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Subject: NCAA Championship recap, Hodge Trophy Voting and Coach Labonde Update
Date: March 22, 2023 at 11:27 AM
To: lanny@wrestlingusa.com

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Bears, Fans, Friends, and Alumni,

NCAA Championship Recap

It is a great time to be a Bear, as this past weekend in Tulsa, Oklahoma, we made a little bit of history. As I am sure you are all aware, Andrew Alirez claimed the 2023 individual National Championship at 141lbs, becoming our first Division 1 NCAA Champion since 1962 and our first overall National Champion since Scott Hewit in 1999. When Andrew arrived on campus 4 years ago, he wanted to put Greeley and UNC on the map. I think he did that on Saturday night. I am so proud of Andrew and him reaching the pinnacle of our sport!

Our two other wrestlers in the NCAA tournament, did their best to not be overshadowed by Andrew and ultimately both exited in the Round of 12, falling 1 match shy of becoming All-Americans. Both Stevo Poulin (125) and Vinny Zerban (157) wrestled well and are excited to come back next year. Both are only Freshman. Its safe to say that the future is bright for the Bears!

Dan Hodge Trophy Voting- VOTE NOW!

With Andrew Alirezs perfect season, he has been named a finalist for the Dan Hodge Trophy, which if you are not familiar, is the Heisman for NCAA wrestling. One component of this award is the fan vote which is accounted for 10% of the overall vote. Please do your part by going to the below link and submitted your vote for Andrew!

<https://www.win-magazine.com/2023/03/21/fanvote/>

Jack Labonde Sr

~~Jack Labonde Sr.~~

On a more somber note, I am sorry to let you all know of the passing of Legendary UNC Coach Jack Labonde Sr. Coach Labonde passed peacefully on March 11th, 2023 at the age of 94. Coach was a legend throughout the wrestling community and UNC was lucky to have him at the helm of our wrestling program from 1959-1982.

A memorial and reception for Coach Labonde will be held at 12pm on Tuesday, March 28th at the Campus Commons on UNC's campus (1051 22nd Street, Greeley, CO). Please join me in honoring a legend!

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/greeley-co/jack-labonde-11206379>

GO BEARS!



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