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**Subject:** UVU WRE: UVU earns team and individual NWCA academic accolades  
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**UVU earns team and individual NWCA academic accolades**  
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**MANHEIM, Pa.** - The Utah Valley University wrestling team as well as four Wolverine grapplers were honored by the National Wrestling Coaches Association on Friday for achieving all-academic honors. As a team, UVU boasted the fifth-best team GPA in the nation for 2018-19 and Kimball Bastian, Matt Findlay, Tate Orndorff and Demetrius Romero all earned NWCA Division I Scholar All-American accolades.

This marks the 10th time in the past 11 seasons that UVU has earned a spot on the NWCA Division I Top 30 Scholar All-American Teams list. The Wolverines earned a top-five finish in 2018-19 by producing a 3.39 team GPA. The fifth-place finish marks UVU's second highest finish in program history, as it previously posted the fourth-best team GPA in 2011-12. It also finished one spot higher than what the Wolverines finished with a season ago, as the team held down the sixth-best team GPA in 2017-18 with a 3.39 team grade-point average.

The Wolverines are just one of two Big 12 Conference institutions to make the cut as well as the highest, as fellow Big 12 affiliate South Dakota State posted the 28th-best team GPA (3.16).

Only Drexel (3.63), American (3.56), Harvard (3.55) and Stanford (3.42) finished ahead of UVU in 2018-19. Utah Valley, Sacred Heart (3.38), Hofstra (3.37), Brown (3.36), Duke (3.35) and Central Michigan (3.33) rounded out the top 10. UVU also finished ahead of fellow Ivy League foes Penn (3.29), Columbia (3.27) and Cornell (3.22), as well as the four-time defending NCAA Champion Penn State Nittany Lions (3.22).

Of the individuals honors, Bastian was named to the NWCA Division I Scholar All-American for the third consecutive season, while Romero was named to the team for the second straight year, and both Findlay and Orndorff earned the esteemed honor for the first time. All four Wolverines were NCAA qualifiers for UVU this season and Findlay led the group by holding a 3.94 cumulative GPA while studying biology at Utah Valley. Findlay also earned the prestigious NCAA Elite 90 Award at the NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships last month after holding the highest GPA of any student-athlete at the championship event. Orndorff is next for UVU by holding a 3.79 GPA (mathematics), while Romero follows with a 3.75 clip (behavioral science) and Bastian a 3.41 (exercise science).

The four individuals making the cut is the most of any Big 12 Conference institution, as Iowa State, Northern Colorado, Northern Iowa and Wyoming all followed with two. With four individuals, UVU finishes ties for the eighth most of any NCAA institution. Ohio State led the way with seven, while Lehigh posted six, and Drexel, Duke, Penn State, Purdue and Stanford all tied with five.

The individual awards included 39 athletes who brought home NCAA All-American honors from Pittsburgh with 11 finalists. Highlighting the team were five NCAA Champions including a trio of Nittany Lions; Anthony Cassar, Bo Nickal, and Jason Nolf, as well as Anthony Ashnault (Rutgers) and Spencer Lee (Iowa). Nickal, Nolf, and Ashnault were also Hodge Trophy Finalists with Nickal winning the award. A total of 142 wrestlers received 2019 honors.

"Honoring individuals and teams who have set themselves apart in the classroom is one of the greatest ways we can preserve and grow our sport," Mike Moyer, NWCA Executive Director said. "Wrestling is one of the top collegiate sports having first-generation college attendees and it's great to see so many student-athletes taking advantage of the opportunity the sport has given them by pursuing excellence in the classroom as well as on the mat."

In the Top 30 Team race, the Eastern Intercollegiate Wrestling Association led the way with a total of 11 of its member institutions represented in the top 30. (1. Drexel, 2. American, 3. Harvard, 6. Sacred Heart, 7. Hofstra, 8. Brown, 13. Penn, 15. Lehigh, 16. Columbia, 17. Bucknell, 22. Cornell) The Big Ten followed with six teams making the Top 30.

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