

ASU Wrestling Takes Three Places At Southern Scuffle

Written by Paul Blascovich

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ASU senior Kyle Blevins (Sapulpa, Okla./Sapulpa) defeated a pair of nationally-ranked wrestlers to capture third place at 165 pounds, leading Appalachian State wrestling as one of three place-winners during day two

of the 2012 Southern Scuffle, hosted by Chattanooga at the McKensie Arena on Monday. Blevins was joined by classmates Austin Trotman (Winston-Salem, N.C./Mount Tabor) and Mike Kessler (Bay City, Mich./Western) who took fifth and sixth place in their respective classes. As a squad, Appalachian State finished in eighth place overall, earning 63.5 team points. No. 20 Blevins began the day with a challenge of top-seeded No. 1 David Taylor of Penn State but suffered a 12-3 major decision loss. In the consolation bracket, the Mountaineer pulled out a narrow 2-0 victory over Nicholas Sulzer of Virginia and closed out the day with a 4-2 decision over Hofstra's No. 3 Paul Gillespie. The win marked the Mountaineers' first victory over a top-10 wrestler this season. Blevins' third-place finish follows his sixth-place Scuffle showing last year, and his 106 career wins are now two short of third place on ASU's all-time list.

No. 10 Trotman opened the day with a semifinal loss to No. 4 Stephen Bosak of Cornell, 7-3. He then suffered a 2-1 loss to No. 8 Kevin Steinhaus of Minnesota. In his fourth-straight bout against a ranked wrestler, Trotman came out on top over No. 15 Luke Rebertus of Navy, earning a 7-3 decision to secure fifth place. With 111 career wins, Trotman is three away from becoming ASU's all-time winningest wrestler.

Kessler began Monday with a 6-2 decision over Indiana's Matt Ortega and followed with a 4:51 pin of No. 15 Mike Nevinger of Cornell—his second win over a ranked wrestler this season. In the consolation semifinal, Kessler was edged by Missouri's Nicholas Hucke, 5-4, and in the fifth-place bout, he fell to Old Dominion's Justin LaValle, 1-4. The preseason all-Southern Conference selection has 20 wins on the season and stands to surpass his career-high of 27 by March.

Senior Savva Kostis (Boone, N.C./Watauga) also competed Monday, but met an early exit on a 4:31 pin by unattached grappler Augustus Sako (Virginia). Junior Brett Boston (Morganton, N.C./Freedom) fell one win short of a spot on the podium, having been eliminated by Navy's No. 18 Aaron Kalil, 12-3.

Appalachian State is back in action later in the week when they travel to face George Mason on Thursday, Jan. 5. The meeting is ASU's first-ever against the Patriots.

Photo Courtesy: Kyle Blevins, by Meghan Gay, ASU Athletics