



NAVY ATHLETICS

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Wrestling Announces 2023-24 Schedule

ANNAPOLIS, Md. - Fourth-year head coach Cary Kolat announced the 2023-24 Navy wrestling schedule on Monday.

The 2023-24 campaign features 16 duals and three tournaments during the regular season. The Mids will wrestle three duals at Alumni Hall along with the Navy Quad Meet.

Fans can get their first look at the 2023-24 squad at the Blue and Gold Wrestle-Offs on Friday, Oct. 20 at 7 p.m. The event will take place at Dahlgren Hall and admission is free.

Navy opens its 115th season with a dual against Illinois. The Mids will battle the Fighting Illini on Saturday, Nov. 4 at 2 p.m. ET in Champaign, Ill. The dual will serve as just the third all-time meeting between the two programs and the first in Champaign. Navy claimed the first matchup, 25-8, in Annapolis in 1952 and Illinois won the last contest, 20-13, at the 1995 Virginia Duals.

The Mids return to Annapolis to host the Navy Quad Meet on Sunday, Nov. 12. Navy will wrestle Morgan State, Pitt and VMI at Alumni Hall with the first duals beginning at noon. Admission for the quad meet is free.

Morgan State will make its first trip to Annapolis for its second clash against Navy. The Mids won the first meeting, 37-6, at the 1982 Virginia Duals.

Navy has been victorious in 25 of its 40 meetings against Pitt. The two programs squared off for the first time since 1997 during the shortened Covid-19 season (2021) and the Panthers bested the Mids, 22-14.

Navy will look to extend its winning streak against VMI in the 16th all-time matchup. The Mids have won 12 duals in the all-time series, including the last five.

Navy will then host the 45th annual Navy Classic on Saturday, Nov. 18. The event will be held at McDonough School in Owings Mills, Md., at 10 a.m. Expected participants include Air Force, American, Bloomsburg, Bucknell, The Citadel, Cleveland State, Davidson, Kent State, Lock Haven, defending champion Nebraska, Ohio and Princeton. The Mids finished in third place of 12 teams in

their home tournament in 2022.

Coach Kolat will send 10 wrestlers to Las Vegas, Nev., to compete in the Cliff Keen Las Vegas Invitational, the nation's biggest regular-season collegiate wrestling tournament. The event takes place Dec. 1-2 at the Westgate Paradise Event Center. Josh Koderhandt (141) and Jacob Koser (197) placed fourth and seventh in their respective bouts to help Navy place 14th of 33 teams last season. Last year's tournament featured over 100 nationally-ranked wrestlers and 10 programs ranked in the NWCA Division I Wrestling Coaches Top 25 Poll.

Navy returns to dual competition for its second-ever contest against Ohio on Sunday, Dec. 10 at 2 p.m. The dual will be hosted by Jefferson Morgan High School in Jefferson, Pa. The Mids won their first dual over the Bobcats, 21-14, in Athens during the 2021-22 campaign.

Prior to the holiday break, Navy will face its first EIWA opponent, American, in Washington, D.C. The dual is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. The Mids have claimed 14 of the 16 matchups and have scored 30 or more points in eight duals against the Eagles.

Navy opens the new year with the Franklin & Marshall Open on Friday, Jan. 5 in Lancaster, Pa. Brendan Ferretti (133), Koser and Grady Griess (285) won individual titles at the tournament last season.

The Mids then travel to Hampton, Va., for the Virginia Duals slated for Jan. 12 and 13. Opponents and start times are still to be determined.

Navy wrestles back-to-back days the following week at EIWA foes Lehigh (Jan. 20, 2 p.m.) and Binghamton (Jan. 21, 2 p.m.).

The Mids will go toe to toe with the Mountain Hawks for the 104th time in a series that dates back to 1910. Lehigh leads the all-time series, 55-48, and won last year's dual in Annapolis, 21-16.

Navy and Binghamton will square off for the third-consecutive season. The Mids evened the all-time series (1-1) with a dramatic comeback win on senior day last season. Binghamton held a 15-6 lead, but Navy won three of the final four bouts to rally for a 19-18 victory.

Navy resumes its rivalry with North Carolina on Sunday, Jan. 28 at 3 p.m. in Chapel Hill, N.C. The two teams will face one another for the 59th time and the first time since 2016. The Mids have won 38 duals against the Tar Heels and three of the last five in Chapel Hill.

Navy concludes the regular season with three-straight duals in Annapolis. All three contests will be held at Alumni Hall and tickets will go on sale at the start of 2024.

The homestand opens against coach Kolat's alma mater Lock Haven on Friday, Feb. 2 at 7:30 p.m. The Mids will battle the Bald Eagles in Annapolis for the first time and fifth time overall. Both clubs have earned two wins in the series, with Lock Haven claiming the last two meetings.

Navy resumes EIWA competition the next day against Bucknell at 7:30 p.m. The Mids have won the last 21 duals against the Bison and 25 of the 26 overall meetings. Navy won last year's matchup in Lewisburg, 25-9.

The regular season comes to a close with the annual Army-Navy Star Match presented by USAA on Friday, Feb. 16 at 7:30 p.m. Navy will wrestle its biggest rival for the 69th-consecutive season and look to claim its 53rd win in the all-time series. The Mids won last year's Star Match in West Point, 18-13, thanks to a thrilling victory by Andrew Cerniglia (157) in the final bout of the dual.

The postseason starts with the EIWA Championship hosted by Bucknell in Lewisburg, Pa., March 8-9. Navy returns eight athletes who wrestled at last year's EIWA Championship, including Griess who claimed the heavyweight title. The Mids finished in a tie for fourth place of 17 teams at the league championship last season.

Athletes who qualify based on their EIWA Championship placement will then compete at the NCAA Championship. The national meet will take place March 21-23 at the T-Mobile Center in Kansas City, Mo. Navy brings back four of its five NCAA qualifiers from a year ago (Ferretti, Koderhandt, David Key, Griess) as well as Cerniglia who competed at nationals in 2021 and 2022.