

2025 NCAA Wrestling Championship

Friday, March 21, 2025

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Wells Fargo Center

Caleb Henson

Semifinals Media Conference

149 Lbs

THE MODERATOR: 149 pounds, the defending national champion, Caleb Henson of Virginia Tech, with a victory today, 6-2. Caleb?

CALEB HENSON: Thankful to be here. Appreciate all the behind-the-scenes stuff. Makes it cooler when we're out there, people at home, brings eyes to the sport. Pumped for tomorrow.

Q. Hey, Caleb, congrats. I notice you have been finishing your single with a bear hug a lot. Is that something you've been working on?

CALEB HENSON: Yeah, I'm blessed to have partners like Raf Hipolito and Bryce Andonian, who are experts in some of those positions. And after three years of being in Blacksburg, you start to pick it up.

Just something that I've slowly added to my arsenal that comes to fruition when I'm out here competing. And maybe it's a little trick for right now, and next year I'll have to bring something else. But it's been fun to play with, and gotten pretty good at it.

Q. I'm a Virginia kid, Northern Virginia, proud of what's happening in Blacksburg. What is leading the way? Why is Virginia Tech becoming the force that it is?

CALEB HENSON: When I came in, there was a group of guys that established this culture there that you could feel. And being there for even one or two days, you kinda see it when kids come on visits. Everyone seems to like it in Blacksburg.

From not only our coaches and teammates, but the behind-the-scenes guys that you might not know, our media, our director of ops, the list goes on, everyone. It's a tight-knit family, and we have a lot of fun.

The guys that are there have belief in the people that are



leading them, and that goes a long way when you have great leaders like our coaching staff.

Q. Ridge Lovett has been on a hot streak this tournament. You guys have battled in the past. What are you looking for from him? What are you ready for?

CALEB HENSON: It's always fun wrestling him. I said it to him after the Vegas finals, and I'm just like, man, that was a fun scrap. It's a familiar foe, and we're both going to leave it all out there. Got lots of respect for him.

And, yeah, I'm going to come out there and scrap for seven minutes of war, like y'all saw in the semis last year. What happens, happens.

My motto when I'm competing is I'm not afraid to lose. I don't fear losing. I've already won with my savior, Jesus Christ. And just going out there, this is so cool to be able to compete.

You only get this day on that mat on that bout once in your life. So making the most of it, feeling free out there and whatever happens, happen.

Maybe we will see a higher scoring match. What was it last year, 1-0, overtime. When he got me at Vegas, I think it was a 1- or 2-point bout.

So who knows. Like you said, he's been on a hot streak. And I like to put up points, as we saw in last year's finals. We'll see. It'll be fun. And thanks for the T yesterday, guy hooked me up.

Q. Having been through the experience of this tournament and getting it done last year, do you have a different approach or some learnings that are going to help you going into tomorrow?

CALEB HENSON: Yeah, going back on what brought me success last year, for sure, and the habits I've been building through the season that help me get focused and dialed again.

Just relying on what I do every day and follow back maybe

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of what I did to pass the time last year and, again, just enjoy it. I got family here. Definitely spend some time with that in the morning, watch the teammates get after it in those placement rounds. And, yeah, I mean, I'm going to trust my coaches. They lead me. So lean on them. And, again, I'm along for the ride, in a sense.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Caleb.

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