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Romero into finals as he and Orndorff secure NCAA berths
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TULSA, Okla. - Demetrius Romero won his semifinal bout on Saturday night to advance to the 165-pound title match at the Big 12 Wrestling Championships at the BOK Center. Romero becomes Utah Valley's second wrestler to advance to a Big 12 Championship match, following Dustin Dennison's appearance in the 2017 final.

"The guys he beat are All-American level guys and Demetrius has been wrestling at that level all year," said UVU head coach [Greg Williams](#). "I'm really proud of him. He's someone we know that when he steps out on the mat, he's going to put it all out there."

Romero and Tanner Orndorff both secured spots at the NCAA Wrestling Championships in two weeks in Pittsburgh, with three more Wolverines competing on Sunday to earn their spots. Kimball Bastian, Will Sumner and Tate Orndorff are also still alive in their bid to place and punch their tickets to Pittsburgh.

Romero defeated Northern Iowa wrestler Bryce Steiert, 3-2, and will compete on Sunday night with coverage on AT&T Sportsnet/Fox Sports Networks beginning at 7 p.m. CT/6 p.m. MT. He'll face North Dakota State's Andrew Fogarty in the final.

Romero earned the semifinal behind a third-period takedown with 1:21 remaining in a 1-1 tie. Steiert got an escape but Romero was able to stave off any takedown attempt to hang on.

Two other Wolverines also competed in the semifinals, but both lost to their respective competitors. Kimball Bastian (174 lbs) was edged 3-1 by Taylor Lujan of Northern Iowa in his semifinal match. Down 3-0 entering the final period, Bastian scored on an escape but Lujan thwarted any attempt for an equalizing takedown from the Wolverine junior.

Tate Orndorff (285 lbs) drew top seed and No. 2 nationally-ranked Derek White of Oklahoma State, with White picking up a 10-1 major decision. Bastian and Orndorff now move into the consolation bracket with an opportunity to cement their spots at the NCAA Championships in the Sunday's session.

Will Sumner (184 lbs) was dominant in his first consolation match, tech-falling Tucker Nadeau, 15-0 (5:46) with the bulk of his scoring coming on three takedowns and a pair of four-point near falls. Sumner faced South Dakota State's Zach Carlson in his nightcap, building a 5-0 lead before holding on to win 6-3.

"Will is a huge success story. In the classroom and on the mat. He's plugged away and gotten more confidence. We're so pleased for him that he's having the success that he is," Williams said.

Tanner Orndorff (197 lbs) was in trouble in a lose-or-go-home match against Cordell Eaton of North Dakota State. Orndorff trailed 3-2 with the clock ticking down but got a match-winning takedown with 16 seconds left to earn the 4-3 win and stay alive. He defeated Air Force's Anthony McLaughlin in similar fashion after trailing 2-0 entering the third. Orndorff got an escape and then took McLaughlin down with 29 seconds to go and was able to ride him out to keep the one-point lead and the win.

Among other Wolverines at the Big 12, 125-pound senior Mitch Brown picked up two wins on Saturday. Brown who was 1-1 on Saturday morning, used a trio of four-point near falls in earning a 16-0 technical fall (4:13) over Gregory Coapstick of South Dakota State in his first

match of session two. He was then narrowly defeated by Iowa State's Alex Mackall, 4-3, when Mackall was awarded a takedown at the edge of the mat late in the third period. Utah Valley challenged the call, but it was not overturned.

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