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Purdue's Clarke, Thornton Earn B1G Postgrad Scholarships



May 9, 2019

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. – Swimmer [Alex Clarke](#) and wrestler [Ben Thornton](#), both graduating seniors and multi-year Academic All-Big Ten honorees, have been selected as Purdue Athletics' recipients of the annual Big Ten postgraduate scholarships for the 2018-19 school year.

Clarke (Carmel, Ind.) and Thornton (Stoddard, Wis.) will each receive a \$7,500 scholarship for their continuing education. The scholarship recipients were officially announced at the seventh-annual Golden Pete Awards on April 22.

Clarke is graduating with a 3.88 grade-point average as a speech, language and hearing sciences major. She is set to continue her education in a master's of science program in speech-language pathology at Arizona State University.

Thornton is graduating with a 3.74 GPA as a movement and sport sciences major with a minor in psychology. On May 28, he will begin a doctor of physical therapy program at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse.

Since the Big Ten introduced the two postgraduate scholarships awarded to every institution at the end of the 2012-13 school year, Clarke is the seventh Purdue swimmer to be selected as a recipient. Thornton is the third member of Purdue wrestling to be recognized for his academic excellence.

Each Big Ten institution developed its own on-campus selection process when awarding the scholarship. Student-athletes must have maintained at least a 3.2 GPA, demonstrated leadership qualities, served as an excellent role model and intended to continue their academic work beyond their bachelor's degree at a graduate degree program.

The scholarship will be used to pay expenses of the student's postgraduate education to include such related activities as research and teaching, as well as other expenses such as tuition, fees, room and board, required course-related supplies and books.

Clarke was among the Boilermakers' most versatile performers during her career, ranking among the

program's all-time top 15 in four individual events – both individual medley races as well as the 200 butterfly (1:59.36, 9th) and 200-yard backstroke (2:00.00, 15th). She graduated this month ranked third all-time in the 400 IM (4:15.32) and fourth in the 200 IM (1:59.66). Her freshman-record time in the 200 IM from the 2016 Big Ten Championships still stands.

Clarke scored in all three of her individual events at Big Tens in both 2016 and 2017. She was the only member of the program to compete in the taxing 400 IM at Big Tens her sophomore year. Clarke is in line to become a three-time Big Ten Distinguished Scholar when the league announces its 2018-19 honorees in June. She also garnered honorable mention Scholar All-America accolades from the College Swimming & Diving Coaches Association of America twice during her career.

Thornton wrestled at 125 and 133 pounds as a four-year starter for the Boilermakers, compiling a career record of 91-51. His 91 career victories ranks 19th on Purdue's career list, while his 162 career back points rank 15th. Thornton finished his senior campaign with a mark of 23-11 and spent most of the season nationally ranked at 133 pounds.

He qualified for the 2018 and 2019 NCAA Championships at 133 pounds and placed at the Big Ten Championships three times. Twice he received Purdue wrestling's Joe Patacsil Leadership Award and twice was named Most Dedicated Wrestler.

In addition to his success on the mat, Thornton has excelled in the classroom. He was honored as an Academic All-Big Ten selection four times and was deemed a National Wrestling Coaches Association All-Academic pick three times.

BIG TEN POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

2013 – Lauren Gustafson (Swimming), Alec LaMothe (Swimming)

2014 – Cody Davis (Football), Kyle Mosier (Wrestling)

2015 – Carly Marshall (Swimming), Manuel Gutierrez (Swimming)

2016 – Hayden Hamby (Basketball), Andrew Hoselton (Wrestling)

2017 – Christa Szalach (Soccer), Jon McKeeman (Basketball)

2018 – Hanna House (Swimming), Chris Bals (Swimming)

2019 – Alex Clarke (Swimming), Ben Thornton (Wrestling)

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