

2023 NCAA Wrestling Championship

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Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Trent Hilday

Semifinals Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Trent Hilday from the 197-pound Championship match. Trent is from NC State. Give us some comments about your match.

TRENT HILDAY: It was a tough match, super competitive opponent, and Sloan is really good in all positions and had to be super good in all positions to finish it out, but proud of my effort to push the pace, get the takedown and ride hard at the end of the second period. It's a big deal to make the national finals and proud of myself for getting there and excited for tomorrow.

Q. How have you balanced the folkstyle/freestyle season?

TRENT HILDAY: I haven't done a lot of freestyle besides the Bill Farrow. Been focused on the folkstyle. After this take time and gear up for the Olympic Trials, so a busy month ahead. I've been enjoying the folkstyle training of it, the intensity of it, and as soon as this ends I'll try to get used to freestyle for a couple weeks.

Q. Trent, I just asked Aaron about you guys wrestling each other throughout your careers going all the way back to high school. He mentioned some guys are good in high school and they don't do the longevity thing, something happens. What's it mean to you that you are going to wrestle a guy in a rivalry that has come full circumstance?

TRENT HILDAY: It may be hard for me to call it a rivalry. I've gotten beat every time, but I think it goes to show the competitiveness, of getting to this level. Just doing four years of college wrestling is extremely difficult, to be a starter for four years is extremely difficult, and to do that for five, six years and being on the national stage each year is -- looking back on it, it's something that I can really be proud of, and a lot of effort and hard work goes into that.

But like I said, you know, we've -- he's been the kind of guy I've been going after for a long time so it makes me better to train for that and that was, you know, a big part of the

reason I went to 197 this year was to continue to challenge myself.

I feel like I've gotten a ton better in this past year so I'm happy with that.

Q. Would you take us through why you came back for this final season?

TRENT HILDAY: I love wrestling. I love doing this with my teammates. This is my passion. I feel like this is where I'm most alive when I'm competing. There is nothing better than the national -- than the NCAA Tournament. I've been close a couple of times. I've come up short three times here, so I think just the never-ending pursuit of trying to accomplish your goals, right?

This has been a goal of mine ever since I was a little kid. I had the opportunity to come back and enjoy my last season with an awesome team and awesome coaching staff. It means a lot for me to wrestle for NC State and for my family. I've been given such a huge amount of support that it would be foolish not to take advantage of that. I've really enjoyed this last year.

Q. How is it different not having your brother in the room day-to-day?

TRENT HILDAY: I think it forced me to grow up a little bit in a way of taking the reigns of my own career. I've been able to look up to him and follow his lead for the majority of my life and he took the next step in his career.

I think we both learned a lot. We've been best friends for as long as we were little kids, and I've grown a lot this year, kind of taken the next step in my career and him as well in his. So we're still very close. We talk all the time. Every dual meet we rehash the highlights and the low lights, but I'm really, really blessed to have him in my corner. I know how proud he is of me.

And I hope I can be as proud of myself as I know he and the rest of my family are.

Q. Trent, what advice would you give little kids, even

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high schoolers who look to you and say I want to be like Trent Hidlay someday?

TRENT HIDLAY: I think just embracing the challenges of what this sport has to offer. No matter who you are, whether, you know, you're the best guy in the country or you're just starting out, you're going to hit failure at some point. It's going to hit you right in the face. Being able to respond in the face of adversity, what this sport throws at you, prepares you for everything that you need in life.

I think what I've realized about myself is I have everything inside of me that I need to be successful. It's just about really pouring into that and getting the most out of myself every day, and this sport allows me to do that. It allows me to challenge myself a lot and fail a lot and learn how to fail and how to get better and look at myself at the end of the day and look at what I need to do to get better.

There is no better sport than wrestling to do that. I think my advice is embrace the adversity, embrace the failure, never stop learning is and challenge yourself to do really big things.

Q. Coming in everyone knew about your underhook, and it was a major part of your offense. How have coaches pushed you to open that up to the point where you have other tools in the arsenal when a guy shuts that down?

TRENT HIDLAY: They have had to get creative with me in practices. There are some days where I'm not allowed to punch an underhook at all, and it's frustrating trying to wrestle like that. I feel like I've been able to score in a lot of ways this year.

I guess this national tournament I have scored with the underhook, but I have a lot of other ways to score, and I'm going to need to rely on that tomorrow night. They've done a great job at helping me expand my offense, be more free, chain wrestle a little bit, but I can always trust in that at the end.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

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