Every Session on ESPN3)

Live Results: [TrackWrestling.com](#) or [FloWrestling.org](#)

[Tournament Central](#) | [Brackets](#) | [UVU Match Notes](#)

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Session I - Thurs., March 15 - 12 p.m. ET/10 a.m. MT - First Round Matches, ESPN (Watch Live)

Session II - Thurs., March 15 - 7 p.m. ET/5 p.m. MT - Second Round/Wrestlebacks, ESPN (Watch Live)

Session III - Fri., March 16 - 11 a.m. ET/9 a.m. MT - Quarterfinals/Wrestlebacks ESPN (Watch Live)

Session IV - Fri., March 16 - 8 p.m. ET/6 p.m. MT - Semifinals/Wrestlebacks ESPN (Watch Live)

Session V - Sat., March 17 - 11 a.m. ET/9 a.m. MT - Medal Round (3rd, 5th, 7th) ESPN (Watch Live)

Session IV - Sat., March 17 - 8 p.m. ET/6 p.m. MT - Championship Finals ESPN2 (Watch Live)

FIVE WOLVERINES HEAD TO CLEVELAND FOR NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS

OREM, Utah - The Utah Valley University wrestling team will send a program-best five grapplers to the 2018 NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships this week in Cleveland, Ohio. The national tournament will run Thursday to Saturday, March 15-17, at Quicken Loans Arena.

Taylor LaMont (125 pounds), Demetrius Romero (165), Kimball Bastian (174) and Dustin Dennison (197) all earned automatic bids to the 2018 NCAA Championships at the Big 12 Championship earlier this month, and Tanner Orndorff (197) was picked up as an alternate, which turned into an at-large selection after someone had to withdraw from his weight class due to injury. This year will mark Dennison and Orndorff's second consecutive appearance at nationals and the first for LaMont, Romero and Bastian.

All six sessions will be televised on the ESPN Family of Networks and every match on every mat will be streamed live on ESPN3 and WatchESPN.com. Live results can also be followed via TrackWrestling.com. The first session will get underway on Thursday at 10 a.m. MT/noon ET and will be televised live on ESPN.

"I'm excited for the five guys that will be going this week," head UVU coach [Greg Williams](#) said. "I feel like we could have gotten a few more, but our focus is on the five that have qualified. All five have earned this opportunity to get on the mat and compete against some of the best wrestlers in the country."

The 125-pound redshirt freshman LaMont leads the way for the Wolverines by entering the tournament as the No. 7 seed in his weight class. LaMont has wrestled his way to a 25-3 record on the year, which includes a Cliff Keen Las Vegas Invitational title and a third-place finish at the Big 12 Championship. LaMont, who is currently ranked eighth on the latest NCAA Coaches' Panel Ranking and third on the RPI, will open his inaugural appearance at nationals against Northern Illinois' Brock Hudkins (17-10). The No. 7 seed is the highest seed that any Wolverine wrestler has earned in program history.

The 165-pound sophomore Romero has had a strong season in his

The 165-pound sophomore Romero too has had a strong season in his first year in a Wolverine singlet after wrestling his way to a 25-7 record. Romero wrestled his way back to post a true sixth-place finish at the Big 12 Championship and earn the final automatic bid to nationals in his weight class. He is currently ranked 22nd on the latest NCAA Coaches' Panel Ranking and 16th on the RPI. He will enter the tournament unseeded and will take on No. 11 Isaiah White of Nebraska (23-6) in the opening round.

The 174-pound sophomore Bastian earned his automatic bid by placing fifth at the 2018 Big 12 Championship. Bastian went 4-2 at the tournament to improve his season tally to 19-9. Bastian will enter his first trip at nationals against a familiar foe by matching up against No. 11 David Kocer of South Dakota State (24-6) in the opening round. Bastian is currently ranked 28th by the coaches and 24th on the latest RPI.

The 197-pound sophomore Orndorff earned his second consecutive trip to nationals after being named the first alternate in his weight class. Orndorff holds a 21-13 record on the year and posted a 2-2 outing at the Big 12 Championship. The Wolverine sophomore, who is currently ranked 32nd by the coaches and 25th on the latest RPI, went 1-2 at the NCAA Championships a season ago. Orndorff will open his second consecutive season at nationals against the top-seed and 2017 All-American Kollin Moore of Ohio State (22-2).

The senior heavyweight Dennison will head back to nationals for the second straight season after taking third at the 2018 Big 12 Championship to earn an auto bid for the second time. Dennison holds a career-best 30-9 record on the year and will enter tournament ranked 28th on the latest NCAA Coaches' Panel Ranking and 31st on the RPI. The 30 wins are good enough to tie for fourth on the UVU single-season record books and with that many wins on the year, Dennison now sits in second place all-time in wins at Utah Valley with 90 for his career (90-52). The Wolverine heavyweight will enter nationals in a rematch from the semifinals of the Big 12 Championship by taking on No. 9 Derek White of Oklahoma State (23-2).

"This is a solid group of guys and they will go out and compete no matter what the caliber of the opponent is that standing in front of them," Williams added. "We have our work cut out for us, but these guys are all hard workers and won't back down from anybody. All five guys will go out to win and to get on that podium."

The Wolverines finished the regular season with an 8-6 record and tied for fifth in the Big 12 with a 4-4 league record. UVU, who earned its first top-25 ranking in program history on the year by being ranked No. 25 late in the season, went on to post an eighth-place finish at the Big 12 Championship with 50.5 total points.

UVU ALL-TIME AT THE NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS

Utah Valley has now claimed a total of 26 NCAA qualifiers in its nine seasons of competition as a full fledged NCAA Division I member. The Wolverines have had at least one wrestler compete at nationals in each of the past nine seasons and the five that will be going this year marks a program high. UVU has crowned a total of two All-Americans in program history in Benjamin Kjar (125) in 2011 and Jade Rauser (133) in 2016. Kjar reached the semifinals in 2011 en route to placing a program-best fourth that season, while Rauser reeled off an impressive four-match winning streak in 2016 on his way to taking eighth.

NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP FORMAT

Each weight class consists of 33 wrestlers for a grand total of 330 grapplers at the championship event and will be competed under a double-elimination format. The three-day NCAA Championships will feature two sessions of wrestling each day. This year's national tournament will open on Thursday with sessions at 10 a.m. MT/noon ET and 5 p.m. MT/7 p.m. ET. The tournament will then continue with the quarterfinals on Friday at 9 a.m. MT/11 a.m. ET and the semifinals that evening at 6 p.m. MT/8 p.m. ET. The medal rounds will then take place on Saturday at 9 a.m. MT/11 a.m. ET and the championship finals will conclude the event on Saturday at 6 p.m. MT/8 p.m. ET.

UTAH VALLEY'S FIRST ROUND MATCHES

125 - No. 7 Taylor LaMont, UVU (25-3) vs. Brock Hudkins, NIU (17-10)
165 - Demetrius Romero, UVU (25-7) vs. No. 11 Isaiah White, Nebraska (23-6)
174 - Kimball Bastian, UVU (19-9) vs. No. 11 David Kocer, SDSU (24-6)
197 - Tanner Orndorff, UVU (21-13) vs. No. 1 Kollin Moore, Ohio State (22-2)
285 - Dustin Dennison, UVU (30-9) vs. No. 9 Derek White, OK State (23-2)