

ALLEN, Texas—Liberty and Apprentice exchanged the team points lead three times over two days before the Flames clinched the National Collegiate Wrestling Association championship by the smallest of margins on Saturday at the Allen Event Center.

Liberty swept the national duals and the national championship for the second time in four years, overcoming three semifinal losses and won the trophy, 157-156.5, just ahead of the No. 1-ranked Engineers.

In the 21st edition of the NCWA national event, Liberty's only championship qualifier, Austin Amos, rallied with a penalty point and a reversal in the final period of the 235 final for a critical 4-3 win over Steven Webb of UConn. Webb's loss was his third career runner-up finish in the 235 finals.

Apprentice had regained the lead after Ross Graham (197) secured a late win over previously unbeaten Robert LaPeter of Florida State. Graham rallied from a 6-2 deficit with a near-fall and a takedown in the final period for an 8-7 decision. Teammate Colton Messick (125) also claimed a first-place finish, but Chad Simmons (157) dropped an 8-3 decision to Emmanuel's Hunter Quinn.

Perennial power Southwestern Oregon ran away with the women's championship, amassing 134 points. Midland, buoyed by Leilani Camargo's pin of Ebony Ayers of Southwestern in the 191 final, was second with 52.5 points.

George Vanvalen of Alfred State, who improved to 81-4 over the past two seasons and won the 184 title with a dominant technical fall, was selected as the men's Most Outstanding Wrestler.

Maine's Samantha Frank, the most decorated women's wrestler in NCWA history, captured her fourth consecutive title at 101 with a 32-second win by fall over North Texas' Alexis Perez. Frank also earned Most Outstanding Wrestler for the fourth time. Teammates Ivay Navarro (109), Victoria Smith (123), and Olivia Demars (136) also won individual titles. Michigan-Dearborn's Marina Goocher, dropping in weight class, won at 130 and claimed her third national title. She won the 136-pound division in 2016 and 2017.

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