



Army West Point Wrestling

ALUMNI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



From the Editor in Chief

By LTC (R) Larry Baltezare '72

Greetings, fellow alumni, and welcome to the third edition of our Army West Point Wrestling Alumni Newsletter! After a highly successful dual meet season—where we dominated Navy and achieved a national ranking of 23rd—the team is heading into post-season competition, ready to accomplish even more.

Turning to this newsletter, we're thrilled to bring you several highlights that are sure to capture your interest. Inside, you'll find an analysis of each weight class heading into the EIWA Championships, details on the endowment of the Head Coaching position, updates on accomplishments related to the USMAPS pipeline, an interview with Army's most accomplished wrestler, insights on NCAA revenue sharing, and a plethora of alumni news. Of special note is our inaugural 10th year class profile featuring the Class of 2015. Additionally, we've included coverage of the Class of 1972 at the Army-Navy match.

We hope you enjoy reading this publication as we continue to strengthen the Army Wrestling brotherhood and keep our wrestling community informed and connected.

LTC (R) Larry Baltezare '72 Editor-in-Chief

Army West Point Alumni Newsletter

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Alumni.newsletter@westpointwrestlingclub.org



Coaches Corner

By Army Wrestling Head Coach Kevin Ward

I say this every year, but I can't believe it's almost March! It's been a wild season filled with ups and downs, but I finally feel like we are firing on all ten cylinders at just the right time. We finished the regular season in dominant fashion, defeating both Navy and Binghamton—winning 7 out of 10 bouts against Navy and 8 out of 10 against Binghamton. When you compare how our team is competing now to mid-January, it's clear that the difference between winning and losing rarely lies in technical ability. What truly matters is having the guts to win matches late in the third period. Over the past six weeks, we've focused heavily on this: trusting ourselves late in matches and being tougher than the moment we're in. I'm incredibly proud of our team for embracing this mindset and believing in themselves during tough matches. With that mentality, we can win a lot of matches in March.

As we approach the EIWA Tournament, our eyes are set on the team title and the hard work it will take to bring home the championship trophy. This year's tournament will look different with the Ivy League schools absent, but it will still be fiercely competitive for the top spot. Lehigh appears to be the favorite going in, but it's far too close to crown them champions just yet. The winning team will be the one that: a) has multiple champions, b) maintains balance—ensuring all ten wrestlers place in the top five, and c) scores the most bonus points.

It's a straightforward formula. All that's left is to execute our style of wrestling and let the chips fall where they may.

Regarding allocations, this year we expect a dip. The EIWA is traditionally very competitive in the 20-30 ranking range. However, this year, the conference has too many wrestlers ranked between 26-33. These athletes are very good but haven't had strong enough seasons to earn pre-allocated spots (bids) for their conference. While there may be a significant number of at-large bids issued to EIWA wrestlers after the tournament, the number of automatic bids is likely to be in the 25-30 range. I don't like relying on the selection committee for at-large bids, so we need to take care of business at the tournament to lock in our spots at the NCAA Championships. I'm looking forward to the battles ahead!

Lastly, but certainly not least, we must highlight one of the most significant wins in program history: the Class of 1972 Head Coaching Endowment. This extraordinary \$1 million gift directly supports the wrestling program, enabling us to recruit and retain top-tier coaching staff, travel nationwide for premier events, and help our Cadet-wrestlers pursue NCAA Championships. The generosity and leadership of the Class of '72 have made a lasting impact on our program, and we hope other classes will follow their example with similar gifts. There are multiple Naming Rights available, including all three Assistant Coaching positions (\$500K each), as well as opportunities to make facility-improving contributions. If you're interested in helping move our program forward, please reach out to me at kevin.ward@westpoint.edu.

A Look at the EIWA Championships

By Dan Ciccarelli '03

It seems like we are off to the races for the EIWA tournament or “Eastern’s” for those older grads than I. We have a very good chance at winning this whole thing, but we will need to outperform our seeds to do it. Specifically, at weights 141 and 157, we will need monster tournaments from wrestlers focused on “wrestling their way into the NCAA tournament.” In years prior we have made the semifinals as the 5 and 6 seeds, that is no surprise for us. However, we have suffered the “semifinal slide” more times than not. Our key to winning here is getting over our “semifinal hump” and breaking through to the finals.

125#: **Army’s Charlie Farmer** will need to grind through this tournament as a 2 seed to face Sheldon Seymour of Lehigh in the finals. Chuck just beat Binghamton’s Carson Wagner and Drexel’s Desmond Pleasant will probably be the 3 seed. Pleasant has lost to Chuck 2 times, but Desmond went 1-1 with Chuck at the scuffle in 2024. Who knows where LIU’s Robbie Sagaris will fall, and he is dangerous as he has a top 5 win over Dean Peterson of Rutgers. However, our 3 and 4 seeds won’t want a dangerous Sagaris looming over them as the 5 and 6 seed.

133#: I don’t know if Ryan Crookham is going to wrestle, and the Lehigh Forum is still confused about that. Crookham would have to wrestle the whole tournament to get into the NCAA tournament as he only has 5 matches and won’t be eligible for a wildcard bid if he injury defaults out of the tournament. Lehigh seems to want to save Matty Lopes’ redshirt so I will assume Mason Zeigler is Lehigh’s Man at 133. That being said, Kurt Phipps will likely be the 1 seed with **Army’s Ethan Berginc** as the 2 seed. Kyle Waterman of Drexel and Micah Roes of Binghamton are the 3 and 4 seeds, respectively. Waterman is a huge problem as he keeps scores tight and is always in the match. Raymond Lopez (American) and Brendan Ferretti (Navy) are bracket busters who could make the semis as 5 & 6 Seeds.

141#: Navy’s Koderhant is in a class above all wrestlers in the EIWA, so who will meet him in the finals? On paper, Lehigh’s Carter Bailey and Drexel’s Jordan Soriano could be the 2 or 3 seeds as they both have the same ranked wins against EIWA opponents **Army’s Richard Treanor** and Bucknell’s Dylan Chappel. Right now we are looking at Chappel as the 4 seed and Treanor as the 5 seed. We need Treanor to outperform his seed and wrestle to a 3rd place finish if Army wants to take home the team trophy. The bracket buster for this tournament is Hofstra’s Justin Hoyle. Do not let the 10-12 record fool you, Hoyle has been a thorn in Army’s side for a good 5 years. Nobody from Army has ever beaten him, and even Treanor has a loss to Hoyle at the beginning of this year. Nobody in this weight class wants Hoyle as their first match.

149#: Malyke Hines of Lehigh and **Trae McDaniel (Army)** look like the top two seeds here in a weight class that probably has only two AQ slots. Binghamton’s Ivan Garcia will probably garner the 3 seed with Hofstra’s Noah Tapia taking the 4 seed. There aren’t really any dark horses here, but Trae can get some bonus wins here to help the team score. I really want to see a rematch between Trae and Malyke for the finals.

157#: **Army’s Dakota Morris** wrestled his way to a 7 seed here based on losing 5 head-to-head EIWA losses. We may be able to argue for a 6 seed here due to Dakota having a better overall record than Cade Wirsnberger, but that is a long shot. Bottom line is that Dakota needs to reverse all those one score losses and make the finals. This weight will probably have only ONE qualifier due to only having one ranked wrestler currently. This is also the most important weight class for Dakota to perform in. We need 3rd place points here, but making the finals would be just as hard as getting 3rd here.

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A Look at the EIWA Championships (cont'd)

By Dan Ciccarelli '03

165#: **Gunner Filipowicz (Army)** is top dog here, but still needs to be focused to win it all. The good thing is that Navy's Dylan Elmore and Drexel's Noah Mulvaney will be on the bottom side of the bracket. That leaves Binghamton's Carter Baer and Hofstra's Kyle Mosher on his side. Some dark horses here are American's Kaden Milheim and Drexel's Cody Walsh. They always keep themselves in a match and Milheim may prove to be a landmine at this tournament.

174#: This should be a really good bracket to watch. Binghamton's Brevin Cassella looks ready to use his last year to get an EIWA title and top 8 seed at the NCAA tournament. However, Bucknell's Myles Takats or Navy's Danny Wask will have something to say about that should they meet in the finals. **Army's Dalton Harkins** looks to be in a good spot as he is a clear 4 seed which means he only needs to get through Drexel's Jasiah Queen and Cassella to make the finals. If Harkins were at the bottom, he would need to get past two guys who have beaten him before. Don't get me wrong, Queen is extremely tough, and we also have American's Caleb Campos who can throw his way to an electrifying final run. I expect this bracket to have the most upsets of all the EIWA weights.

