



# PRESS RELEASE

NC State Wrestling

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## NC State and Oklahoma State to Travel to Italy for Collegiate Wrestling Dual

*First time in NCAA history for a college wrestling dual to be held outside of North America*

**RALEIGH, N.C.** - Oklahoma State and NC State will be making NCAA history this upcoming collegiate wrestling season. In January, both programs will be traveling overseas to face off in Italy, the first NCAA dual to be held outside of North America.

The two teams will wrestle January 5 in Naples.

“We’re excited for the opportunity to wrestle in Italy this season,” said Oklahoma State head coach John Smith. “As a program, Oklahoma State has had the opportunity to be a part of many firsts in our sport, and it will be a great experience for our student-athletes to showcase college wrestling overseas for the first time.”

“This was a very exciting dual to get on our schedule,” said NC State head coach Pat Popolizio. “It is very special for us to have our team make this international trip, and expose them to a different culture. Anywhere you wrestle Oklahoma State you are facing one of the top teams year in and year out in the NCAA, but we are also going to have the opportunity to showcase collegiate wrestling to a whole new audience.

“You always know it’s going to be a first class event when Frank Popolizio (of Journeymen Wrestling) is involved. We’re very appreciative of Frank’s hard work in organizing the logistics for this unique event.”

NC State has finished in the top-10 in the final coaches polls each of the past two seasons, and will be returning a pair of All-Americans for the 2017-18 season, led by two-time All-American Kevin Jack at 141 pounds. Oklahoma State currently has a streak of eight straight top-10 finishes at the NCAA Championships, and will be returning six of their school-record eight All-Americans from last season, including the two-time defending national champion at 141 pounds Dean Heil.

The two teams have faced off in a pair of highly contested duals recently. In 2015, the two teams were tied heading into the final two matches, which Oklahoma State scored two major decisions and won in Raleigh, 20-12. The Wolfpack returned the favor in Stillwater in 2016, as NC State won the final three matches of the dual for a 19-15 victory.

In addition to the recent close matches, the personal ties of the duals extend to the head coaches. John Smith was Pat Popolizio’s collegiate head coach at Oklahoma State. The duo has split their first two meetings since Popolizio arrived in Raleigh.

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