

# Brunson, Richards Conclude Illini Careers as All-Americans

## *Brunson places sixth, Richards seventh*

**ST. LOUIS** – Two of the most successful wrestlers in Illini history, seniors **Zac Brunson** and **Zane Richards** concluded their Illinois careers on Saturday with All-America honors. Brunson placed sixth at 174 pounds, while Richards earned a seventh place finish at 133 pounds. The two seniors finish their Illini careers with a combined eight NCAA Championships appearances, three All-American honors and 218 combined victories.

Illinois currently sits in 11th place with 43.5 team points. Michigan is 10th with 47.5 points, while Penn State is in first place with 122 points heading into the championship round on Saturday night.

**Zane Richards** earned his second All-American finish at NCAA Championships, winning the seventh-place match on Saturday morning with a 14-4 major decision against No. 9 seed Scotty Parker (Lehigh). After a hard-fought 7-6 decision in sudden victory in round two, Richards exposed the Lehigh grappler on Saturday with six takedowns and a point for riding time.

"I'm not satisfied with seventh, but that's what I got," said Richards after the seventh-place victory. "My college career, I'm happy but I'm not satisfied. I'm proud of the things I've done, but I always think there's a lot more things that I can give. There are a couple of situations where if I wrestle a little smarter, or do things a little differently, I'm in the finals."

Richards won his opening two matches of the championships with wins a forfeit win against Alex Madrigal (Old Dominion) and Scotty Parker (Lehigh). After dropping a hard-fought match to top seed Nathan Tomasello (Ohio State), Richards defeated Mitch McKee (Minnesota) by a 14-6 major decision in the blood round to clinch a spot on the podium. Richards' dropped his second match of the tournament on Friday night, a 6-5 loss to No. 5 seed Stevan Micic (Michigan), to move him into the seventh-place match.

A native of Carbondale, Illinois, Richards finishes his Illini career with the 12<sup>th</sup> most wins in Illinois history (111) and the 12<sup>th</sup> best win percentage in school history (.810). Qualifying for NCAA Championships all four years, Richards earned All-America honors each of the last two seasons.

"I'm proud of where I've come from. I'm an in-state kid and I'm proud that I've kept it going. I'm honored and very proud of what this university has done for me."

Brunson earned his first All-America honor by placing sixth at 174 pounds with two wins on Thursday, and then two more on Friday. On Thursday, Brunson defeated Purdue's Jacob Morrissey (12-1) and SIU-Edwardsville's Jake Residori (6-2) to advance to the quarterfinal round. After losing to No. 2 seed Brian Realbutto (Cornell) in

the quarterfinals, Brunson won his blood round match against Jadaen Bernstein (Navy) by a 12-2 decision to clinch the All-America honor, and then defeated No. 7 seed Kyle Crutchmer (Oklahoma State) to advance to the consolation semifinal round. On Saturday, Brunson dropped matches to No. 1 seed Zahid Valencia (Arizona State) and No. 2 seed Brian Realbuto (Cornell) in the consolation semifinal and fifth-place matches, respectively.

Brunson concludes his Illinois career tied with Pat Quirk for the 15<sup>th</sup> most wins in Illinois history (107) and nearly cracked the top-10 career pins list with 19 total falls. The Eugene, Oregon native saved his best season for last, as the four-time NCAA qualifier tallied a career-best 32 wins in 2016-17 on his way to earning his first All-American honor this weekend.

Up next, [Isaiah Martinez](#) wrestles Vincenzo Joseph of Penn State in the 165-pound title bout tonight at 7 p.m. The championship round can be seen live at 7 p.m. on ESPN and in the Watch ESPN app. The championship round will begin with the 197-pound match and conclude with the 184-pound title.

For complete coverage of Fighting Illini wrestling, go to [FIGHTINILLINI.com](http://FIGHTINILLINI.com) and follow @IlliniWrestling on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

### **Team Scores through Session V:**

1. Penn State – 122
2. Ohio State – 106
3. Oklahoma State – 99
4. Iowa – 93
5. Missouri – 82.5
6. Virginia Tech – 63.5
7. Minnesota – 62.5
8. Cornell – 60.5
9. Nebraska – 59.5
10. Michigan – 47.5
- 11. ILLINOIS – 43.5**
12. Arizona State – 41