184#: I don't know what to make of the possible seeding in this weight class because nobody is undefeated in conference matches. With Hofstra's Ross McFarland, Drexel's Guiseppe Hoose, and Lehigh's Caden Rogers rounding out the top 3 seeds, it will be a Coaches Quarell for seeds 4-6. Bucknell's Logan Deacetis is 4-2 against EIWA foes with a win over **Army's Jake Gilfoil**, however he has a 10-12 overall record. Navy's Daniel Williams has beaten Hoose and Rogers but lost to Deacetis and Gilfoil. This is the weight where I can see Ward and Green sitting back in the seeding meeting to see who gets the top 4 and jockey for 5 or 6 depending on how each side of the bracket looks. In this weight, a 5 or 6 seed is just as good as a 3 or 4 seed. Gilfoil has the talent and gas tank to win this whole thing. He will definitely need to make the finals if he wants to go to Philly.

197#: I don't know if Drexel's Mickey O'Malley will be seeded because he only has 8 matches and I don't know if EIWA seeding criteria has changed. From years prior the highest someone without the minimum matches can be seeded is 1 below the number of AQs for that weight. That being said, Lehigh's Beard, Bucknell's Dillon Bechtold, and **Army's Wolfgang Frable** look to be seeds 1-3, respectively. Then we will have O'Malley and Payton Thomas at 4 and 5 (or reversed depending on AQ slots). This puts Wolfgang in position for bonus points and an "upset" to make the 197lb final. The top side will definitely be tougher than the bottom side.

HWT: Binghamton's Owen Trephan is undefeated on the season and the clear #1 seed. **Army's Lucas Stoddard** and Binghamton's Cory Day have only lost to Trephan in EIWA competition. We would have liked to see that head-to-head last Sunday, but we will have to settle for a rematch in the EIWA finals since Day and Stoddard will likely be seeded #2 and #3 respectively. The big question here is, "Who does Army put in at EIWAs?" **Army's Brady Colbert** has been on fire the whole season, and I can see Brady winning the whole tournament and becoming an AA. Stoddard hasn't been the same since U23s, but he can still win this tournament as well. I just think that Brady has the best chance from how I have seen him wrestle and beat guys that Stoddard has never beaten. Brady may be the most ducked wrestler in the NCAA (2x MFFs in the finals of Edinboro and F&M, 1 forfeit at the Binghamton dual).

- TUNE IN TO BHAW ARMY WRESTLING RADIO SHOW -



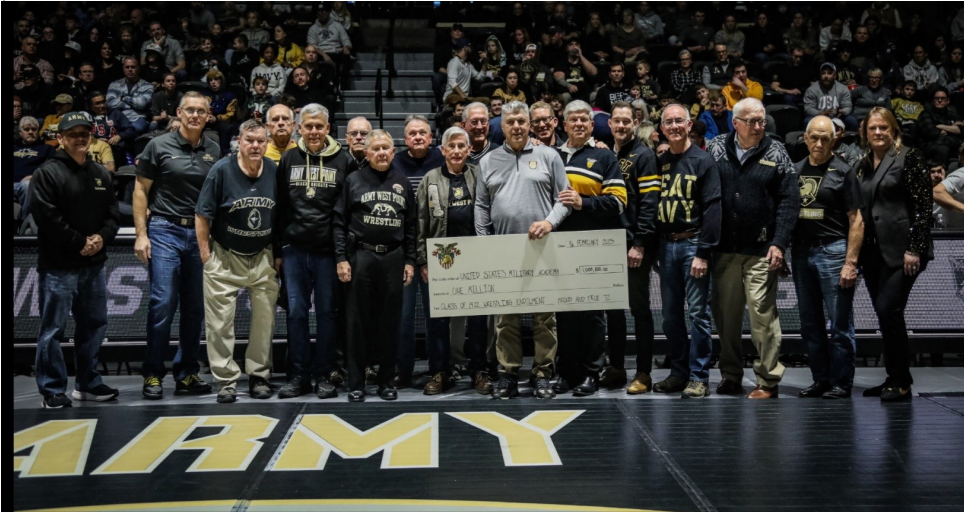
All Things Army Wrestling—Interviews, Match Recaps, Catchups with Old Grads

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Endowment of the Head Men's Wrestling Coach Position

By LTC (R) Larry Baltezare '72

The Class of 1972, led by the efforts of Ray Ritacco, Larry Baltezare, Will Webb, Jerry Hamilton, Eric Bantz, and many others, has reached its goal of a **\$1 million gift** to the wrestling program to endow the Head Wrestling Coaching position. The class raised these funds through a combination of class gifts and individual donations over four years.



Class of '72 Members with the Superintendent LTG Steven Gilland, Athletic Director Tom Theodorakis, Coach Ward, and AOG.

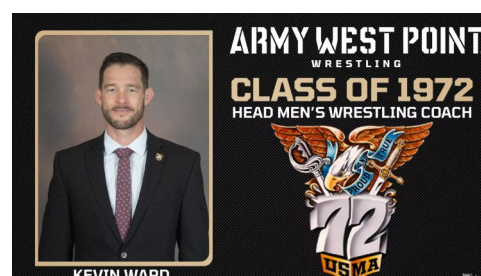
During halftime at the Army-Navy wrestling match on February 16, 2025, in Christl Arena, the Class of 1972 presented the Association of Graduates (AOG) with a check for \$1,000,000. Following this generous contribution, AOG notified Class of '72 President John Northrup that the class would be honored by naming the Head Men's Wrestling Coach position as the **Class of 1972 Head Men's Wrestling Coach**.

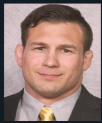
"This investment in the future of our wrestling program is a testament to the enduring bond of the Long Gray Line with

both current and future generations. We are incredibly grateful for the support and generosity of the Class of 1972," said Coach Ward. "Their gift is transformational for our program and speaks to the unmatched alumni support for the Army Wrestling team. Over 50 years ago, this program changed the lives of the Class of 1972. Today, the Class of '72 is impacting the lives of future Cadet-wrestlers at West Point."

"Coach Ward didn't just build Army Wrestling—he transformed it into a powerhouse program that last year produced six national qualifiers, claimed third place at the EIWA Championships, and earned Coach of the Year honors," said Raymond Ritacco, a member of the Class of 1972, football and wrestling letter winner, and recipient of the 1972 Army Athletic Association Award. "Now the Class of '72 is honoring his championship vision with a \$1 million endowment investment, challenging Army Nation to help our wrestlers compete with the best-funded teams in America."

"This gift isn't just about honoring excellence. It's about securing Army Wrestling's future at the highest level," said Army West Point Director of Athletics Tom Theodorakis. "Coach Ward has built something truly special here at West Point, and this support will help Army Wrestling continue to thrive for years to come."





News from “Up the Hill” (USMAPS)

By WPWC Head Wrestling Coach Jeff Breese

The USMAPS season has mostly concluded. At the time of writing this, a small group may still get one more local competition to cap their year, while several others will simply focus on Q3 final exams. We will take a small contingent to U20 Nationals in Las Vegas in late April and primarily focus on Greco. We have some very good Greco athletes. The bonus is that Greco is first on the schedule in Vegas allowing more travel time back to USMAPS for Q4 final exams. This always the balancing act for the Vegas trip because Q4 finals always seem to be early the next week after the trip. That is what is ahead.

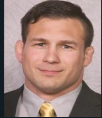
Here is what has happened. We have had good season at the Prep School as far as win totals are concerned. The wins have been there, but admittedly the progress has been a little slower than I wanted but here is the good news. The things I have been emphasizing since August about understanding how to compete effectively, developing excellent technique in all positions, and managing weight with a healthy diet, have really begun to click. The more each wrestler grasps these things and puts them to work the faster and greater their development. I have been very pleased with the progress over the last month. The even better news is that we still have March, April and part of May to keep building on our progress.

This Prep class overall was not one of our strongest based on credentials, but that won't stop some of them from closing the gap. That process has already begun. On our trip to Air Force Prep, we beat their recruit that was ranked #146 on the 2024 Big Board TWICE. These wins were achieved by two Army Prep recruits that did not even win a state title and were not ranked in the Top 250. Two victories does not a career make, but it is a good sign of the direction we are headed. Our most consistent performances have been at 157 with Kellen Smith, Casper Stewart, and Owen Hicks often placing as three of the top four in their weight class. Good results have not been limited to 157, we have also had favorable results at 165, 174, 184, and 197. Ninety-two percent of the Prepsters have a winning record and five of them have a win percentage of over 70%.

