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WYOMING

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Seeds, Brackets Released for NCAA Wrestling Championships

LARAMIE, Wyo. (March 13, 2019) – The NCAA has released brackets and seeds for the 2019 NCAA Wrestling Championships, including seedings and first-round matchups for the seven Wyoming Cowboys set to compete at the national tournament.

At 125 pounds, Cole Verner will compete as the No. 23 seed and face off with No. 10 Brent Fleetwood of North Dakota State in the first round of action in Pittsburgh. Verner has had an impressive junior campaign, competing in his first season in the Cowboy lineup. The Green River, Wyo., native has knocked off a couple of top-10 opponents in then-No. 5 Zeke Moisey of Nebraska and No. 7 Sean Fausz of NC State. Verner is 21-13 overall on the year with four falls, a tech fall and two major decisions.

Coming off his first-career Big 12 finals appearance, Montorie Bridges is red hot entering the 2019 NCAA Championships. Bridges is set as the No. 12 seed at 133 pounds and will take on No. 21 Cam Sykora of North Dakota State in his first match at the tourney. The redshirt sophomore was a 2018 All-American, finishing eighth in his first career NCAA appearance. Boasting a 29-8 overall record, Bridges has eight wins over top-20 opponents, most recently a 6-3 decision over No. 10 Austin Gomez of Iowa State at the Big 12 Championships.

Cowboy Sam Turner will be making his second career NCAA appearance next weekend in Pittsburgh, being selected as the No. 23 seed at 141 pounds to set up a first-round contest with No. 10 Nicholas Gil of Navy. Turner is 29-12 on the year with five falls and a trio of technical falls. Turner has three top-15 wins as a redshirt sophomore, following a successful freshman campaign in 2018 in which he qualified at 149 pounds.

Senior Branson Ashworth will be the No. 10 seed at 165 pounds at his final NCAA Championships appearance. The Cowboy will face off with Duke's No. 23 Zach Finesilver in the first round. Ashworth has had a stellar senior season for the Cowboys racking up a 32-5 overall record with a perfect 20-0 dual mark and 10 top-20 wins. Overall, 17 of his 32 wins this season came with bonus points, including a team-leading 11 technical falls.

Seeded No. 25 at 174 pounds, Hayden Hastings will match up with No. 8 Taylor Lujan of Northern Iowa in the first round in Pittsburgh. Hastings has 25 overall wins on the year and a trio of wins over top-20 foes. Most recently, he knocked off No. 12 Kimball Bastian

and a trio of wins over top-20 foes. Most recently, he knocked off No. 12 Nimbair Bastian of Utah Valley.

Freshman Tate Samuelson has turned in an outstanding debut season for the Cowboys at 184 pounds this season. Samuelson will enter the NCAA Championships as a No. 18 seed and face off with North Carolina's 15th-seeded Chip Ness in the first round of action. The Castle Rock, Colo., native is 22-7 on the year with three falls and a pair of ranked wins.

Following a 4-2 weekend at the Big 12 Championships last weekend, heavyweight Brian Andrews was selected as the No. 19 seed at the NCAA Championships, and will wrestle No. 14 AJ Nevills of Fresno State in the first round. A junior college transfer, the sophomore has been impressive in his first season in the Cowboy lineup with a 32-10 overall record with 13 bonus point wins.

The 2019 NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships take place at PPG Paints Arena in Pittsburgh, Pa., March 21-23.

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