

**From:** Cobe Michael Wastler cwastler@uwyo.edu   
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**To:** Cobe Michael Wastler cwastler@uwyo.edu



## Cowboy Wrestling Season Preview

**LARAMIE, Wyo. (Nov. 19, 2021)** – After a productive off-season, the Cowboy Wrestling Program looks ready to make waves in the 2021-22 season. The Cowboys will get their season started next Saturday in Laramie as they host the Cowboy Open.

The Cowboys look to build off of a historic post season from a year ago which saw them have four Big 12 finalists, seven NCAA Qualifiers and one all American. This season the Pokes return their entire starting line-up including all seven NCAA qualifiers and All-American Stephen Buchanan.

“This season is an opportunity for us to build on the experience we have and the success we’ve had. We have several guys that are right there and capable of being All-Americans.” Head Wrestling Coach Mark Branch Said “It’s all about improvement throughout the year to have our best performances in march.”

In addition to an experienced starting lineup the Cowboys have also already showcased the youth and depth they have in the program. In the buildup to the season the Cowboy reserves have competed in two open tournaments producing six champions and 20 total place winners in those two tournaments.

“The way we set up our season was to maximize our training for those older guys, so our younger guys weren’t fully prepared for those open tournaments and I’m really proud that they were seeking competition.” Branch said “I’m proud of the guys that went and got those matches in. and earned those results.”

The Cowboys will waste no time in facing high level competition as Arizona State, Utah Valley and Northern Colorado will all send athletes to compete at the Cowboy Open. From there the Pokes will be up against a field featuring nationally ranked teams and opponents at the Cliff Keen Invitational in Las Vegas.

The Pokes first dual of the season will be on Dec. 17 as they host the No. 2 ranked Oklahoma State Cowboys in Laramie. The Cowboy on Cowboy matchup will be a can’t miss dual as it will feature numerous ranked matchups and a potential battle of All-Americans in Stephen Buchanan and Oklahoma State’s AJ Ferrari, who was a national champion a year ago at 197 pounds.

“We’ve had a great shift in our culture and our team is doing a lot of things the right way. We have everybody working in the same direction and those things make a big difference.” Branch said “I really enjoy being with this team and I’m really excited about the possibilities this season.”

Wyoming’s schedule also features duals against Oregon State, Northern Iowa, South Dakota State, Iowa State and Missouri who are all currently ranked in the top 25. The pokes are set to have a very competitive and exciting season.

The season will begin with eight Cowboy grapplers ranked in their respective weight classes. Hayden Hastings, Stephen Buchanan and Brian Andrews are all ranked in the top ten in their weight classes to begin the season with Buchanan being ranked as high as No. 7 at 197 pounds. Job Greenwood, Chase Zollmann, Jacob Wright, Cole Moody and Tate Samuelson will also all begin the season ranked.

A group of Cowboys will in action this Saturday at the Younes Hospitality Open hosted by Nebraska-Kearney while the season will officially begin with the Cowboy Open next Saturday.

### Cobe Wastler

Communications Coordinator

### University of Wyoming Athletics

1000 E. University Avenue | Laramie, Wyoming 82071

Phone (Cell): (719)-338-6105 | Email: [cwastler@uwyo.edu](mailto:cwastler@uwyo.edu)

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