There is still work to do and the challenge of breaking into the starting lineup down the hill gets tougher every year. However, it is important to remember that progress does continue each year for those that work on it. Some guys that were not starters in their Plebe year, were heroes in the Navy dual as Cows. So, every day we fight for progress. Our goal at USMAPS is to put at least one Prepster into the starting lineup as a Plebe every year. We may not always reach that goal, but if we can help raise the level of those wrestlers that do make the starting lineup, we are making an impact. We have a few pieces from this year's team that have significant potential to make a difference. We just have to wait see how much of an impact they make.

Here are the numbers for USMAPS Wrestling for the 2024-25 season

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News from "Up the Hill" (USMAPS)

By WPWC Head Wrestling Coach Jeff Breese

USMAPS Wrestling Results 2024/25

| Name | Weight | Wins | Losses | % | D1* & D2/D3 Ranked Wins |
|----------------------------|--------|------|--------|----|--|
| Damian Resendez | 133 | 3 | 1 | 75 | |
| Thomas Von Esch- enbach | 141 | 17 | 17 | 50 | G.Reece (App St)* W 14- 1, Sauter (FM)* W 10-4, Maughan (AFP) W |
| Shane Reilly | 149 | 17 | 17 | 50 | |
| Marcus Reum | 149 | 9 | 11 | 45 | |
| Caspar Stewart | 157 | 23 | 8 | 74 | C. Arciulo (F&M)* W 19-4 , J.Wacha* (COL), A.Diaby (Drexel)* W 4-1, E.Alderfer (LHU) W 7-5, C.Burke (LHU) W 11-5 Iznaga (Drexel)* W 12-1, J. Neill (F&M) * W 6-1, J Everett (NAPS) W 6-4 |
| Owen Hicks | 157 | 24 | 14 | 63 | D. Pattera (Kent State) * W TF, J.Wacha (COL)* W 9- 5, C.Burke (LHU) W Fall, Diesley (FM)* WTF 15-0, Weaver (FM)* W Fall, Diaby (DREX)* 12-11 W, Everett (NAPS) W 5 -4, Maldonado AF Prep W |
| Kellen Smith | 157 | 22 | 8 | 73 | R. Alvarado (Army)* W 14- 7, D. Rosetti (COL)* W 7- 2, H.Ward (LHU) W 12-5, Diaby (DREX)* W TF 16-1, Maldo- nado (AFP) W 6-3, Wood Air Force* W TF |
| Arvin Khosravv | 165 | 15 | 4 | 79 | D3 #17 Stathopoulos (Stevens) W 7-3, Van Orden (AFP) W TF 21-4 |
| Gage LaPlante | 174 | 24 | 9 | 73 | M.Fuccilli (F&M)* W TF, G.Spaon(Drexel)* W Fall, C. Jacob's (CLAR)* W 10- 4 |
| Mark Ayala | 184 | 20 | 11 | 65 | J. Lange (Davidson) W 8- 3, G. Proffitt(Hofstra)* W Fall, L. Varga (F&M)* W 4- 1 |
| Brenton Russell | 197 | 19 | 9 | 68 | E. Weatherspoon (Virginia)* W Fall, A. Fricchione (Penn St) W Fall, K. Tompkins (AFP) W Fall, |
| Ryland Whitworth | 197 | 24 | 10 | 71 | G. Pool (App St)* W Fall, J Griffith (DREX)* W 8-1 |

Mike Natvig— The Story of an Army Wrestling Legend

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

Mike Natvig became Army Wrestling's first NCAA Wrestling Champion in 1962 and followed that up with a second NCAA Championship in 1963. In the proud history of Army Wrestling Mike remains the only NCAA Champion that West Point has produced although there have been multiple 2nd and 3rd place finishers. I was fortunate to recently catch up with Mike and interview him for our Army Wrestling Alumni Newsletter and here is what he shared with us.

EB: Hello Sir. Thank you for taking the time to let our readers know more about you and your career.

MN: It is my pleasure.

EB: Where are you from originally and how old were you when you started wrestling?

MN: I am originally from Decorah, Iowa. I started wrestling in 9th grade. Previously, I was a guard on my junior high school basketball team. I was not very tall and my jump shot was only 2 inches off the court. This made me think I should try a different winter sport.

EB: How did you do in your high school wrestling career?

MN: I did OK. I made it to States my sophomore year but did not go very far. I did not get to go to States again until my senior year. I finished second that time.

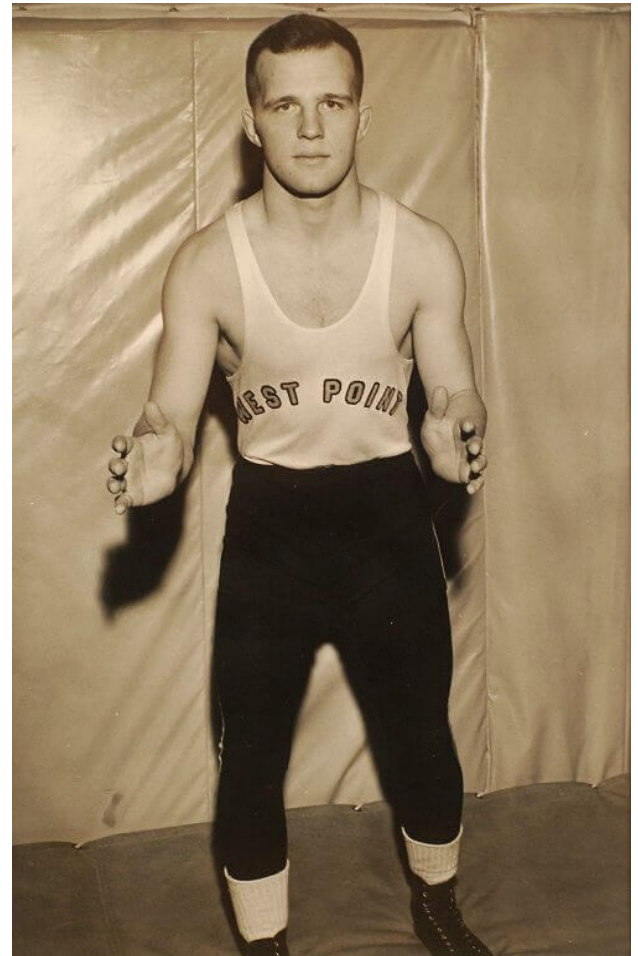
EB: Were you recruited?

MN: Somewhat. The University of Iowa, Nebraska, West Point, and my local junior college were the only schools that expressed any interest in me.

EB: Did you have an interest in West Point from an early age?

MN: Not really. I did have an aunt whose husband was a graduate. But to tell you how little I knew about West Point, I thought the Army-Navy football game was between active-duty soldiers and sailors!

EB: How did you wind up going to the Academy?



Mike Natvig—The Story of an Army Wrestling Legend

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

MN: Leroy Alitz was Army's Head Coach at the time. (Note: Coach Alitz inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame 1992). He was from Osage, Iowa and expressed the most interest in me. He really encouraged me. However, my senior year I did not complete the entrance exam to West Point. Army's AD then told Coach Alitz to have me reapply the following year. I did and was admitted.

EB: Then what did you do the year after high school while waiting to reapply to West Point

MN: Iowa offered me a wrestling scholarship so I took it and went there. I only wrestled 2 or 3 exhibition matches against teammates during the year.

EB: You were in the Class of 63. How long were wrestling matches (HS and college) at that time?

MN: High School matches were 6 minutes (2-2-2) and College matches were 9 minutes (3-3-3).

EB: Who were your coaches at West Point?

MN: Coach Alitz was my Head Coach all 4 years. I had several different assistant coaches. They changed due to the coaches finishing their military commitments and leaving the service. Many of the assistants had previous outstanding wrestling careers before entering the Army. They included Gray Simons, Greg Ruth, and Doug Blubaugh. All three were National Champions previously at other schools.

EB: How good was Army's team during your career?

MN: We were pretty good my first 3 years and we beat Navy each of those years. (Editor note: No other Army Team did this until the Class of 2020, under Head Coach Kevin Ward, beat Navy 4 years in a row!)

