



MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE ANNOUNCES 2017-18 JANUARY WRESTLING RANKINGS
Missouri selected as the favorite in first January rankings over Central Michigan

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CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Coming off another successful wrestling season that witnessed the 12th MAC Individual National Champion in league history, eight All-Americans and 45 wrestlers seeded in the 2017 NCAA Wrestling Championship, the rise of MAC wrestling continues with the 2017-18 regular season schedule.

The Mid-American Conference wrestling coaches announced the 2017-18 January weight class individual rankings in conjunction with the league office today. Based on the individual rankings, five-time defending MAC Champion Missouri Tigers (31.0 points) were selected first in the Conference over second-place Central Michigan (21.0 points).

The 2017-18 January ranking also witnessed a three-way tie for third place as Buffalo, Eastern Michigan and Old Dominion all had 10 points. Ohio (7.0 points) was ranked sixth followed by Kent State (6.0 points) and Northern Illinois (4.0 points).

Last season, the MAC witnessed Missouri junior J'den Cox become the league's first-ever three-time NCAA Champion. Cox became the 12th MAC wrestler in Conference history to win an individual National Championship. Cox won the 197-weight class with an 8-2 win over Brett Pfarr of Minnesota at the Scottrade Center in St. Louis. Cox is the fifth MAC National Champion in the last seven years, joining Missouri's Drake Houdashelt in 2015 (149 weight class), Cox in 2014, 2016 and 2017 (197 weight class) and Kent State's Dustin Kilgore in 2011 (197 weight class). Cox is a four-time MAC Champion, three-time NCAA Champion and Olympic bronze medal winner.

The MAC had eight All-Americans in 2017 and will see three of these All-Americans returning this season, including senior Joey Lavallee (Missouri, 157), sophomore Jaydin Eierman (Missouri, 141) and junior Daniel Lewis (Missouri, 165).

In addition, six MAC wrestlers who won their respective weight class at the 2017 MAC Wrestling Championships will be returning this season as well: junior Shakur Laney (Ohio, 125); junior John Ernest (Missouri, 133); sophomore Jaydin Eierman (Missouri, 141); senior Joey Lavallee (Missouri, 157); junior Daniel Lewis (Missouri, 165); and junior Jake Gunning (Buffalo, 285).

In the summer of 2017, the MAC announced the addition of SIU Edwardsville to begin as an affiliate member in wrestling for the 2018-19 season. The MAC will operate the 2017-18 season with eight members and increase to nine members next season in 2018-19.

The rankings will be released each month throughout the season, with one additional ranking system (two total) in January and February. The 2017-18 first January rankings, voted on by the league's head coaches in an open forum are as follows:



2017-18 MAC Weight Class January (1st of two) Rankings:

125 – 1. Brock Hudkins (Northern Illinois, Sophomore); 2. Michael McGee (Old Dominion, Freshman); 3. Barlow McGhee (Missouri, Senior); 4. Kyle Akins (Buffalo, Junior).

133 – 1. John Erneste (Missouri, Junior); 2. Cameron Kelly (Ohio, Junior); 3. Bryan Lantry (Buffalo, Junior); 4. Anthony Tutolo (Kent State, Junior).

141 – 1. Jaydin Eierman (Missouri, Sophomore); 2. Mason Smith (Central Michigan, Sophomore); 3. Alex Madrigal (Old Dominion, Sophomore); 4. Alec Hagan (Ohio, Freshman).

149 – 1. Justin Oliver (Central Michigan, Junior); 2. Grant Leeth (Missouri, Junior); 3. Kyle Springer (Eastern Michigan, Senior); 4. Nick Monico (Kent State, Redshirt Freshman).

157 – 1. Joey Lavallee (Missouri, Senior); 2. Colin Heffernan (Central Michigan, Senior); 3. Larry Early (Old Dominion, Sophomore); 4. Casey Sparkman (Kent State, Junior).

165 – 1. Connor Flynn (Missouri, Sophomore); 2. Zac Carson (Eastern Michigan, Sophomore); 3. Logan Parks (Central Michigan, Sophomore); 4. Luke Drugac (Old Dominion, Sophomore).

174 – 1. Daniel Lewis (Missouri, Junior); 2. CJ Brucki (Central Michigan, Senior); 3. Seldon Wright (Old Dominion, Junior); 4. Austin Reese (Ohio, Junior).

184 – 1. Jordan Ellingwood (Central Michigan, Senior); 2. Canten Marriott (Missouri, Redshirt Freshman); 3. Kayne MacCallum (Eastern Michigan, Junior); 4. Brett Perry (Buffalo, Junior).

197 – 1. Willie Miklus (Missouri, Senior); 2. Stephen Suglio (Kent State, Senior); 3. Joe Ariola (Buffalo, Senior); 4. Jordan Atienza (Central Michigan, Junior).

HWT – 1. Jake Gunning (Buffalo, Junior); 2. Gage Hutchison (Eastern Michigan, Senior); 3. Zack Parker (Ohio, Junior); 4. Matt Stencel (Central Michigan, Redshirt Freshman).

The team rankings were also decided in the same forum. The eight schools were ranked based on the number of first through fourth-place votes that were earned in the individual voting system. A first-place vote was worth four team points; a second-place vote earned three team points; third-seeded votes were worth two team points, while a fourth-place tally earned one point in the team ranking system. The first January team rankings for the MAC are as follows:

2017-18 MAC January (1st of two) Rankings

1. Missouri (32.0)
2. Central Michigan (21.0)
3. Buffalo (10.0)



- t-3. Eastern Michigan (10.0)
- t-3. Old Dominion (10.0)
- 6. Ohio (7.0)
- 7. Kent State (6.0)
- 8. Northern Illinois (4.0)

The 2018 MAC Wrestling Championships will be held March 3-4 and hosted by Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, Mich. The MAC will serve as the host of the 2018 NCAA Wrestling Championships March 15-17 at Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland.

Last year, Missouri won its fifth consecutive MAC Championship with 154.5 points, followed by second-place Northern Iowa (106.5 points) and third-place Central Michigan (103.5 points). Old Dominion (94.0 points) finished fourth, followed by Northern Illinois (92.0 points), Buffalo (80.5 points), Eastern Michigan (64.0 points), Ohio (62.5 points) and Kent State (55.0 points).

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