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Subject: Ashnault Earns First No. 1 Seed in Program History as Brackets, Seeding Unveiled for 2019 NCAA Wrestling Championships
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Ashnault Earns First No. 1 Seed in Program History as Brackets, Seeding Unveiled for 2019 NCAA Wrestling Championships

Bracket

PISCATAWAY, N.J. (March 13, 2019) – Anthony Ashnault (149) once again made history for Rutgers wrestling, becoming the first No. 1 seed in program history as brackets and seeding were unveiled for the 2019 NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships, held March 21-23 in Pittsburgh. Six Scarlet Knights will compete in the three-day tournament held at PPG Paints Arena.

Nick Suriano also received a top-4 seed with his No. 3 seed at 133 pounds, marking the first time RU will have two top-4 seeds at the same national tournament. With all 33 wrestlers in each weight class seeded this year, No. 16 **John Van Brill** (157), No. 21 **Nicholas Gravina** (184), No. 29 **Joseph Grello** (174) and No. 33 **Peter Lipari** (141) will all wrestle in the first round of the championship bracket next Thursday.

Ashnault passes Emil Perona (1950-52) – the No. 2 seed at the 1952 NCAA Championships – as the highest seed at the national tournament for Rutgers in program history. Ashnault has been seeded as high as fourth (2016) during his career "On the Banks".

The three-time All-American and 2019 Big Ten champion will face the winner of No. 32 seed Tanner Smith (Chattanooga) and No. 33 seed Malik Amine (Michigan) to open NCAAs. Ashnault is one of just 12 wrestlers without a loss this season, as he enters the tournament with a 27-0 record. That impressive mark includes an 8-0 record against ranked foes with wins over No. 2 Micah Jordan (Ohio State, twice), No. 3 Mitch Finesilver (Duke), No. 4 Matthew Kolodzik (Princeton), No. 7 Kaden Gfeller (Oklahoma State), No. 10 Pat Lugo (Iowa), No. 17 Tommy Thorn (Minnesota) and No. 20 Cole Martin (Wisconsin).

Suriano will face No. 30 seed Dylan Duncan (Illinois) in the first round. The 2019 Big Ten champion

Gravina will face No. 33 seed Dylan Duncan (Minnesota) in the first round. The 2016 Big Ten Champion owns a 24-3 record this season with wins over seven ranked opponents, including No. 4 Micky Phillippi (Pittsburgh), No. 5 Ethan Lizak (Minnesota), No. 6 Austin DeSanto (Iowa), No. 7 Luke Pletcher (Ohio State), No. 9 John Erneste (Missouri), No. 14 Korbin Myers (Virginia Tech) and No. 15 Ben Thornton (Purdue).

Van Brill will face No. 17 seed BC LaPrade (Virginia Tech), who he pinned in the first round of the Cliff Keen Invitational earlier this season. The three-time Big Ten Championships placewinner finished eighth last weekend at the conference tournament, which included an opening-round fall over No. 8 Ke-Shawn Hayes (Ohio State). The three-time national qualifier is 19-14 this season.

In his final NCAA championships, Gravina faces No. 12 seed Cashe Wilcke (Iowa) in the first round. Gravina picked up two wins to finish sixth at last weekend's Big Ten Championships and is 6-4 this season. A four-time national qualifier, Gravina advanced to the Round of 12 at the 2017 NCAA Championships out in St. Louis.

After he was awarded an at-large selection on Tuesday, Grello is the No. 29-seed and faces No. 4 seed Myles Amine (Michigan) in the first round. Grello (16-9) went 2-2 at the Big Ten Championships this past weekend, closing out the tournament with wins over Jake Covaciu (Indiana) and Mitch Bowman (Iowa) to finish ninth in his weight class. Grello went 14-7 during the regular season, which included an 11-5 dual record and a 5-3 mark in Big Ten Conference action.

Lipari drew a first-round pigtail match against No. 32 seed Christopher Sandoval (Northern Colorado), with the winner facing No. 1 seed Gianni Diakomihalis (Cornell) in the first round. Lipari also finished ninth at the Big Ten Championships to lock up an automatic bid to nationals and owns a 12-12 record heading to Pittsburgh.

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