EB: Did Army have other outstanding wrestlers while you were a cadet?

MN: Absolutely! Al Rushatz was great. He took 3rd at the NCAAs as a yearling (Plebes could not wrestle varsity in those days). I truly think he would have won the NCAAs except he badly hurt his knee at the end of the season his cow year and was hospitalized with an infection the end of his Firsty season.

EB: Who were the Army Team Captains while you were a cadet?

MN: Plebe year it was Harry Miller, Yearling year Warren Miller, Cow year Al Rushatz, and I was blessed to be Captain my Firsty year. Only one captain each year in those days.

EB: Who were some of Army's major opponents then?

MN: In the EIWA, we always seemed to be in the mix with Penn State, Pitt, Lehigh, and Navy. Interestingly, the West Point AD would not allow wrestlers to go to the NCAAs unless we made the EIWA finals in our weight class. As a result, only one teammate went with me to the NCAAs each year.

EB: Did you have any particular individual opponents who were a challenge for you!

Mike Natvig—The Story of an Army Wrestling Legend

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

MN: Yes. Kirk Pendleton from Lehigh (who was in the same year as I was) was very good. My junior year he beat me in the EIWA finals at 157. In those days we could change weights right before the NCAAs and both of us dropped to 147 for the Nationals. We then met in the finals of the NCAAs and I was fortunate to come out on top. (Editor note: Pendleton was a 3-time NCAA finalist and is one of the greatest wrestlers in Lehigh history. He never lost a dual and his only 2 losses were both in NCAA finals.)

EB: You went to the NCAAs three times and your total record there was 10-1. That is outstanding! What can you tell us about your experience at Nationals. Let's start with your yearling year.

MN: As a yearling, I lost in the EIWA Finals to a Penn State wrestler who wound up taking 2nd at the Nationals that year. At the NCAAs, I lost to an Oklahoma State wrestler who finished 3rd but he did not reach the Finals. As a result, I had no wrestle backs. In those days, there were only 4 All Americans in each weight and you were eliminated from the tourney unless the man who beat you made the finals.

EB: How about the NCAAs your Cow year?

MN: As I mentioned, Pendleton beat me at 157 in the EIWA finals. I came back to beat him in the Finals of the Nationals at 147. He took me down in the first period and he was leading 4-2 going into the 2nd period. However, I came back to win 5-4 by riding him out the entire 3rd period.

EB: I have heard that Lehigh had already written up in their school paper that Pendleton was bringing back the NCAA Championship. What were you feeling when you beat Pendleton and realized you were Army's first NCAA Champion?

MN: I usually did not get too emotional after my matches. I also often did not know how much time was left in my bouts. However, in my match with Pendleton, it seemed the entire crowd in Oklahoma was rooting for me and they counted down the last 5 seconds of our match. The crowd really made a lot of noise. I was in a daze when I won and after the ref raised my hand, I actually walked off the wrong side of the mat! Coach Alitz had to run (all the way) around the mat to get me! He said "Where are you going?" Something else interesting about that 1962 NCAA Tournament was that in my 5 matches (all victories), my opponent always got the first takedown of the match. Coach Alitz said, "When they take you down, you have them EXACTLY where you want them!"

EB: After becoming Army's first National Wrestling Champion, did West Point recognize you at all?

MN: I came back from the tournament in Oklahoma and had Sunday night dinner in our Dining Hall. The plebes on the wrestling team had made a giant banner, that they hung from the Poop deck, that said "WELCOME BACK MIKE NATVIG, NATIONAL CHAMP!!" When the adjutant went to give announcements, the Corps kept yelling "WE WANT MIKE!!" I had to go to the Poop deck and say a few words.

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Mike Natvig—The Story of an Army Wrestling Legend

By Staff Writer Dr. Eric Bantz '72

EB: Nice! Very cool! What do you remember from Firsty Year?

MN: I remember that our first competition of the year was a pretty big tournament at the Coast Guard Academy. I was going to be at 147 again. However, most of our heavier guys were football players. Some of them were not able to wrestle yet as it was so early in the season. A few days before the competition, Coach Alitz asked me if I would be willing to fill in at 177. I said "OK."

EB: How did you make out?

MN: I weighed in at 155. I was fortunate I won the tourney.

EB: Great! How did you do at the EIWAs and NCAAs Firsty year?

MN: I was fortunate again and took first in both tournaments.

EB: At the NCAAs, did you still have problems on your feet?

MN: No. I had (thankfully) gotten better. In the 1963 NCAAs I only gave up a total of 3 points in my 5 matches (2 in the finals). I did not give up any takedowns.

EB: How would you describe your style of wrestling?

MN: I liked to throw the legs in. I used the Crab ride a lot. I picked it up in high school and it worked well for me. I was not super quick. Coach Alitz did not try and change me too much at West Point.

EB: After graduation, what branch did you choose and how long did you serve in the Army?

MN: I chose Field Artillery. I stayed Active Duty 14 years serving in Vietnam, Germany and Korea as well as 4 years at West Point in the PE Dept. I then went into the Colorado Army Reserves. I often worked as a Military Academy Liaison Officer (MALO) and finished with 28 years of service.

EB: I remember being a cadet wrestler when you, after finishing your tour in Vietnam (in 1971), came to West Point to help our team. My teammate Will Webb ('72) credits you with teaching him the Crab Ride which helped him defeat many opponents. Thank you!

MN: Will was a quick learner and a good wrestler.

EB: Is there anybody you want to mention who had a positive effect on your wrestling career?

MN: Leroy Alitz was a very good friend and coach. He helped me get better. Wrestling with the All Army Team was also of great benefit. My teammates, of course, were also a blessing. Genny, my wife of 61 years, has been truly awesome!

EB: I know you are still involved with Army Wrestling. Do you have any advice for our current wrestlers?

MN: I don't know if I have anything to say except NEVER go into a match thinking you are going to lose and NEVER give up during a match! You can always win, even right at the end!

EB: Thank you, Sir, for taking the time with us today and letting our readers know some more about you and the great history and story of Army Wrestling. Army Wrestling fans are extremely proud of what you accomplished during your wrestling career as well as your service after graduation.

Army Wrestling Giving Day Update

A **Big Thank-You** to all the supporters of Army Wrestling and their generosity on Army Athletics Giving Day this past December. A few stats we'd like to share related to the Army Wrestling Endowments and Team Fund.

Wrestling Team Endowments

Purpose: Long Term Financial Sustainability of the Army Wrestling Program

Amount Donated during Athletics Giving Day ('24): \$45,878 towards Class of '72 Head Men's Wrestling Coach position and \$8,730 towards for general wrestling endowment.

Number of Participating Donors on Athletics Giving Day ('24): 135

Wrestling Team Fund

Purpose: Provides a means to address more immediate Margin of Excellence needs of the Army Wrestling Program.

Amount Donated during Athletics Giving Day ('24): \$43,292

Number of Participating Donors on Athletics Giving Day ('24): 304

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NCAA Revenue Sharing— How Did We Get Here and What Does it Mean?

Contributed by Douglas Williams '90

Today I'd like to explore the monumental shift occurring across collegiate landscape as a result of litigation that seeks to allow collegiate student-athletes to share in the profits generated by the sports establishment. In this article, I will broadly recap this litigation and a recently proposed settlement by the NCAA. While today's article will not drill into specific implications for the collegiate wrestling community, this topic will be addressed in the next newsletter. So here we go!!

Backdrop

As most of you know, for decades the NCAA has limited a student-athlete's ability to receive financial compensation related to athletic endeavors during their collegiate career. The NCAA first allowed athletic scholarships beginning in the 1950's and until recently only permitted scholarships and limited expenses as forms of financial compensation for athletes. Scholarships covered tuition, room and board, books, and sometimes other fees, but did not include direct payment for participation or the use of athletes; names, images, and likenesses (NIL). The NCAA maintained a strict amateurism model, prohibiting any form of direct compensation beyond these scholarships and expenses.¹

On the flip side, the revenue generated by Division I universities athletic departments can be substantial when including ticket sales, media rights, conference distributions, donor contributions and other related athletic revenues. For example, Ohio State University, one of the top revenue-generating schools, brought in over \$251 million in revenue from its athletic programs in 2023. Similarly, the Texas Longhorns generated \$239 million, Alabama Crimson Tide earned \$214 million, Michigan Wolverines brought in \$210 million, Georgia Bulldogs made \$203 million, and LSU Tigers earned \$199 million. These figures highlight just how lucrative college athletics can be, especially for top-tier programs in power conferences like the Big Ten and SEC.²

This paradoxical situation set the groundwork for a series of class action lawsuits beginning in 2009 as NCAA student-athletes began to seek a greater share of the profits generated by athletic programs on the premise that they were primary contributors to the revenue through their athletic performances.

