

**From:** Lipsett, Tanner D [tlipsett@purdue.edu](mailto:tlipsett@purdue.edu)  
**Subject:** Ersland Announces Purdue Wrestling Staff Changes  
**Date:** August 30, 2022 at 7:40 AM  
**To:** undisclosed-recipients;



**For Immediate Release:**  
Tuesday, August 30, 2022  
Tanner Lipsett, Associate Director of Strategic Communications  
Purdue University Wrestling  
[tlipsett@purdue.edu](mailto:tlipsett@purdue.edu) | 765-426-4895

## Ersland Announces Purdue Wrestling Staff Changes

**Web Release:** <https://boile.rs/23WR-Staff-Adds>

**WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind.** - Purdue wrestling head coach Tony Ersland announced several staff additions and changes this week, welcoming a pair of new faces to the Boilermaker staff, while altering the duties of two current staff members. LeRoy Gardner and Charles Small join the Purdue family, accepting the titles of volunteer assistant coach and graduate manager, respectively, while Leroy Vega transitions into a role with wrestling development and Tanner Lipsett becomes a full-time supervisor of operations for the wrestling team.

Gardner takes over the volunteer coaching duties after six years as the head wrestling coach at the University of the Ozarks. He was also promoted to the title of assistant athletics director the director of men's and women's wrestling after the addition of women's wrestling to the Eagles' athletics roster in 2020-21. In his tenure at Ozarks, Gardner accounted for the school's first-ever NCAA Championship qualifiers, in any sport, and an NWCA All-America honoree. He also served as the head coach at the University of Houston-Downtown and the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School, in addition to an assistant coaching stint at his alma mater, Wartburg College. Gardner was a three-time All-American for the Tigers, winning the 2003 national heavyweight championship and helping guide his team to a pair of NCAA Division III national titles.

A member of the NWCA Hall of Fame and the Wartburg Sports Hall of Fame, Gardner has a variety of international coaching titles and accomplishments on his resume, placing in the Fila Junior World Greco-Roman Championships during his competitive career, and serving as a personal coach for U23 senior women's world team member Charlotte Fowler at the 2018 world championships and on the staff of U.S. U17 Greco-Roman team in 2022. He graduated from Wartburg with a degree in psychology and added a MBA from Rhode Island, while serving as an officer in the in the United States Navy. He continues to serve as a Commander, in the United States Navy Reserve.

A native of Bradenton, Florida, Small joins the Boilermakers after completing his collegiate career at Hofstra University this past year. Small competed at 184 pounds for the Pride, qualifying for the 2021 NCAA Championships and amassing a 38-27 record, including a 19-8 mark in his final season. He was a 2021 NWCA Scholar All-America honoree, in addition to earning a pair of EIWA Academic Achievement Awards. He participated in the 2021 NCAA Career in Sports Forum, served on the Hofstra Diversity and Inclusion Committee and was wrestling's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Small earned his bachelor's degree at Hofstra in criminology, and added a master's degree in

earned his bachelor's degree at Florida in criminology, and added a master's degree in exercise science.

Prior to his time in Long Island, Small attended Northwest Kansas Technical College, where he won the 2019 National Junior College Athletic Association 184-pound championship and led the Mavericks to a fourth-place national team finish. He also won a 2017 Florida High School State title at Manatee High School and was a two-time state placewinner. He will pursue another master's degree in his time at Purdue, enrolling in the recreation and sports management program in the college of health and kinesiology.

Vega will shift gears for Ersland in the Boilermakers after serving as Purdue's volunteer assistant coach the last three seasons. His new role as a wrestling development associate will allow him to serve as counselor for the program and will use campus and outside resources to help the student-athletes grow in their personal and professional skills. He will work with the coaching staff to design workouts and individual programming for the Boilermakers, aiming to maximize each wrestler's skill set and competitive growth.

Going into his 17<sup>th</sup> year at Purdue and 13<sup>th</sup> season with the wrestling program, Lipsett will transition into a full-time role as the Boilermakers' supervisor of operations. He spent 13 years as a full-time member of Purdue's athletics communications office, and the last three years in a hybrid role with communications and operations for the wrestling program. In addition to his duties with travel, logistics and scheduling, Lipsett will take on a more active role with on-campus recruiting and recruiting communication with prospective student athletes. He will be replaced in the Purdue athletics communications office by William Soulé, who joins the Boilermakers after serving as the wrestling communications contact at the University of Oklahoma in 2021-22. Soulé will start his position at Purdue in September.

The Boilermakers will officially start their season with their first practice on Oct. 10, while Purdue's first competition is scheduled for Sunday, November 6, heading to the Clarion Open.

*Tanner D Lipsett*  
*Supervisor of Wrestling Operations /*  
*Associate Director Strategic Communications*  
*Purdue University Athletics*  
*900 John R. Wooden Drive*  
*Mackey Arena - Room 2216*  
*West Lafayette, Ind. 47907*  
*Office: (765) 494-3197*  
*Twitter: @Tanner\_Lipsett*  
[www.PurdueSports.com](http://www.PurdueSports.com)

