

FIGHTING ILLINI WRESTLING

Former Illini Wrestler Jimmy Kennedy Places Runner-Up at World Team Trials

B.J. Futrell finishes second, Isaiah Martinez, third in challenge bracket

LINCOLN, Neb. – Former Illini Jimmy Kennedy finished runner-up in the 70kg weight division at U.S.A World Team Trials on Saturday evening at the Bob Devaney Center. Kennedy dropped the best-of-three championship series to James Green by scores of 6-0 and 8-5. Also placing for the Illini in the challenge tournament was former Illini B.J. Futrell, second at 65kg, and current Illini Isaiah Martinez, third at 74kg.

With senior freestyle wrestlers competing for a spot on Team USA for the upcoming World Wrestling Championships, held August 21-26 in Paris, France, Jimmy Kennedy won three matches on Saturday morning and afternoon to advance to the championship series against U.S. Open champion James Green.

In the championships series, the Illini two-time All-American was unable to upset former Nebraska Husker James Green in the best-of-three format, as the former Husker won both bouts. Green shutout Kennedy in match one with a 6-0 victory, and then held off a late charge by Kennedy in bout two, 8-5.

After posting an 11-0 shutout of Dylan Ness in the opening round, the former Illini erased a 6-0 deficit against Penn State's Jason Nolf to win by a 8-6 decision. Kennedy added his second shutout of the day with a 7-0 victory against Nazar Kulchytsky.

Elsewhere in the trials, former Illini B.J. Futrell (65kg) and current Illini Isaiah Martinez (74kg) each placed in the challenge tournament.

Futrell, a two-time All-American at Illinois, opened competition with a hard-fought 4-3 victory over Dean Heil. Wrestling Evan Henderson in the semifinals, Futrell found himself in the middle of a back-and-forth battle for the second straight match. After Henderson took a 5-4 lead late in period two with a headlock, Futrell rebounded with a reversal to regain a 6-5 advantage to win the match and advance to the challenge tournament final. In the final, Futrell dropped the match to Zain Retherford by a 10-0 tech fall.

At 74kg, two-time NCAA champion Isaiah Martinez won his quarterfinal bout against Kevin LaValley by way of a 10-0 technical fall. Wrestling Kyle Dake in the semifinals, Martinez was unable to overcome the former Cornell grappler, dropping the match by a score of 9-2. Relegated to the consolation bracket, Martinez battled back with two more

score of 7-2. Relegated to the consolation bracket, Martinez came back with two more victories to take third place. Martinez first defeated Anthony Valencia in the consolation semifinals, 14-9, and then won the third-place bout by a 9-6 decision against Chance Marsteller.

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