¹ [https://www.milkenreview.org/articles/the-ncaas-amateurism-rules#:~:text=In%20fact%2C%20for%20its%20first,\(in%20legalese%2C%20NILs\),](https://www.milkenreview.org/articles/the-ncaas-amateurism-rules#:~:text=In%20fact%2C%20for%20its%20first,(in%20legalese%2C%20NILs),)

² <https://sportsdata.usatoday.com/ncaa/finances?form=MG0AV3>

NCAA Revenue Sharing— How Did We Get Here and What Does it Mean?

Contributed by Douglas Williams '90

Litigation Woes

The Initial Case Point: O'Bannon v, NCAA. The initial case of O'Bannon v NCAA was filed by former UCLA basketball player, Ed O'Bannon in 2009. At that point in time, the NCAA was profiting from a relationship with Electronic Arts, the video game producer which featured characters in their video games who resembled past collegiate players but without having received those player's consent to do so. The case resulted in a 2014 ruling that found the NCAA's restrictions on compensating athletes for the use of their names, images, and likenesses (NIL) to be in violation of antitrust laws. This watershed case set the stage for further legal challenges against the NCAA's amateurism model. While part of the rulings were later reversed on appeal, the stage had been set for additional claims and litigation.³

Alston v NCAA. On the heels of the O'Bannon v NCAA ruling, a number of additional lawsuits were raised challenging the NCAA's restrictions on educational compensation for athletes. These lawsuits eventually were combined into NCAA v. Alston and deliberated in front of Judge Wilken, Northern District Court of California. In March 2019, Judge Wilken issued her decision ruling that NCAA restrictions on non-cash education-related benefits violated antitrust law under the Sherman Antitrust Act and required the NCAA to allow for certain types of academic benefits beyond those previously-established during the O'Bannon v NCAA case. Both the NCAA and the Alston v NCAA plaintiffs appealed various parts of this decision, ultimately resulting, in review of the case before the U.S. Supreme Court in 2021.

On June 21, 2021, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously upheld the lower court rulings related to expanding education related compensation but also called attention to need for the NCAA to review its policies related to the pay of student-athletes more broadly. In his concurring opinion on the case, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh said, "Everyone agrees that the NCAA can require college athletes to be enrolled students in good standing. But, the NCAA's model of using unpaid student athletes to generate billions in revenue for member institutions raises serious questions about anti-trust laws. **In particular, it is highly questionable whether the NCAA and its member colleges can justify not paying student athletes a fair share of the revenues** on the circular theory that the defining characteristics of college sports is that the colleges do not pay student athletes..."⁴.

Mounting Pressure: With the proverbial barn doors now completely unhinged, the NCAA faced a stampede of legal cases that further challenged student-athlete compensation policies. Class action lawsuits to include House v. NCAA (filed in 2020), Hubbard v. NCAA (filed in 2023) and Carter v. NCAA (filed in 2023) introduced claims seeking damages for loss NIL opportunities, back-pay related to Alston Awards and retribution for prohibiting "pay to play".

The Settlement:

In July, 2024, the NCAA and Power Five conferences proposed a \$2.8 billion settlement in an attempt to address back damages and future benefits for Division 1 student-athletes as advanced by these aforementioned cases. The proposed settlement by the NCAA aims to phase out the amateurism model and allow schools to directly pay student-athletes a portion of the revenue they help generate

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O%27Bannon_v._NCAA

⁴ No 20-512, Supreme Court of the United States, NCAA v Alston. Jun 21, 2021. Page 44

NCAA Revenue Sharing— How Did We Get Here and What Does it Mean?

Contributed by Douglas Williams '90

The NCAA and Power 5 conferences have offered to:⁵

- a) **Back Damage Compensation:** Award back damage compensation to student/athletes of approximately \$2.78 billion, to be paid over 10 years, to student/athletes engaged in D1 sports during the period of June 2016 to September 2022
- b) **Revenue Distribution:** Going forward, allow schools to distribute revenue to their athletes of up to 22% of the average Power 5 School annual athletic revenue, subject to a tentative revenue sharing cap of \$20.5 million per school for the 2025-26 year.
- c) **NIL Agreements:** Third parties may continue to enter into NIL agreements with student-athletes. Such agreements will be subject to review to ensure they are legitimate, fair market value agreements and not used for pay-for-play. NIL payments by third parties would not apply toward the 22% cap but must be disclosed to a clearinghouse for review.
- d) **Scholarship & Roster Limits:** Lastly, scholarship limits will be eliminated in all sports, and roster limits will instead be established. Institutions have the discretion to offer partial or full scholarships provided they do not exceed the roster limits. This change will allow institutions to provide additional scholarships to student-athletes in the future. A federal judge has granted preliminary approval to the settlement, moving the NCAA and the conferences closer to funding a \$2.8 billion damages pool for current and former athletes over a span of 10 years. However, the settlement process is not over, and a final approval hearing is scheduled for April 7, 2025.

A federal judge has granted preliminary approval to the settlement, moving the NCAA and the conferences closer to funding a \$2.8 billion damages pool for current and former athletes over a span of 10 years. However, the settlement process is not over, and a final approval hearing is scheduled for April 7, 2025.

Implications on the future of Collegiate Sports

The proposed settlement represents a monumental shift in the landscape of collegiate sports, with far-reaching implications for athletes, institutions, and the NCAA itself. A few of these potential implications include:

1. Financial Windfall for Some But Not All D1 Athletes: Based upon the assumption that most Power 5 schools will fully utilize their revenue sharing cap of \$20.5M and also let us assume that those funds are distributed based upon team-specific revenues, then it is highly likely to see members of just a few sport programs reap the majority of the financial windfall. Based upon NCAA data, Football and Men's Basketball account for 95% of team-specific revenue at most Power Conferences⁶. Thus, if revenue distribution follows revenue generation, then \$19.5M would be distributed to rostered athletes on Football and Men's Basketball while the remaining \$1.0M would be allocated across the other D1 sport programs.

2. Greater Disparity of Competition: One of the most significant implications is the potential for increased disparity in competition between programs. Schools with more significant means to generate revenue will be better positioned to attract top talent through higher financial incentives. This could further widen the gap between elite programs and smaller schools and diminish the competitive spirit of collegiate sports.

⁵ <https://www.ncaa.org/news/2024/7/26/media-center-settlement-documents-filed-in-college-athletics-class-action-lawsuits.aspx>

⁶ <https://nil-ncaa.com/>

NCAA Revenue Sharing— How Did We Get Here and What Does it Mean?

Contributed by Douglas Williams '90

| Estimated Revenue Sharing Power School Averages | Team | Average Per Team | Average Roster * | Average Per Athlete | % |
|--|------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Football | M | 14,777,853 | 105 | 140,741 | 77.3% |
| Basketball | M | 3,157,779 | 15 | 218,506 | 16.5% |
| Hockey | M | 532,350 | 26 | 20,475 | 2.6% |
| Baseball | M | 351,072 | 34 | 10,326 | 1.8% |
| Basketball | W | 225,254 | 14 | 16,447 | 1.2% |
| Wrestling | M | 121,905 | 30 | 4,068 | 0.6% |
| Volleyball | W | 100,091 | 17 | 6,051 | 0.5% |
| Gymnastics | W | 87,952 | 19 | 4,905 | 0.4% |
| Softball | W | 80,434 | 23 | 3,542 | 0.4% |
| Hockey | W | 62,821 | 25 | 2,622 | 0.3% |
| Soccer | M/W | 56,681 | 28 | 2,060 | 0.3% |
| Track & Field / X-C | M/W | 41,761 | 49 | 852 | 0.2% |
| Lacrosse | M/W | 39,562 | 41 | 975 | 0.2% |
| Swimming | M/W | 30,802 | 30 | 1,027 | 0.2% |
| Rowing | W | 19,394 | 64 | 292 | 0.1% |
| Field Hockey | W | 18,585 | 25 | 707 | 0.1% |
| Tennis | M/W | 16,529 | 9 | 1,837 | 0.1% |
| Golf | M/W | 12,124 | 9 | 1,347 | 0.1% |
| Beach Volleyball | W | 8,220 | 17 | 511 | 0.0% |
| Totals per School | | 19,107,197 | | | 100% |

3. Reduction in Non-Revenue Generating Sports: With the emphasis on revenue sharing, universities and colleges may be compelled to cut costs in other areas. This could lead to a reduction in the number of non-revenue generating sports offered. Programs that do not bring in substantial income may face cuts or eliminations, potentially limiting opportunities for student-athletes in less popular sports. This reduction could also impact diversity and inclusiveness of collegiate athletics.

