

From: Tomanelli, Nick nt21@illinois.edu 
Subject: Illini WREST: Zac Braunagel Named NCAA/B1G Wrestler of The Week
Date: January 11, 2023 at 2:17 PM
To:

NT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Zac Braunagel Named NCAA/B1G Wrestler of The Week

Big Ten Release

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. – Redshirt junior [Zac Braunagel](#) was named to NCAA Wrestler of the Week and Big Ten Co-Wrestler of the week honors for this weekend's performances against No. 2 Iowa and No. 13 Wisconsin.

No. 12 ranked Braunagel went 2-0 this weekend with his wins coming at crucial points in each dual. At No. 2 Iowa the Illini trailed 16-19 with two bouts left and he was next up at 197 lbs. He had a tall task in front of him wrestling the sixth ranked Jacob Warner.

Neither wrestler would give up a takedown as it stood at 1-1 for most of the match. In the last five seconds of the match Warner finally gave up an inch and Zac took complete advantage securing the takedown. Braunagel went on to win 3-1, he is one of two wrestlers to date to beat Warner this season (Iowa State's No. 3 Yonger Bastida). This kept the Illini alive in the dual with the unanimously ranked No. 2 Hawkeyes 19-19.

At home in the State Farm Center the Illini welcomed in No. 13 Wisconsin. The Illini trailed 6-8 after three matches. Braunagel had a rematch with No. 14 ranked Braxton Amos whom he beat a week prior at Midlands for the 197 lbs. title (TB-2, 2-1).

They went back and forth again as this match looked as it was destined for another overtime round. Braunagel trailed for much of the third period, 3-2, but again his stamina prevailed. Give Braunagel an inch and he will take it a mile; he secured the takedown around 30 seconds left in the third period to win 4-3.

This win was a critical point in the dual as it put them up 9-8 at the intermission. The Illini went on to beat No. 13 Wisconsin 18-17.

A Belleville, Ill. native [Zac Braunagel](#) enters his fifth season for the Illini. This offseason he bumped up a weight class from 184 to 197 and is having his best year so far. He sits at 15-3 on the season just two wins behind matching last year's total of 17. He was an NCAA qualifier last year after he placed third in the Big Ten Championships at 184 lbs.

The last Illini to earn Big Ten Wrestler of the Week was Joey Gunther on Nov. 19, 2019. [Zac Braunagel](#) is the first Illinois wrestler to win NCAA Wrestler of the Week honors.