Three Nittany Lion Wrestlers Notch Dominant Wins at NWCA All-Star Classic in Austin, Texas

Kerkvliet, Brooks and Starocci all victorious in exhibition matches

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa.; Nov. 22, 2022 – Three Penn State All-Americans took part in the 2022 NWCA All-Star Classic in Austin, Texas. No. 1 Carter Starocci, No. 1 Aaron Brooks and No. 2 Greg Kerkvliet each participated in the exhibition and all three came away with impressive victories. **The NWCA All-Star bouts do not count as official NCAA matches, on the athlete's win-loss record or towards their RPIs.**

Kerkvliet faced No. 4 Tony Cassioppi of Iowa in a rematch of last year's B1G semifinal match (won 6-4 SV by Cassioppi). Kerkvliet used a clean takedown in the first period to take a one-point, 2-1 lead after the opening stanza with 1:00 in riding time to his side. He chose down to start the second period and quickly escaped for a 3-1 lead. He took Cassioppi down once more and rode him for the bulk of the period before the Hawkeye escaped to 5-3 score. Cassioppi chose down to start the third period and eventually escaped to a 5-4 Kerkvliet lead but the Lion had a riding time point wrapped up. Kerkvliet iced the bout with a final takedown. Cassioppi added one final escape but Kerkvliet, with a riding time point, rolled to the 8-5 win.

Brooks battled No. 2 Parker Keckeisen of Northern Iowa in a rematch of the 2021 NCAA semifinal bout (a 6-4 Brooks win). Brooks took control early, taking Keckeisen down twice in the first two minutes for an early 4-1 lead. The Northern Iowa wrestler managed an escape before the period ended to cut Brooks' lead to 4-2, but Brooks had :50 of riding time. Keckeisen chose down to start the second period and Brooks quickly added to his lead, notching a third takedown to lead 6-4 after Keckeisen escaped. Brooks added a final counter takedown in the second to lead 8-5 after two periods. Brooks escapes to start the third period and quickly picked up his fifth takedown to up his lead to 11-5. Keckeisen managed a late escape after Brooks cut him loose, but Brooks had the riding time point locked up and rolled to an impressive 12-8 win.

Starocci took on No. 2 Mekhi Lewis of Virginia Tech in a rematch of last year's NCAA title bout (won 5-5, TB2 RT by Starocci) last March. Starocci controlled the pace of the first period, working his way in on three solid shots but Lewis was able to play defense and send the bout to the second period tied 0-0. Starocci chose down to start the second and quickly escaped in just :05 to take a 1-0 lead. Starocci continued to pressure Lewis in the second period but could not break through his defense and carried the 1-0 lead into the third. Lewis chose down to start the third period and Starocci went to work on top. The Nittany Lion put together a dominant ride, controlling Lewis for the entirety of the final stanza. In the end, he rolled up almost 2:00 in riding time and posted the impressive 2-0 victory.

The Nittany Lions are 1-0 overall, 0-0 in B1G duals. Penn State returns to action on Dec. 2 and 4 with a two dual road trip. Penn State will trek to Trenton, N.J., to face the Rider Broncs on Friday, Dec. 2, at 7:30 p.m. in CURE Arena. Two days later, The Nittany Lions visit Lehigh on Sunday, Dec. 4, for a 2 p.m. dual.

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