4. Player Development: The settlement could also lead to a greater use of the transfer portal to lure talent in lieu of long-term player development. Programs may opt to recruit seasoned athletes from other schools to fill immediate needs through lucrative pay to play contracts. This shift in strategy could undermine the traditional model of nurturing talent and fostering team cohesion over time, leading to a more transient and transactional nature in collegiate sports.

5. Devaluation of Education: Another critical concern is the risk that education becomes a forlorn goal in the age of Pay to Play within D1 campuses. As financial incentives tied to player performance increase, there is a strong possibility that the balance between sports and education is further tilted with student-athletes prioritizing their athletic careers over their academic pursuits.

Conclusion

The ongoing legal battles and proposed settlements signify a monumental shift in the collegiate athletic landscape. As student-athletes continue to advocate for fair compensation, the NCAA's traditional amateurism model is being re-evaluated. The outcomes of these legal cases and settlements will undoubtedly shape the future of college sports in ways that benefit but also have detrimental impacts on the student athletes of tomorrow.

Alumni News - 10 Year Spotlight—Class of 2015

Opening Remarks By Hunter Wood '15 and former Army Wrestling Captain

Hard to believe it's been nearly a decade since we stepped off the mats as members of the Army Wrestling Team. Our time at West Point was anything but ordinary—we saw coaching transitions, injuries, tough training cycles, weird skin infections, and plenty of lessons learned the hard way. Many of us were recruited by Coach Chuck Barbee, spent most of our careers wrestling for Coach Joe Heskett, and finished our senior year under current Head Coach Kevin Ward. Looking back now, it's incredible to see how Coach Ward has built and elevated the program over the past 10 years. A big shout out to Coach Ward and his leadership—Army Wrestling is in great hands.

Our class finished with a 26-23 dual record—not the most impressive on paper—but we'll always have one major highlight: beating Navy our senior year and ending a 17-year drought. We can also proudly claim some degree of success after school. Most members of our class became Ranger qualified, many served in elite units, a couple went on to attend top 10 schools for further education, and one even became one of the fittest men in the world. Since graduation, we've strived to embody the BHAW spirit in everything we do beyond the mat.

More than the wins and losses, though, wrestling at Army shaped us into who we are today. The sport gave us some of our highest highs and lowest lows, forged lifelong friendships, and instilled lessons in leadership that extend far beyond the mat. Some of our best memories—and toughest moments—happened in that wrestling room. But those experiences stay with us, and so does the brotherhood.

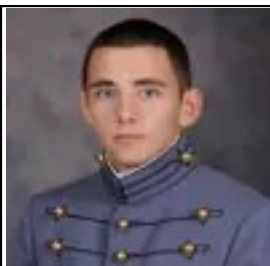
As we look back, we owe a big thanks to all the coaches, and upperclassmen who pushed us, mentored us, and helped shape us into the men and leaders we are today. We also want to recognize the generations of Army wrestlers who came before us—the Old Grads who set the standard and built the foundation of what it means to be part of this program. Their legacy lives on in every match, every practice, and every wrestler who steps onto the mat. We're proud to be part of this incredible alumni group and even prouder to carry the lifelong title of Army Wrestlers.

Former Army Wrestlers from the Class of 2015

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Zachary Cottle/133 ^{lbs} | Craemer Hedash/157 ^{lbs} | Chandler Smith/157-165 ^{lbs} |
| Scott Filbert/125 ^{lbs} | Shawn Miracle/157 ^{lbs} | Stephen Snyder/197-285 ^{lbs} |
| Cole Gracey/165 ^{lbs} | Jared Ross/149-165 ^{lbs} | Hunter Wood/125 ^{lbs} |

Alumni News - Class of 2015 Spotlight

About Us



Zach Cottle

Original Hometown: Fort Calhoun, Nebraska

Wt. Class: 125

Branch Selection: Infantry

About Me: I live in Washingtonville, NY and work at the U.S.M.A where I serve as a professor within the Department of Military Instruction, specifically teaching MS200. I am married to Christa, and we have four children: Wesley (19), Chandler (11), Zekiel (3), and Felicity (1). I

currently have the pleasure of serving as the assistant coach for the youth wrestling program at Washingtonville Middle School, though my role often extends to that of a head coach. I also serve as an OR for Army Wrestling.

Military Assignments: As a Platoon Leader, I was stationed at Fort Wainwright, AK. For those who love the outdoors, I highly recommend visiting Alaska—just be sure to choose the summer if you're not a fan of the cold. The sights are truly breathtaking. Following my completion of the Maneuver Captain's Career Course (MCCC), I was then stationed at Fort Campbell, KY.

Did teammates assign you a nickname as a cadet wrestler? My nickname "Z" has a fun origin story from my youth wrestling days. Our coach could never quite remember my name or my brother's, and one day he ended up calling us "Q" and "Z." The name "Z" just stuck for me ever since!

Did you happen to observe any prankish activity while a cadet? Plebe pillow fight

"Words of Wisdom" for future Army Wrestlers: To all the dedicated athletes on the Army Wrestling team, remember that wrestling, much like life, is a test of perseverance and resilience. Embrace every challenge on the mat as an opportunity to learn and grow stronger, both physically and mentally. Never shy away from tough matches or rigorous training sessions—they are your steppingstones to greatness. Cultivate discipline and focus in every practice but also remember to support and uplift your teammates. The bonds you build now will be your strength in times of need. Lastly, carry the honor of representing the Army with pride, not just through your victories, but through every effort you make. Your commitment and hard work are laying the groundwork for future champions. Keep pushing your limits, and let every match refine your character and skills.



Scott Filbert

Original Hometown: Tucson, Arizona

Wt. Class: 125

Branch Selection: Infantry

About Me: I am married to Alayna for 8 years and we have a 6 year old daughter named Jolie. We presently live in West Point, NY where I serve as a professor within the Department of Military Instruction.

Military Assignments: Mechanized Infantry Platoon Leader and Armor Company Executive Officer, Third Infantry Division; AS1 and AS3, 75th Ranger Regiment; Rifle Company Commander and Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), 173rd Airborne ERT

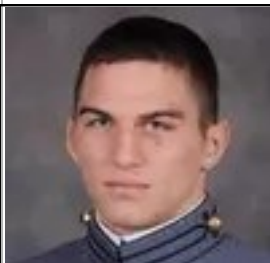
Fondest Memory of West Point: We beat Iowa State (editor's note: Iowa State was ranked #24 at the time) in a duel. Huge upset

Did you happen to "observe" any prankish activity while a cadet? The Naked Man of course.

"Words of Wisdom" for future Army Wrestlers: You'll excel in any unit you go to if you bring the same work ethic from wrestling to the job.

Alumni News - Class of 2015 Spotlight

About Us



Cole Gracey

Original Hometown: Tuttle, Oklahoma

Wt. Class: 165

Branch Selection: Field Artillery

About Me: I am married to my wife Katie and we have been living in Germany for the past 6 years. Katie is an entrepreneur and started a financial literacy app called Classbank. She is clearly much more impressive than I am! I am still in the military, currently working at JMRC

in Hohenfels Germany as an Observer Coach Trainer (OCT).

Military Assignments: I did my lieutenant time at Ft. Campbell, KY. After Captains Career course in Ft. Sill Oklahoma I was stationed in Vilseck, Germany as part of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment. There I was a Battalion Fire Support Officer, then a BN AS3 and finally I was a Battery commander for Bravo Battery. Post command I became an OCT in Hohenfels Germany.

Did teammates assign you a nickname as a cadet wrestler? The coaches mostly called me the Garden Snake due to its status as one of the worlds greatest apex predators. Some of my teammates called me Slenderman not sure why but I imagine it had to do with the fear I struck into most people.

