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Crookham Named EIWA Freshman Of The Year

BETHLEHEM, Pa. – Lehigh deferred first-year wrestler Ryan Crookham has been named EIWA Freshman of the Year, the conference announced over the weekend. An All-American and EIWA Champion, Crookham enjoyed an outstanding first-year eligibility season for the Brown and White.

Crookham posted a 23-1 record during the recently-completed 2023-24 campaign. After winning a title at 133 at the season-opening Princeton Open, Crookham burst onto the national scene in November when he defeated defending NCAA Champion and reigning World Champion Vito Arujau of Cornell 8-4 at the Journeymen Collegiate Classic at Freedom High School. The win over Arujau was the first of two victories in three tries by Crookham over Arujau during the 2023-24 season.

After an early December top-five win over Penn State's Aaron Nagao, Crookham spent the rest of the regular season ranked No. 1 in the country at 133. Crookham completed a 14-0 regular season and was the No. 1 seed at the EIWA Championships, where he claimed the title at 133 with a 10-6 decision over Arujau in the finals. He received the Coaches' Trophy as the outstanding wrestler at the EIWA Championships.

The No. 2 seed at the NCAA Championships in Kansas City, Mo., Crookham went 5-1 to finish in third place, suffering his lone loss of the season to Arujau in the semifinals.

Crookham and teammate Luke Stanich became the first Lehigh wrestlers to earn All-America honors in their first years of eligibility since 2014 when Darian Cruz and Mitch Minotti made the podium.

The Hellertown, Pa., native is the seventh Lehigh wrestler to be named EIWA Freshman of the Year since the award's inception in 1994. Other Lehigh winners include Travis Doto (1997), Ryan Bernholz (1998), Mario Stuart (2001), Troy Letters (2003), Stephen Dutton (2011) and most recently, Malyke Hines (2021).

Crookham was one of four individual EIWA champions for the Mountain Hawks and one of three All-Americans for the 2023-24 season. Lehigh wrestlers have now won 231 individual EIWA titles and have claimed 163 All-America medals.

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