

Purdue Names A.J. Schopp Assistant Coach

Three-time All-American comes to Purdue after two seasons at SDSU



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WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. - Purdue head wrestling coach [Tony Ersland](#) has announced the addition of three-time All-American [A.J. Schopp](#) as an assistant coach. From his high-level experience as one of the nation's top 133-pounders throughout his career at Edinboro, to his time building a program as an assistant coach at South Dakota State, Schopp brings an exceptional skill set and high level of competitiveness to Purdue.

"Coming from Edinboro and South Dakota State, A.J. understands what we are doing here at Purdue," Ersland said. "He has been through the building process as a wrestler and a coach with the goal of moving a program forward and creating success. A.J. knows what it takes, he is not scared of the work and effort needed to push a program, he's excited about it."

Schopp's mentality encompasses results on the mat and the importance of the structure needed to get there.

"The staff at Purdue likes to put in the work and that's what I am excited about," Schopp said. "If you are willing to put in the work, and have the right support behind you, anything can be done. The administration is also top-notch, which plays a huge role in having success in wrestling programs. Together, a lot can be achieved."

Schopp joins the Boilermakers' staff after spending the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons as an assistant coach at South Dakota State. Numerous program firsts were established at SDSU with Schopp on staff, highlighted by the program's first-ever Big 12 Conference champion and Division I All-Americans in Seth Gross and Alex Kocer. Gross was the NCAA runner-up at 133 pounds in 2017, while Kocer placed eighth at 149 pounds.

Schopp's influence on Gross extended into freestyle, coaching him to a UWW national championship and a spot on the U.S. junior world freestyle team in 2016.

In two seasons with Schopp on staff, the Jackrabbits posted a 28-11 dual record, qualified 10 to the NCAA Championships, totaled 11 Academic All-Big 12 honors and totaled eight NWCA All-Academic distinctions.

"I plan on putting everything I have into the program to help it succeed in the classroom, on the mat and socially," Schopp said. "Creating all-around good people is something I have learned from the many individuals I have been around in my wrestling career and plan to instill that into the student-athletes at Purdue University. And of course, I plan to make the team tough on top!"

Wrestling at 133 pounds at Edinboro (2012-15), Schopp was consistently ranked among the nation's elite. He was known for his ability to rack up bonus points and his dominance on top.

"A.J. has a tremendous skill set on top that will benefit our program," Erslund said. "He embodies toughness and an attitude in his wrestling that I want our wrestlers to be around."

Schopp was a four-time NCAA Championships qualifier, earning All-America honors three times, and was a three-time Eastern Wrestling League champion.

He placed fourth at the 2013 and 2014 NCAA Championships and had his highest NCAA finish in his final campaign, taking third in 2015. After being upended in the first round, the No. 9 seed stormed through wrestlebacks, winning seven straight to place third. Schopp was bestowed with the Gorriaran Award for the most falls in the least amount of time, sticking four opponents in 11:53 during wrestlebacks. The Fighting Scots' third-place finish in the team standings marked the highest finish in program history at the Division I championships.

Schopp is scattered throughout Edinboro's record book. With a career mark of 133-17, his .887 winning percentage ranks second and his 133 wins are tied for sixth. He tops the career falls list with 67 and he earned a spot on the Fighting Scots' top-20 season falls list in each of his four campaigns

The Tyrone, Pennsylvania, native earned a bachelor's degree in business administration, along with a minor in economics, from Edinboro in May 2015. He and his wife Katie have a son Ryder.

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