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FIGHTING ILLINI WRESTLING

Parker's Overtime Win Pushes Illini Past Spartans, 18-15

EAST LANSING, Mich. - No. 14 Fighting Illini Wrestling won its first Big Ten matchup of the season at Michigan State in an 18-15 thriller on Friday night. With the score tied 15-15 heading into the final match, the Illini looked to redshirt senior leader and nationally-ranked No. 2 [Emery Parker](#) to win the 184-pound bout against No. 20 Cameron Caffey and secure the team's first conference win. Parker came away with a takedown in overtime to win the bout and the match for the Orange and Blue. The Illini trailed 12-0 after the first three bouts, but five straight wins by redshirt sophomore [Dylan Duncan](#) (133), redshirt sophomore [Mike Carr](#) (141), junior [Christian Kanzler](#) (149), redshirt junior [Eric Barone](#) and redshirt senior [Nick Gasbarro](#), helped bring the Illini back and put UI in a position to win the dual.

"The first few matches were really flat," said head coach [Jim Heffernan](#). "Duncan, Carr, Kanzler and Barone changed the momentum, and Gasbarro's win was huge in a really tough spot. It was good to have Emery (Parker) and Michael (Carr) back."

With the dual beginning at 197-pounds, the Illini fell behind early after dropping the first three matches of the evening. No. 20 [Dylan Duncan](#) was then tasked with getting the first Illinois victory of the night in the 133-pound bout against Anthony Tutolo. It was an action-packed second period, as within the first minute Duncan recorded a takedown, and then responded to a Tutolo reversal with a reversal of his own. With a 4-4 tie heading into the final period, Duncan started the third with another reversal which would give him the lead for good. Duncan won the 133-pound matchup in a 7-5 decision over Tutolo to put the Illini on the board and make it a 12-3 Spartan advantage.

No. 5 [Mike Carr](#) was up next in his first matchup since the Cliff Keen Invite on December 1, tonight looking for a win against MSU's Austin Eicher. Carr looked in-form early, recording the first period takedown to take a 2-1 lead into the second frame. After an escape, Carr picked up his second takedown of the match to extend his lead to 5-2 over Eicher. Carr's defense was strong in the final period and he earned the victory in his return matchup by way of a 7-5 decision, putting the score at 12-6 in favor of Michigan State.

[Christian Kanzler](#) looked to make it a third consecutive victory for the Illini in the 149-pound bout versus Christian Enriquez. Like Carr in the preceding match, Kanzler jumped out to the early lead with a takedown and finished the first in front, 2-1. After falling behind in the second, Kanzler responded with another takedown to regain a 4-3 lead. However, an escape late in the period by Enriquez drew the score even going into the final period. Kanzler made a quick escape, and then finished the period strong with a takedown and a point for riding time to win the match in an 8-4 decision. Kanzler's first-career Big Ten victory pushed the Spartan lead to just three, with Michigan State now leading, 12-9.

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It was a very defensively poignant effort from No. 12 [Eric Barone](#) in the 157-pound matchup against Jake Tucker. After a scoreless first period, Barone would pick up his first point of the match after a penalty called against Tucker. He would follow up with an escape point to take a 2-0 lead into the third period. Barone would only allow one escape point to Tucker in the final frame, and as a result achieved a 2-1 decision over Tucker to know the dual score at 12-all.

[Nick Gasbarro](#) got the start for the Orange and Blue at 165-pounds in what would be a very pivotal matchup against MSU's Logan Ritchie. After another tightly contested first period, Gasbarro was able to come away with the first points of the match with a reversal late in the second period. After Ritchie escaped to start the third, he was called for a penalty which further extended Gasbarro's lead to 3-1. Gasbarro added the exclamation point with a takedown in the closing seconds of the match to win a 5-1 decision over Ritchie. Gasbarro's win is the first for him in a dual this season, and was the fifth-consecutive win of the night for the Illini, which gave UI its first lead of the night in a 15-12 advantage.

After [Carver James](#) dropped a heartbreaking 4-2 decision in overtime to Drew Hughes to push the score back even at 15, the Illini would be counting on senior leader and No. 2 [Emery Parker](#) to come through in the 184-pound bout against No. 20 Cameron Caffey and bring Illinois the victory. After yet another scoreless first period, Parker got on the board first with an escape in the second period to take a 1-0 lead. Parker started the third with that lead, but an escape by Coffey evened the score at 1. The last minute of the bout was back-and-forth, with Parker first taking the lead on a takedown, then Caffey drawing within one on an escape. Caffey then took the lead late with a takedown, but Parker was poised and made an escape in the last seconds of the third to tie the score and force overtime. Nearing the end of the first overtime period, Parker recorded the takedown that would win him the match, 6-4, and give Illinois an 18-15 victory over Michigan State.

Tonight's Illini victory puts the team at 2-1 on the season and 1-0 in Big Ten action. The victory also is the fifth straight for Illinois against Michigan State.

The Illini are right back in action tomorrow as they head to Ann Arbor, Mich., to do battle with No. 5 Michigan at the Crisler Center. The dual will begin at 6 p.m. CT and can be streamed on BTN2Go.

For complete coverage of Fighting Illini Wrestling, visit [FightingIllini.com](#), follow the Illini on Twitter ([@illiniwrestling](#)) and Instagram ([illiniwrestling](#)) and like [Fighting Illini Wrestling](#) on Facebook.

Results:

197: Brad Wilton (MSU) Fall [Andre Lee](#) (ILL) (5:44), MSU 6, ILL 0
285: Chase Beard (MSU) dec. [Deuce Rachal](#) (ILL) (Dec 6-4), MSU 9, ILL 0
125: Rayvon Foley (MSU) dec. [Travis Piotrowski](#) (ILL) (Dec 6-1), MSU 12, ILL 0
133: [Dylan Duncan](#) (ILL) dec. Anthony Tutolo (MSU) (Dec 7-5), MSU 12, ILL 3
141: [Mike Carr](#) (ILL) dec. Austin Eicher (MSU) (Dec 6-4), MSU 12, ILL 6
149: [Christian Kanzler](#) (ILL) dec. Jaden Enriquez (MSU) (Dec 8-4), MSU 12, ILL 9
157: [Eric Barone](#) (ILL) dec. Jake Toker (MSU) (Dec 2-1), ILL 12, MSU 12
165: [Nick Gasbarro](#) (ILL) dec. Logan Ritchie (MSU) (Dec 5-1), ILL 15, MSU 12
174: Drew Hughes (MSU) SV-1 [Carver James](#) (ILL) (SV-1 4-2), ILL 15, MSU 12
184: [Emery Parker](#) (ILL) SV-1 Cameron Caffey (MSU) (SV-1 6-4), **ILL 18, MSU 15**

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