

ASU Wrestling Competes At Southern Scuffle

Written by Paul Blascovich
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To ring in the new year, Appalachian State wrestling competed in day one of the 2012 Southern Scuffle, hosted by Chattanooga at the McKensie Arena

on Sunday. Five Mountaineers have survived the opening rounds and will compete on Monday for a shot at securing a spot on the podium.

With 49 points, ASU unofficially ranks seventh of 22 teams after the first day of competition. No. 5 Penn State leads with 118 points, followed by No. 3 Minnesota (110.5), No. 11 Missouri (83.5) and No. 4 Cornell (79).

Appalachian's top-ranked wrestler, No. 10 Austin Trotman (Winston-Salem, N.C./Mount Tabor), cruised to easy victories in his first two matches at 184 pounds. He scored a 14-5 major decision over Minnesota's Joel Bauman and a 12-3 major over John Tuck of Oregon State. The quarterfinals saw Trotman paired against No. 11 Jon Fausey from Virginia, and the Mountaineer came up with a 7-3 decision to clinch at least sixth place overall. Trotman will face No. 4 Steve Bosak of Cornell in Monday's semifinal.

No. 20 Kyle Blevins (Sapulpa, Okla./Sapulpa) earned a pin over Cleveland State's Corey Carlo in his first match and qualified for the 165-pound quarterfinal by way of a forfeit. Blevins squared off against No. 12 Zach Toal of Missouri and slipped by with a 2-0 decision to earn his place on the podium. The ASU senior will face top-seeded No. 1 David Taylor from Penn State in his semifinal bout.

Senior 141-pounder Mike Kessler (Bay City, Mich./Western) became the Apps' third quarterfinalist after a 7-1 decision over Old Dominion's Jacob Kingett and a 3-1 win over Luke Vaith of Hofstra. Top seed No. 5 Mike Mangrum of Oregon State was too much for Kessler and earned a 16-6 major decision to send the Mountaineer to the consolation bracket. Kessler faces Indiana's Matt Ortega in his first match Monday to earn a guaranteed spot on the podium.

Senior Savva Kostis (Boone, N.C./Watauga) fell to unattached Marcus Cain (Duke), 6-3, in his first bout at 149 pounds, but rebounded with a 1:45 pin over Davante Andujar of Gardener-Webb. After consecutive major decisions over Virginia's Shawn Harris (13-2) and Old Dominion's Brennan Brumley (17-6), Kostis has worked his way back into contention. He stands one win from a place on the podium and will meet unattached grappler Augustus Sako (Virginia) on Monday.

Appalachian's remaining survivor is 133-pounder Brett Boston (Morganton, N.C./Freedom), who fell to Duke's Brandon Gambucci in a 12-0 major decision to open the day. Boston fought back to earn decisions over Adam Matthews of NC State (7-3) and Jacob Wojcik of Ohio (8-6) to put himself one win off the podium. In his path is Navy's No. 18 Aaron Kalil, who was upset in his quarterfinal to fall to the wrestle-back bracket.

Chris Johnson (Hillsborough, N.C./Orange) (133 pounds) qualified for the fifth consolation round before being eliminated by No. 16 Garrett Drucker of Oregon State (10-1), and heavyweight Joe Cummings (Valley Cottage, N.Y./Nyack) advanced equally far on the day, suffering losses to No. 5 Jeremy Johnson of Ohio (pin, 1:53) and Ethan Hayes of Virginia (6-0).

Action resumes at 9 a.m. on Monday, with live results available at TrackWrestling.com.

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Photo Courtesy: Brett Boston, by Keith Cline, ASU Athletics