

Wrestling: Three Buckeyes Move On To Quarterfinals, Day One Recap Of NCAA Championships



The NCAA Championships began Thursday where nine Ohio State wrestlers began their trek through their bracket to attempt to win individual and team national title.

Three Buckeyes moved on to the quarterfinals on day one with Jesse Mendez, Rocco Welsh and Nick Feldman moving on, and the team has with 20.5 points which is currently good for seventh place. Eight of nine wrestlers remain in contention for at least a top-3 spot.

First Round

Isaac Wilcox started the day off for the Buckeyes as the No. 32 seed in the 157-pound bracket, facing a play-in match against Buffalo's Nick Stampoulos. He took the win 8-2, fighting his way into a bout with No. 1 Levi Haines of Penn State.

In the 125-pound bracket, Brendan McCrone earned the No. 29 seed and matched up against No. 4 Matt Ramos from Purdue, who was runner up in the weight last season as a freshman. Redshirt freshman McCrone took the Boilermaker down to the wire, but Ramos came out on top 4-3, sending McCrone to wrestlebacks early.

The 141-pound No. 1 seed Mendez, fresh off of his first Big Ten championship, matched up against No. 33 Todd Carter of Gardner Webb. It didn't take long for Mendez to move on, getting a tech fall 19-4, earning a bonus point for the Buckeyes.

Next up for the Buckeyes was No. 14 Dylan D'Emilio matching up against No. 19 Joseph Zargo of Wisconsin. D'Emilio started early with a takedown and fought hard to earn nearly 40 seconds of riding time before Zargo escaped. D'Emilio escaped to start the second period and had another takedown to widen his lead. The third period was uneventful, neither scoring points, ending the match with a 7-2 D'Emilio win.

Wilcox faced off against Haines next and was taken down twice early on with an escape in between. Haines ended the first period on top with 1:27 of riding time. It took Wilcox almost a minute into the second period to escape, but Haines got another takedown almost immediately after and worked hard trying to get Wilcox off his stomach to pin him, and was rewarded with a three-point nearfall. Haines

escaped to start the third period and had another takedown and with the riding time point locked up, all he had to do was keep his position to earn a tech fall win over Wilcox 17-2, sending him to consolations.

Welsh took a 3-0 lead into the second period as the No. 6 seed against Navy's No. 27 Danny Wask. Welsh added an escape to start the second period and went for a single-leg takedown to finish the period, but he couldn't finish. Wask chose to start on bottom in the third period, looking for an escape point, which he got 15 seconds in. Wask earned another point after Welsh received two stalling warnings, but Welsh finished on top 4-2 to move on.

At 184 pounds, No. 18 Ryder Rogotzke faced off against No. 15 Reece Heller from Pittsburgh. There was a lot of action in the first period, but not many points to go along with it, both wrestlers defending well against attacks, but Heller got on the board first with a takedown, which Rogotzke immediately countered and scored two for a reversal. It didn't take long after that for Rogotzke to pin Heller, securing two bonus points with the win.

No. 23 Luke Geog went in looking to upset Nebraska No. 10 Silas Allred and kept it close in the first period of the match, but Allred was able to earn over a minute and a half of riding time. Allred quickly escaped to begin the second period and scored another takedown which took the match into the third period. Geog was defeated 10-3 and forced into the consolation bracket early.

No. 9 Feldman was the last of the Buckeyes to go in the first round and scored an immediate takedown over No. 24 Keaton Kluever of Hofstra. After an escape, Feldman was on the attack again and used a single-leg takedown to score again. He allowed Kluever to escape a second time so he could go for a third takedown, which he scored almost immediately. The match ended after 2:26 when Feldman pinned Kluever for the two bonus points.

Second Round

Bouzakis had to face off against the No. 1 wrestler at 133 pounds in the second round. Daton Fix of Oklahoma State had a 5-1 lead in the third period before Bouzakis landed a takedown, but neither could manage to score another point and Bouzakis was sent into the consolation bracket.

Mendez continued his dominant streak against No. 17 Isaiah Powe of Chattanooga. In the first period he was able to score a takedown and a two-point nearfall while building 2:14 of riding time, but none of that mattered when he pinned Powe at 4:37 to move on to the quarterfinals.

D'Emilio went against No. 3 Jackson Arrington of NC State to try to get into the quarterfinals, but he struggled to score, only managing an escape point in all three periods and losing 8-1, moving to the quarterfinals.

The true freshman Welsh was the second Buckeye of the day to move on to the quarterfinals. The match against No. 11 Austin Murphy of Campbell was scoreless through the first period with Murphy escaping to start the second and Welsh escaping to start the third, sending it to a sudden victory period. Welsh scored the takedown in extra time to end it and move on.

At 184 pounds, Rogotzke looked to upset No. 2 Isaiah Salazar from Minnesota. Regulation finished with a 1-1 tie after Salazar escaped in the second and Rogotzke escaped to start the third. In the sudden victory period Salazar landed the takedown to send Rogotzke into the quarterfinals.

Feldman's next bout was No. 25 Bradley Hill from Iowa. He led 3-1 after the first period, and continued to score, finishing the match with an 11-2 major decision win to move on to the quarterfinals.

Consolations

McCrone won his first consolation match against No. 13 Noah Surtin of Missouri by major decision, 14-0, to stay in contention, moving on to the second day of the event.

Wilcox came back from his loss to the No. 1 seed to upset No. 17 Brock Mauller of Missouri. He took a 12-7 lead into the third period and was able to finish it off with a 13-10 win to keep his hopes alive.

Geog was the only Buckeye to fall out of the bracket on the first day. In his first consolation match he went up against No. 7 Zach Glazier who beat Geog 16-6, a major decision to end Geog's chances.

The eight Buckeyes still in the tournament will continue their fight for a national title at 12 p.m., available to watch on ESPNU and ESPN+.