

Lazo and Retherford Named Penn State Student-Athletes of the Year

All-Americans honored as 2016-17's top student-athletes

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa.; June 14, 2017 – Penn State Athletics has announced its Female and Male Student-Athletes of the Year, with women's lacrosse All-American Steph Lazo (Stevensville, Md.) and national champion wrestler Zain Retherford (Benton, Pa.) earning the honors for the highly successful 2016-17 academic year.

Retherford becomes the seventh Nittany Lion to earn Male or Female Student-Athlete on multiple occasions during the Big Ten Conference era, joining: Fran McDermid (WSWIM, 1992-93), Christie Welsh (WSOC, 2001-02), Paul Posluszny (FB, 2005-06), Shana Cox (WT&F, 2007-08), Casey Sandy (MGYM, 2008-09) and David Taylor (WR, 2012, 2014).

Lazo, a senior, and Retherford, a junior, will be on the ballot for Big Ten Male and Female Athletes of the Year with honorees from the other 13 conference institutions.

The honors are the latest in a long list of athletic and academic accolades for the two standout student-athletes.

Lazo helped lead the women's lacrosse team to one of the most successful seasons in program history and a second consecutive NCAA National Semifinal appearance. Lazo began the season with a career-high 12-point outburst against Albany and finished the year with 89 points, the ninth highest single-season total in Penn State history. A unanimous All-Big Ten selection, she paced the conference in points as well as assists with 43, the second most by a Nittany Lion in a single season in program history.

Lazo was selected Penn State's first IWLCA first-team All-American in 13 years and its 42nd overall. She averaged 4.24 points per game while registering multiple points in 17 of her 21 games played and had 12 games with four or more points including the first six games of the season. The Stevensville, Maryland native was a three-time Big Ten Offensive Player of the Week and a Tewaaron Award Nominee as one of the top-25 women's lacrosse players in the country. Earlier this month, Lazo also was selected MVP of the IWLCA Senior All-Star Game.

A rehabilitation and human services major, Lazo also became the first Nittany Lion to win Big Ten Attack Player of the Year in 2017 as she finished her career as a three-time All-Region selection, a two-time All-American and a two-time All-Big Ten and Academic All-Big Ten selection. Playing for Coach Missy Doherty, she also ranks seventh on both the all-time points and assists lists in Penn State history.

ranks seventh on both the all-time points and assists lists in Penn State history with 211 and 89, respectively.

The honor is the latest for Retherford who concluded one of Penn State's most dominant individual seasons ever with his NCAA title run in St. Louis in March. Retherford was honored as the Hodge Trophy Winner as the nation's top collegiate wrestler. He was also named InterMat Wrestler of the Year. Retherford's season accolades now include: the 2017 Hodge Award winner as the nation's top wrestler; 2017 NCAA Champion (149); 2017 NCAA Championships Outstanding Wrestler; 2017 NCAA Most Dominant Wrestler (season-long); 2017 Big Ten Champion (149); 2017 Big Ten Championship Outstanding Wrestler; 2017 First Team All-Big Ten; 2017 Academic All-Big Ten.; 2017 CoSIDA First Team Academic All-District (at-large); 2017 CoSIDA First Team Academic All-American (at-large); 2017 NWCA National All-Academic Team; 2017 U.S. World Team Trials Champion.

Retherford, Penn State's 26th three-time All-American, is tied for 17th on Penn State's all-time NCAA wins list with 14 and heads into next year having won 63 straight bouts. He is the seventh two-time NCAA Champion in school history. The Lion went 5-0 with four technical falls and a pin at the tournament and ended the season with a 28-0 mark with 17 pins, seven techs and a major. Retherford was named the 2017 NCAA Championships Outstanding Wrestler for his effort and was among five Penn State individuals to win NCAA titles en route to the program's seventh National Championship in seven years. The junior was also honored for his season long dominance as the 2017 NCAA Most Dominant Wrestler. He heads into his season with a 95-3 career record that includes 36 pins, 17 technical falls and 17 majors. He was won the last two NCAA and Big Ten Championships during his 63-match streak.

A finance major, Retherford is a two-time CoSIDA Academic All-American, earning first-team accolades this spring.

Retherford's selection as Penn State's Male Student-Athlete of the Year marks the sixth consecutive year that one of Coach Cael Sanderson's wrestlers has earned the honor: David Taylor in 2012, Ed Ruth in 2013, Taylor again in 2014, Matt Brown in 2015 and Retherford in 2016 and 2017.

Comprehensive excellence has been on full display by Penn State's student-athletes during the 2016-17 academic year. A school record 114 Nittany Lion student-athletes graduated in May, bringing the 2016-17 total to 142, with more students on schedule to graduate in August. Under the leadership of Director of Athletics Sandy Barbour, 18 Penn State squads earned perfect NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) scores of 1,000 in 2015-16, up from 13 the previous year. Five Nittany Lion student-athletes earned CoSIDA Academic All-America accolades this year bringing the total to 12 honorees during Barbour's tenure in Happy Valley and

year, bringing the total to 12 Honorees during Barkner's tenure in Happy Valley and 198 all-time, to rank No. 4 nationally.

The Nittany Lions won seven Big Ten Championships or tournament titles in seven sports in 2016-17, the most of any Conference institution, and nine conference crowns overall. Penn State's seven Big Ten Championships were the third-highest total in school history (nine conference titles overall this year). Penn State captured its second consecutive NCAA Wrestling Championship (sixth in seven years), won Big Ten titles in field hockey, football, women's soccer, women's indoor track and field, wrestling (regular season), men's hockey and men's outdoor track and field and the men's volleyball team captured the EIVA regular season and tournament titles.

A total of 22 of Penn State's 31 programs participated in their respective NCAA Championship in 2016-17.

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