Did you happen to observe any prankish activity while a cadet? While its not really a prank, during my Senior Year I was the "regs and discipline officer" because I couldn't be trusted with a real position. My job was to gather the list of weekly offenders (e.g. late to class, discipline issues, etc.), scrub the list and give to my TAC [along] with recommendations of how many hours should be given to each cadet. This basically made me the Godfather. People would come to me with their hours and I could make them disappear or double them. If you were cool ... I could possibly overlook it, but if you weren't.....rules are rules.

"Words of Wisdom" for future Army Wrestlers: If a match or class or goal doesn't go your way that's okay. What matters is how you respond. You are in the toughest sport in the toughest school in the world, as long as you keep improving after each set back you will be successful. West Point beat me up mentally and physically but because I learned from it, everything I have done since graduation has seemed easy. Also cherish the time with your teammates. You are currently surrounded by the TOUGHEST people you will ever know.



Craemer Hedash

Original Hometown: Slatington, Pennsylvania

Wt. Class: 157

Branch Selection: Armor

About Me: I am an Armor Officer currently serving as a FABOLC Combined Arms Instructor at Fort Sill, OK. My wife (Kayci) and I, along with our twin daughters (Adalynn and Madison) who were born last year live in Fletcher, Oklahoma. I am also a volunteer coach at a local wrestling club in Elgin.

Military Assignments: PL, XO, HHT XO, Advisor, CDR, HHT CDR, Instructor

Fondest Memory of West Point: Beating Navy and helping my teammates get to the National Tournament.

"Words of Wisdom" for future Army Wrestlers: Your greatest story isn't about who you were, but who you're becoming! Enjoy the process and approach every situation with gratitude!

Alumni News - Class of 2015 Spotlight

About Us



Jared Ross

Original Hometown: Dillsburg, Pennsylvania

Wt. Class: 149/165

Branch Selection: Corps of Engineers

About Me: I am a construction project manager and reside in Fort Myers Florida. I branched Corps of Engineers and served with the 10th Mountain Division in Fort Drum, NY.

Fondest Memory of West Point: The Sea to Summit runs

"Words of Wisdom" for future Army Wrestlers: Embrace BHAW and have some fun



Chandler Smith

Original Hometown: Kansas City, Missouri

Wt. Class: 157/165

Branch Selection: Armor

About Me: I currently live in San Diego, CA and compete professionally in the sport of functional fitness. My main sponsor is Puma and I've travel the world competing in CrossFit and other functional fitness competitions, finishing as one of the top ten fittest on earth twice. My

father, Cedric Smith was a six year NFL Player, my mother, Dr. Nicole Smith is CEO for a charter school in Kansas City. My youngest brother, Cole, is a USMA '21 grad.

Military Assignments: ABOLC student at Fort Moore, Tank + Infantry Platoon Leader in Fort Riley Kansas, MCCC student at Fort Moore, Functional Fitness team program director at Fort Knox

Fondest Memory of West Point: Beating Navy my senior year after the 17 year drought was a ton of fun, but I really enjoyed everything I learned my Plebe year from the Class of 2012 guys. They taught me how to work hard during the preseason, how to be a serious athlete during the season, and how to be a cadet all year. Also, while perhaps not be categorized as a fondest memory, I may or may not have snuck into the steam tunnels to cut weight a time or ten.

"Words of Wisdom" for future Army Wrestlers: Consistency is the only path to success. If you don't quit, you win.



Stephen Snyder

Original Hometown: Woodbine, Maryland

Wt. Class: 197/285

Branch Selection: Infantry

About Me: I currently live in Evanston, Illinois with my wife, Michelle, married in 2019 and our son, Stephen who was born in 2023. I am a Full-Time Student at Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management. After completing my MBA in June 2025 I will begin working at a consulting firm in Chicago, IL.

consulting firm in Chicago, IL.

Military Assignments: 3rd Infantry Division, 75th Ranger Regiment, 6th Ranger Training Battalion

Fondest Memory of West Point: I have a lot of great memories from competing at West Point and so many great friends - one that always stands out is competing at the Southern Scuffle each year and being back at West Point on winter break to train and get ready to compete with everyone.

Alumni News - Class of 2015 Spotlight

About Us



Hunter Wood

Original Hometown: Fairmont, W.Va.

Wt. Class: 125

Branch Selection: Infantry

About Me: I currently live in Pensacola, FL, with my wife, Melissa, a nurse specializing in cancer research. My mother, Tonya, is also a nurse, while my father, Robert, is the owner and founder of Hometown Hotdogs—the best hot dogs east of the Mississippi. My sister, Tressa,

and her husband, Joe, recently welcomed a baby boy, Wyatt, who is destined to be a future Army wrestler. After transitioning out of the Army in 2024, I joined Galls, LLC, a retailer specializing in products for the military, law enforcement, and first responders. This fall, I will be attending UVA Darden to pursue my MBA..

Military Assignments: USMAPS AI (1st Semester), 1-327IN/1BCT/101 ABN DIV (Rifle PL), 1-32CAV/1BCT/101 ABN DIV (Scout PL), 6th Ranger Training Battalion (Company Commander)

Fondest Memory of West Point: It is hard to pick one because there are so many, but I'll never forget wrestling at MSG in NYC or beating Navy our senior year - breaking a long losing streak

“Words of Wisdom” for future Army Wrestlers: Enjoy every moment of this journey. Embrace the brotherhood and the bonds you’re forming—they’re unlike anything else. Recognize what an incredible opportunity you have to compete at this level, and never lose sight of what you set out to achieve in your wrestling career. Chase greatness relentlessly, and stay focused on your goals every single day in the room. The discipline, resilience, and mindset you build as an Army Wrestler will serve you well in your military career and beyond.

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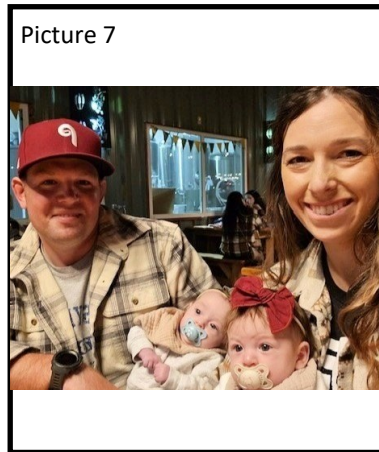
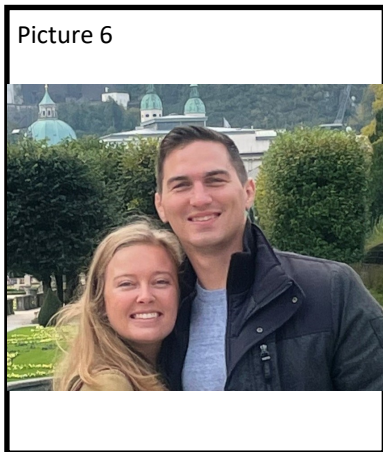
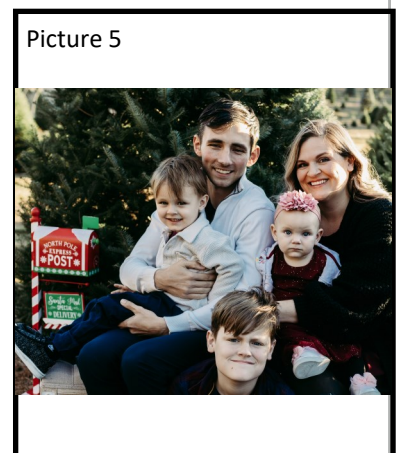
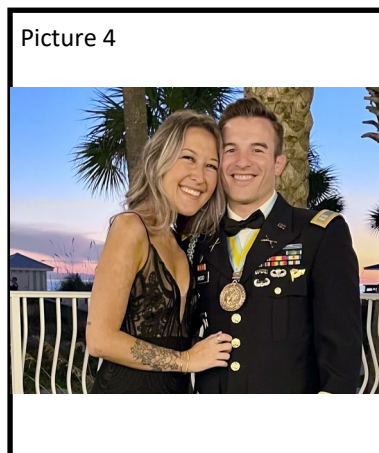
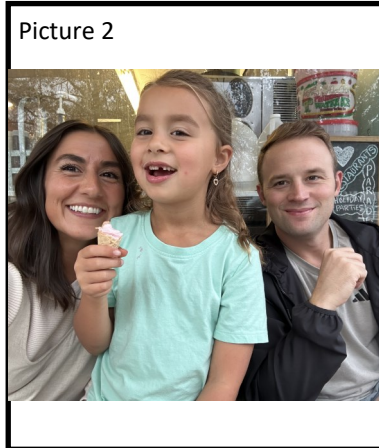
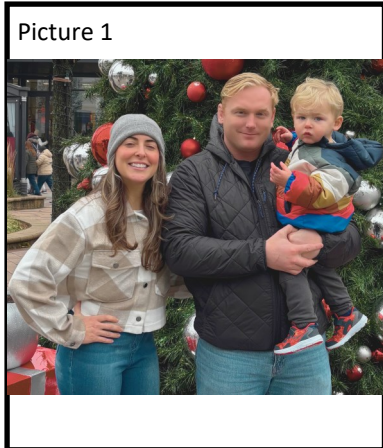
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Alumni News - Class of 2015 Spotlight

Name the Face | Can You Make the Associations?

