

Burns Earns Spot on U.S. National Team

Written by Ryan Bower
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Appalachian State University wrestling assistant coach Daren Burns grabbed a third-place finish at the recently completed USA Wrestling World Team Trials in Stillwater, Okla. on June 21. Burns, who competed in the Greco-Roman tournament (96 kg/211.5 lbs), nearly snagged a first-round win over eventual tournament champion Caylor Williams, but was pinned while leading 6-4.

In the consolation bracket, Burns roared back with wins over Patrick Carey and Tyler Lehman to finish in the top three in his weight class. Burns earned a victory via medical forfeit in the first round of consolation before earning the win over Carey via pin and notching a technical against Lehman.

With the victory, Burns earned a spot on the 2013 US National Team after a sixth-place finish at last year's Olympic Trials and was just two spots shy of representing the United States at the World Championships in Budapest, Hungary in September.

"It felt great to compete in the World Team Trials after finishing fourth at the US Open in Las Vegas in April," said Burns. "I fell a little short of my goal, but I am excited to represent App State on the U.S. National Team this year."

In addition to Burns' recent success, a slew of wrestlers from the App State Regional Training Center (AppStateRTC) performed extremely well earlier this year.

Burns took fourth at the U.S. Open earlier this year to earn a spot in the World Team Trials where he was joined by former Appalachian State all-American Austin Trotman, who took sixth at the U.S. Open and finished 1-2 at the World Team Trials.

Vito Pasone took fourth in his weight class (55 kg/121 lbs) at the FILA Junior Greco-Roman National Tournament while fellow Mountaineers Dylan Cottrell (70 kg/154 lbs) and Denzel Dejournette (120 kg/264.5 lbs) each finished fifth. With his performance, Pasone earned a spot in the FILA Junior Greco-Roman World Team Trials and received a year of funded access to the U.S. Olympic Training Center. He also finished one victory shy of earning all-American status at the University Freestyle Nationals

Cottrell and Dejournette also took fifth and seventh, respectively, at the FILA Junior Freestyle Nationals to qualify for the World Team Trials.

Acton Pifer rounded out the Mountaineers' successful summer with a sixth place finish at 66 kg (145.5 lbs) at the University Greco-Roman Nationals to earn all-American status and receive a year of funded access to the U.S. Olympic Training Center.

"The future for AppStateRTC is bright, I am excited for us to start recruiting a few former Mountaineers to help build our Regional Training Center team," said Burns.

Photo Courtesy: Daren Burns, ASU Athletics