

Strickland, Parisi Advance to NCAA Tournament

Written by Brandon McGinnis
Saturday, 09 March 2013 22:21

Redshirt sophomore Dominic Parisi and redshirt freshman Zack Strickland finished second, but both qualify for the NCAA Championships, as Appalachian State University finished sixth at the Southern Conference Championships on Saturday at

Cameron Hall on the campus of Virginia Military Institute. After claiming a major decision in the first round and a 9-3 decision over No. 3 seed Paul Duggan of Campbell, Strickland, who was the No. 2 seed, faced Chattanooga's Josh Condon for the third time this season.

Strickland and Condon fought to a 2-2 deadlock after the second period, but Condon strung together three-straight takedowns to engineer a 7-3 decision, clinching the runner-up finish. Despite the second place finish, No. 3 Duggan finished third in the wrestleback bracket, giving Strickland the second automatic qualifier to the National Championships.

Parisi also had a memorable debut at the SoCon Championships, earning a second-place finish. The Concord, N.C. native tallied a pin and two major decisions in his three wins. A loss to top-seed Nick Soto of UTC placed him in the wrestleback bracket, where he totaled two wins. With Chattanooga's Nick Soto capturing the championship at 125 pounds, Parisi earned a true second-place match with Campbell's Eric Montoya to determine who would earn the second at-large automatic qualifier.

After Montoya took a 5-4 lead into the final period, Parisi tallied a reversal 16 seconds into the third period. Parisi was able to hold off Montoya for his first win in three tries over the Fighting Camel. Strickland and Parisi becomes the first at-large automatic qualifiers since Austin Trotman and Terreyl Williams both got into the Championships in 2008. The Muncy, Pa. native enters the NAAs with a 24-11 record, while Parisi carries a 28-11 mark.

In one of the most surprising runs of the tournament, No. 6 seed, freshman Zach Kechter (149), began his day with an upset 4-3 decision over No. 3 seed, Zeb Stewart of VMI. After a loss to Ryan Medved of Davidson, Kechter added another upset, this time over No. 4 seed Jordan Dix in a 5-2 decision.

In the third place bout, Kechter faced No. 5 seed, Davidson's Kevin Birmingham. In the opening period, Kechter tallied two takedowns, but Birmingham escaped both to make the score, 4-2. The Wildcat added two takedowns in the second period, as Kechter could only escape one, giving Birmingham the advantage entering the final period.

In the third period, Birmingham added a quick escape, but a key takedown by Kechter drew the score even at 7-7. As Kechter was above three minutes of riding time, the freshman was called for stalling twice, giving Birmingham the point and sending the bout into sudden victory.

In the sudden victory period, it took Kechter 1:23 to earn the necessary takedown to the 10-8 sudden victory win.

Falling in the wrestleback after capturing one win each was junior Chris Johnson, redshirt sophomore Paul Weiss and sophomore Joe Cummings. Weiss picked up an opening bout with a 3-1 decision over Gardner-Webb's Blake Salyer, but suffered back-to-back losses to end his tournament run.

After dropping his opening bout, Johnson fought back with an upset over No. 6 seed Matt Zarth of Davidson. Johnson tried to go for his second-straight upset against No. 5 seed Davante Andujar, but fell just short with a 3-2 decision.

Strickland, Parisi Advance to NCAA Tournament

Written by Brandon McGinnis
Saturday, 09 March 2013 22:21

Active wins leader, senior Brett Boston, was unable to make it three-straight wins over Davidson's Anthony Elias this season, falling to the Wildcat, 7-3. Later, Boston was defeated by UTC's Alex Ward to end his career at Appalachian with 52 career wins.

Junior Collins Creech (157), sophomore Jake Johnson (184) and redshirt freshman Colin Hedash (174) also fell in their opening two matches to end their conference championship run. Chattanooga took first-place in the tournament with 102.5 points, as they take home its third-straight tournament championship. The Mountaineers finished sixth with 27 points. Parisi and Strickland now shift their focus to their respective NCAA National Championship trips. The tournament begins on Thursday, March 21 at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines, Iowa.

Photo Courtesy: Dominic Parisi, ASU Athletics