### **Illini Championships Notes**

- [Zac Brunson](#) is the 55<sup>th</sup> Illini to earn All-American honors since Coach Heffernan came on staff in 1992
- Brunson finishes his Illini career with 107 wins, tied with Pat Quirk for 15<sup>th</sup> most in Illinois history.
- The Illini have three All-Americans for the second straight season, as [Isaiah Martinez](#), [Zane Richards](#) and [Zac Brunson](#) each clinched spots on the podium on Friday. Martinez, Richards and Steven Rodriguez were All-Americans last year for Illinois.
- [Zane Richards](#) concludes his Illinois career with 111 career victories and a .810 win percentage (111-26), both of which rank 12<sup>th</sup> in Illinois history.
- Richards and Brunson have combined for 218 wins in their wrestling careers

### **Match-By-Match Results (number in parentheses indicates seed)**

**125 // [Travis Piotrowski](#) // Freshman // 1-2 - Eliminated**

Round	Result
Round 1	Lost by tech fall (40) to Pat Mueller (Missouri) 10-1

Round 1	Lost by tech fall (10) Jack Mueller (Virginia), 16-1
Cons. Round 1	Won by dec. Ibrahim Bunduka (George Mason), 6-0
Cons. Round 2	Lost by dec. (9) Joshua Rodriguez (NDSU), 5-2

**133 // (8) Zane Richards // R-Senior // 4-2 - Richards Places 7th**

Round	Result
Round 1	Won by med. forfeit vs. Alex Madrigal (Old Dominion)
Round 2	Won by dec. (9) Scotty Parker (Lehigh), 7-6 (SV-1)
Quarterfinals	Lost by dec. (1) Nathan Tomasello (Ohio State), 3-1
Cons. Round 3	Won by major dec. (14) Mitch McKee (Minnesota), 14-6
Cons. Round 4	Lost by dec. (5) Stevan Micic (Michigan), 6-5
7th Place Match	Won by major dec. (9) Scotty Parker (Lehigh), 14-4

**149 // Eric Barone // R-Freshman // 0-2 - Eliminated**

Round	Result
Round 1	Lost by fall (9) Justin Oliver (Central Michigan), 4:47
Cons. Rd. 1	Lost by dec. (8) Patricio Lugo (Edinboro), 7-3

**157 // Kyle Langenderfer // R-Junior // 2-2 - Eliminated**

Round	Result
Round 1	Won by dec. (13) John Van Brill (Rutgers), 10-4
Round 2	Lost by dec. (4) Tyler Berger (Nebraska), 11-7
Cons. Round 2	Won by maj. dec. Casey Sparkman (Kent State), 9-1
Cons. Round 3	Lost by dec. May Bathea (Penn), 4-3

**165 // (1) Isaiah Martinez // R-Junior // 4-0**

Round	Result
Round 1	Won by major dec. Shaun'Qae McMurtry (NIU), 14-4
Round 2	Won by dec. (16) Nick Wanzek (Minnesota), 8-5
Quarterfinals	Won by dec. (9) Chandler Rogers (Oklahoma State), 9-5
Semifinals	Won by dec. (4) Isaac Jordan (Mississippi), 9-4

Semifinals	won by dec. (4) Isaac Jordan (Wisconsin), 2-1
1st Place Match	(3) Vincenzo Joseph (Penn State)

**174 // (10) Zac Brunson // R-Senior // 4-3 - Brunson Places 6th**

Round	Result
Round 1	Won by maj. dec. Jacob Morrissey (Purdue), 12-1
Round 2	Won by dec. Jake Residori (SIUE), 6-2
Quarterfinals	Lost by fall (2) Brian Realbuto (Cornell), 1:12
Cons. Round 3	Won by major dec. Jadaen Bernstein (Navy), 12-2
Cons. Round 4	Won by dec. (7) Kyle Crutchmer (Oklahoma State), 8-5
Cons. Semifinal	Lost by fall (1) Zahid Valencia (Arizona State), 1:36
5th Place Match	Lost by fall (2) Brian Realbuto (Cornell), 1:15

**184 // (11) Emery Parker // R-Sophomore // 2-2 - Eliminated**

Round	Result
Round 1	Won by dec. Hunter Gamble (Gardner-Webb), 6-2
Round 2	Won by dec. (6) Myles Martin (Ohio State), 14-9
Quarterfinals	Lost by fall (3) Sammy Brooks (Iowa), 6:01
Cons. Round 3	Lost by dec. (9) Nate Jackson (Indiana), 3-1 (SV-1)



**Chad Beyler**

Athletics Communication Intern

Division of Intercollegiate Athletics | University of Illinois

SID Contact: Men's & Women's Track/XC, Wrestling, Assistant Volleyball

Office: 217-300-1449 | Cell: 217-493-3777

[beyler2@illinois.edu](mailto:beyler2@illinois.edu)