

Parisi, Strickland Shine at NCAA Championships

Written by Brandon McGinnis
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Despite being Appalachian State University's only two participants at this season's NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships, redshirt sophomore Dominic Parisi (Concord, N.C./Jay M. Robinson) and

redshirt freshman Zack Strickland (Muncy, Pa./Muncy) received the attention of wrestling fans across the nation as the duo combined for a 3-1 record on the opening day of the tournament on Thursday at Wells Fargo Arena.

Parisi headlined the pair with back-to-back victories over seeded opponents, while Strickland captured an opening round victory, but fell in the second round to the second-seeded David Taylor of Penn State.

Parisi began his tournament run at 125 pounds with the task of defeating No. 5 seed David Garnett of Virginia Tech, who entered the championships with 27 wins on the season. The redshirt sophomore started quickly with two takedowns to open the first period and continued controlled after with a 4-2 score. After adding an escape, Garnett rallied with a takedown that Parisi was able to escape. Garnett added another takedown as the score moved to 6-4 to begin the final period.

Garnett added a quick takedown to draw the score even, as Parisi was able to escape with a minute left. The App was able to hang on to his 7-6 lead to stun the fifth-seeded Garnett and advance to the round of 16.

Parisi's road did not get easier, facing No. 12 seed Tyler Cox of Wyoming, who defeated Southern Conference Champion, Nick Soto of Chattanooga, in the opening round.

The Concord, N.C. native began the bout well, tallying a quick takedown and held a 2-1 lead heading into the second period. Cox got himself back into the match with two near-fall points, but Parisi evened the bout with an escape at 3-3 with Cox holding the over a minute of riding time.

In the final period, Parisi grabbed a quick takedown, but Cox escaped as Parisi carried a 5-4 lead with under a minute left. Cox then brought down Parisi with just two seconds left in the bout, but the takedown was waved off by the referee. After a Wyoming challenge, Parisi was awarded the 5-4 decision and a trip to the round of 8.

Parisi's next bout will be against No. 4 seed Nicholas Megaludis of Penn State. Megaludis currently sits at 28-3 on the season.

Strickland (165) got back on the winning track after suffering a heart-breaking loss at the SoCon Championships to fellow NCAA Championship participant, Josh Condon of Chattanooga. In his first match of the day, Strickland paired up with Nicholas Visicaro of Rutgers, who came into the championships with a 15-10 record.

Strickland started quickly, grabbing an early takedown and taking a 2-1 lead into the second period. Strickland started to pull away in the second period, earning an escape and a takedown to take a 5-1 lead into the final period. The Muncy, Pa. native clinched his victory in the final period, scoring a 6-1 win over Visicaro.

In his next bout, Strickland was unable to keep up with Big 10 champion, Taylor, falling in the opening period. Strickland will await Mark Martin of Ohio State in the wrestleback bracket, who defeated Navy's Peyton Walsh, 6-1, in the opening round of the consolation bracket. His match

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is slated for 11:45 a.m.

Fans can follow the second day of the NCAA Wrestling Championships on ESPN3 and ESPNU.

Photo Courtesy: Dominic Parisi, ASU Athletics