- (A) Zach Cottle
- (B) Scott Filbert
- (C) Cole Gracey
- (D) Craemer Hedash
- (E) Jared Ross
- (F) Stephen Snyder
- (G) Hunter Wood



Answers: A—>5; B—>2; C—>6; D—>7; E—>3; F—>1; G—>4

Alumni News

Recent Command Selections & Promotions

Justin Gorkowski '03 was promoted to Colonel on 1 Jan 25. He is assigned as a military advisor at the State Department.

Four former Army wrestlers from the Class of '15 along with the son of Army Wrestling All-American **Dennis Semmel '86** have been selected for promotion to major.

- **Austin Semmel '15**
- **Zachary Cottle '15**
- **Scott Filbert '15**
- **Coleman Gracy '15**
- **Craemer Hedash '15**



R to L **Justin Gorkowski '03** former Supe, LTG(R) **Dan Christman** (huge Army Wrestling fan) , wife **Liz O'Brien**



COL T. J. Sikora '02 assumed command of the US Army Cyber Protection Brigade at Fort Eisenhower on December 13, 2024. COL Christopher Stauder relinquished his command and to COL Timothy Sikora with MG Jacquelin McPhail, Commanding General of U.S. Army Network Enterprise Technology Command, officiating the transfer of command.

Assignments

Scott Clark '08 (wrestled '04-08 at heavyweight and was the USMAPS head coach from 2017-2018.) from his current assignment as the JFSO at 1 German-Netherlands Corps in Germany was selected as a battalion CSL principal.

Alumni News

Advancements and Career News

Patrick Maginn '98 was appointed by LOGISTEC in November 2024 to become the new President of the Water Infrastructure Solutions Division moving from his previous role as President of North Point Roofing. LOGISTEC is the largest potable water pipeline rehabilitation company in North America. Patrick wrestled for West Point 94-98, and was team co-captain '98.

Matt Williams '24 and **Tyler Morris '24** graduated from IBOLC in Fort Moore GA with former wrestlers **Wilde Wilkerson '24** and **Mark Montgomery '24** in attendance. Wilde and Mark are also stationed at Fort Moore as they attend Armor Basic Officers Leadership Course.



Family News



Mark Montgomery '24 wedded to Jacqueline (Mazzeo) Montgomery on December 20th, 2024 in Emerson, New Jersey.

Steven Shone '89—My daughter Taylor Shone is graduating from Medical School (Lincoln Memorial University) on May 10, 2025. She will be focusing on Pediatrics and will marry her fiancé Reid Huckabee on June 7th at Wake Forrest University where they met as undergraduates. Currently I am teaching AP Calculus BC and Multivariable Calculus at the Webb School in Bell Buckle, TN in my 27th year of teaching. Also, I have completed 19 Half-Ironmans and 3 Full Ironmans.

Alumni News

Class of '72 Wrestlers (and Classmates) at the Army Navy Match



L to R—Front Row - Howard Carpenter, Butch Stedje, Ray Ritacco, Jerry Hamilton, Larry Baltezare, Bill James, Bob Curran. **Back Row**—Joe Adamczyk, Eric Bantz, Will Webb, Hank Mumma, Gary Sarpen



Charlie Farmer wrestling Nick Treaster



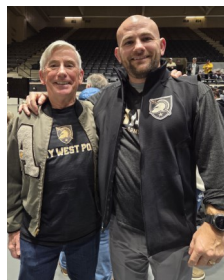
Coach Ward at the pre-match social



L to R WP Wrestling Club President Todd Messitt '87 and Ray Ritacco '72



Final Score



L to R Larry Baltezare '72 and Mr BHAU Radio (Brian Rowan '09)



L-R Bill James '72, Mike Nardotti '69, Larry Baltezare '72



Singing Second

Alumni News

Wrestling Involvement & Other Accomplishments

Mike Peterson '92 son, Connor Peterson, is ranked 5rd in Minnesota AAA at 133 as a junior. **Vic Ames '92** along with classmates, **Paul Kuznik '92** and **Rob Holder '92** will make their annual pilgrimage to watch Minnesota State High School Wrestling Championships and let us know how he does.

Treavor Erney '89 brought 9 wrestlers from HD Woodson HS in DC and 3 wrestlers from other DC public schools to cheer on America's Team when Army wrestled American University (AU) on January 19, 2025. Several of these wrestlers actively participate in the Wrestling to Beat the Streets program DC (WBTSDC) during the off season. Treavor's wrestlers were excited to meet Kevin Ward and the Army wrestlers post match, and Kevin, Scott and Todd sent WPWC shirts to thank these young wrestlers for their support. (No doubt they are wearing them proudly.) Anthony McHugh (AFA '2017) and Ryan Hetrick (USMA '22) supported the wrestlers' trip to the match. AU has been a WBTSDC supporter offering free admission to wrestlers and family members to all of their matches (even if they root for Army.) Treavor is currently working on a plan to bring several of his wrestlers to the EIWA Championships at Lehigh this year.



Alumni News

Wrestling Involvement & Other Accomplishments (continued)

H. Frederick Koehler '57— Between my Plebe and Cow years I struggled to be on the Wrestling Team. In my Firstie year the Plebe Team had no coach so I asked Coach Alitz if I could fill that position. The Plebe Team did very well, losing only once to the NJ high school championship team. During my tour at Ft Bragg I coached the 82d Airborne team which led to coaching the best Army wrestlers in the individual National Championships. After leaving active duty I helped several high school coaches and started refereeing high school matches in upper-tate NY. That led to being asked by Coach Alitz to referee a B-Squad (JV) meet at West Point. It is a tribute to the West Point Honor System that the opposition allowed this assignment.

Wrestling Training Applied to Life's Challenges

Chuck Toftoy '58 - Here are a couple examples of how wrestling as a cadet helped me in real life situations later on. Hopefully after reading my stories, you will realize that your wrestling training will be useful to you for the rest of your life in ways you might not expect.

#1: In 1965 at Dong Xoai, just before a huge battle I spotted a soldier about 50m away. He looked conspicuous as our eyes met. I chased after him, tackled him, and got him into a pinning hold. Found out he was a North Vietnamese Captain scouting the area. We gained important intelligence from him. That was a rare case since he was far from N. Vietnam. I was a Captain , battalion advisor to the Airborne Brigade (Vn)

#2: As a Lieutenant in the 24th Inf Div in Munich, I heard a 'mayday' yell in our Company area. I ran to our mess hall and saw one of our troopers about to be knifed by another soldier. I dove for his right foot, spun around behind him, slammed him on the floor, which caused the knife to drop away. Got him in a 'Boston Crab hold' until MPs showed up.

Alumni News

NETWORKING AND MENTORING SUPPORT

- ATTENTION ACTIVE DUTY ARMY WRESTLING ALUMNI -

Have a need to network during your Army Career?

Seeking advice on Branch/Post Experiences, Future Assignment Networking, Post Command Mentoring, General Army Career Mentoring, Transitioning from Service.

Then leverage the **Brotherhood of Army Wrestling!!**

***Fifty of our current active-duty** Army Wrestling Alumni have volunteered to serve in an informal networking capacity, available to all current and former Army Wrestlers.*

Take advantage of their collective experiences, knowledge and willingness to connect.

Check your personal email inbox for a Career Networking & Mentoring Program Announcement that provides additional details, list of advisors/mentors and their respective contact information.

If you didn't receive or cannot locate that program announcement, then contact doug.williams@westpointwrestlingclub.org to get plugged-in.



- Next Issue of the Army Wrestling Alumni Newsletter—May 2025
- Suggestions/Ideas for Content?? Please Let Us Know What You Think!!
 - Alumni News should be sent to Larry Baltezore
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