

**From:** Steve Lomangino sjl304@lehigh.edu  
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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Steve Lomangino (Director of Sports Communications)  
Email – [sjl304@lehigh.edu](mailto:sjl304@lehigh.edu)

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## **Lehigh Wrestling Welcomes Nine Newcomers For 2021-22 Season**

BETHLEHEM, Pa. – Lehigh head coach Pat Santoro has announced the addition of nine student-athletes who will join the Mountain Hawks wrestling program. The four-time defending EIWA champions have added eight freshmen and a transfer student-athlete. As a group, the incoming class has combined to win four state championships and earn 19 medals at state tournaments.

The nine newcomers represent five states, with four from Pennsylvania, two from New Jersey and one each from California, Florida and New York. The class includes two wrestlers who project at the first two weight classes, three who project at 149 or 157 and four who project at the two heaviest weight classes.

“We’ve put together a really nice class,” Santoro said. “There’s a lot of talent in this group. These guys come with a great work ethic. I’m excited about what this class will bring to our program.

“We’re trying to get ‘Saturday wrestlers,’” Santoro added, referencing wrestlers who compete on the final day of the NCAA Championships. “That has been our goal for the last several years. You obviously have to fill the weight classes, but we’re looking to bring in guys who will still be wrestling on that last Saturday at the NCAA Tournament.”

Information on the nine newcomers can be found below. The newcomers will join a core of returnees that includes 10 NCAA qualifiers, four former EIWA champions and three NWCA All-Americans.

#### **Carter Bailey – 125/133 – Livermore, Calif./Grenada – Business**

Lightweight Carter Bailey from California kicks off the 2021 class. Bailey finished fifth in California this past season and posted a seventh place finish at the 2020 Super 32 tournament. In May, Bailey claimed second place at NHSCA Senior Nationals. Bailey is ranked 14th at 126 by FloWrestling and 76th overall on FloWrestling’s 2021 big board.

#### **Max Brignola – 149/157 – Rumson, N.J./Rumson-Fair Haven – Business**

A four-time state qualifier and two-time place winner, Max Brignola comes from Rumson-Fair Haven High School in New Jersey. Brignola finished fourth at 152 this past season after claiming eighth place at 145 in 2020. A three-year team captain, Brignola is a four-time regional place winner (and 2021 champion) and a three-time district place winner (and two-time champion). Brignola posted a 124-21 career record and was a freestyle state champion in 2019.

#### **Todd DeGroat – 285 – Vestal, N.Y./Vestal Central – Arts and Sciences**

One of two projected heavyweights in the incoming class, Todd DeGroat hails from Vestal, N.Y. He is a three-time NHSCA All-American, winning a title as a sophomore in 2019 with six falls in his tournament. DeGroat placed fifth in New York State as a sophomore. He also played football at Vestal Central and despite injuries his final two years, put together a 92-22 career record on the mats with 65 falls.

**Patrick Edmondson – 149/157 – Catawissa, Pa./Southern Columbia – Arts and Sciences**

From the same high school program that produced brothers Kent and Jaret Lane, Patrick Edmondson is one of two Southern Columbia graduates in the incoming class. Edmondson amassed 135 career victories and was a two-time PIAA AA place winner, claiming sixth at 113 in 2018 and third at 145 this past season. A two-time district champion and 2020 regional champion, Edmondson posted 67 falls in his high school career.

**Gaige Garcia – 197 – Catawissa, Pa./Southern Columbia (Michigan) – Business**

The other Southern Columbia alumnus in the incoming class is Gaige Garcia, who transfers to Lehigh after attending the University of Michigan in 2020-21. Garcia was a two-time PIAA champion at 195 winning titles in 2019 and 2020, and a four-time place winner with third (2018) and fifth (2017) place finishes to his credit. He went 163-6 in his high school career with 103 falls, and went 48-0 as a senior. Garcia was ranked 22nd overall and second at his weight class by FloWrestling. He also lettered in football and track and field at Southern Columbia and was a four-time first team All-State running back in football. Garcia will compete in both wrestling and football at Lehigh.

**Zac Martin – 149 – Levittown, Pa./Neshaminy – Arts and Sciences**

Four-time PIAA state qualifier and two-time place winner Zac Martin comes to Lehigh from Neshaminy High School. Martin finished sixth at 132 in 2020 and moved up to 152 in 2021 where he posted an eighth place finish. He is a four-time Southeast Regional place winner, and two-time champion, and also a four-time district place winner and two-time champion. The two-year team captain posted 119 victories and was named to the District One Academic All-League Team and the PWCA Academic All-State Team.

**Matt Rodriquez – 133 – Green Cove Springs, Fla./Ridgeview – Health**

Accomplished pinner Matt Rodriquez comes to Lehigh from Ridgeview High School in Florida. A four-time Florida state medalist and 2021 state champion, Rodriquez went 258-8 for his high school career with a NFHS national-record 207 falls. In his senior season, Rodriquez went 57-0 with a streak of 52 consecutive pins. He finished third in the state as a freshman in 2018 and finished second in the state in 2019 and 2020 before breaking through with his unbeaten senior season where he did not allow a point. Rodriquez is a four-time district and regional champion, who was the Florida Times Union Wrestler of the Year in 2021. He is a three-time NHSCA Academic All-American. Rodriquez won titles at MidWest, Big Buck and Aztec Nationals and earned All-America honors at Tulsa Nationals and NHSCAs.

**Nathan Taylor – 285 – Brookville, Pa./Brookville – Arts and Sciences**

A 2021 PIAA champion from Brookville, Nathan Taylor is the second heavyweight in the incoming class. Taylor went 31-1 as a senior with 20 falls. A two-time district and regional champion, Taylor also placed at the state tournament in 2020, finishing fourth. He posted an 87-24 career record with 46 falls. Taylor also lettered in football and will be the fifth heavyweight in Lehigh history to have won a Pennsylvania state championship.

**Jack Wilt – 197 – Madison, N.J./Seton Hall Prep – Arts and Sciences**

Rounding out the incoming class is upperweight Jack Wilt from Seton Hall Prep in New Jersey. Wilt placed third at 195 at the 2021 New Jersey state tournament and is a three-time district finalist, winning a pair of titles, and a two-time regional finalist with one championship to his credit. He also won a pair of Super Essex Conference championships and was the 2021 Super Essex Boys Wrestler of the Year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic there was no conference or district tournament in 2021. Wilt also won Seton Hall Prep's Outstanding Senior Athlete Award.

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Director of Sports Communications - Lehigh University Athletics  
[sjl304@lehigh.edu](mailto:sjl304@lehigh.edu)  
610-758-3174