

2025 NCAA Wrestling Championship

Friday, March 21, 2025

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Wells Fargo Center

Wyatt Hendrickson

Semifinals Media Conference

285 Lbs

THE MODERATOR: We welcome Wyatt Hendrickson, semifinalist winning tonight 8-2. Wyatt?

WYATT HENDRICKSON: First, I just want to thank my family. I want to thank all the coaches I've had since I was five years old, Coach Matt Treaster has been teaching me the cross face series, and in the past five years I've seen a lot of cross faces, cradles, butchers. That was all thanks to Coach Matt Treaster.

Q. You faced Gable Stevenson a couple years ago back at Air Force. How do you think you've changed since then?

WYATT HENDRICKSON: I think it's important when you step on the mat to have an attack mentality. My senior year when I was watching Gable wrestle in the NCAA Tournament when I was in high school. I was like, I tried to develop my technique to wrestle smarter, faster, better, and that person was -- Gable was the guy I looked up to.

I think the first time I stepped on the mat against him I was still in the fan boy stage, you know, but I think I've grown to be my own man and be my own type of wrestler, so I think it's important that I go in there with an attack mentality, and obviously I'll show him respect, but not too much.

Q. Wyatt, what does it mean to you to be able to finish your career on the biggest stage when you didn't think you would have this opportunity last year?

WYATT HENDRICKSON: It's an absolute blessing. I truly thought last year on the mat was my last year. I told people that all along, and the year was over, and it stung a little bit because I didn't reach my goals, but turn around and it's 364 days since then, and here we are, back in the NCAA's getting a second chance at that national championship match. Blessed and humbled to be up there.



God can work miracles. He's truly done some amazing things in my life, and led me down paths to meet a lot of great people that support me, and athletics is a big part of my career. So having that support this past year has been really big.

Q. Talk about defeating the national champion on the way to the final, what that means to you?

WYATT HENDRICKSON: Wrestled Greg a couple times, and unfortunately we're always banged up. It's been a tough mentality to wrestle him past couple of years. It's toward the end of the season, and this time I was able to gather myself, and my coaches were able to say things to me to keep me in high spirits, and the person that wins the national championship, doesn't matter where you are at, but it's the person that wins five matches. Obviously this was a stepping stone in the semis. Greg and I are good buddies. We have wrestled each other all the way back since we were 11 years old, so we have a long history, and it feels good to come back and prove myself and get that win.

Q. You mentioned that your coaches told you things to help you with this. What did they tell you?

WYATT HENDRICKSON: I think when you go out there in a match, and if you're thinking hey I want to win this match or I want to go get a takedown, that's not exactly what I want to hear. I think they've done a great job at mentally preparing me and saying when you are in there don't think about winning the match or getting a takedown, think of staying in your stance, you're clearing ties, and you're moving, so it's more position base than outcome base, so it's easier to take it second by second than match by match.

Q. Wyatt, your weight class is loaded with six world champions, right? What does that say about the heavyweights in the United States, yourself included, world champion, right? And what are the prospects in that weight class, looking toward LA?

WYATT HENDRICKSON: First off, I think heavyweight has evolved over the past couple of years. Kyle Snyder



was the first "small" heavyweight, and I think you've been able to see some of the top heavyweights are 250, 260, and we're all athletic weapons. You got so many world champions, freestyle, Greco-Roman, Olympic champions. Heavyweight is not an easy weight class. You aren't going to get in this bracket and expect to step on the podium come March.

Obviously in 2028, I'm prepared to wrestle anyone. I have a goal, and I don't care who steps in my way, I'm prepared to wrestle anyone. I have a goal, and I don't care who steps in my way, it's not going to change my goals. It's not going to change how I wrestle.

Q. It's not always the best decision to shoot on Greg Kerkvliet. You made the decision to go get one more. What did you feel to where you decided to get that?

WYATT HENDRICKSON: I think it's part of the mentality I went into that match with. Obviously I wanted to be smart and strategic, but if I see an opportunity to score more points, you guys know I'm going to take that opportunity. I was watching the way he was wrestling me, how he was reacting from my collar ties, and I saw the opportunity to get that takedown, and you can't be in there wrestling scared thinking, oh, I could shoot, and he could score on me. My mentality was, hey, if I shoot, I'm going to take him down. I fully committed to that shot, and from the second I was ready to shoot, I knew I was going to take him down.

That's the type of small things that the coaches have been telling me, and the small things I need to think mentally, while I'm in those matches, because if I'm just thinking, hey, I'm just going to shooting, and that's it, I'm going to shoot and stay on the leg, then he can defend me. So I think it was to stay true to myself, and if I see an opportunity to attack, I was going to do it, and I did.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Wyatt Hendrickson. Congratulations.

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