

2025 NCAA Wrestling Championship

Friday, March 21, 2025

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Wells Fargo Center

Parker Keckeisen

Semifinals Media Conference

184 Lbs

THE MODERATOR: We welcome Parker Keckeisen. Congratulations on your win. Parker?

PARKER KECKEISEN: I'm blessed. I gave him a bow at the end. That was a respect to Max and the way he can scrap and make him push my limits.

Just want to thank God. Got a great support staff. Got great people around me. And I just don't think that's luck. I think God is orchestrating that. So thank you, God.

Q. Parker, first just walk me through that scramble, heck of a moment.

PARKER KECKEISEN: I was in on a leg, thought I was going to build up. He got my head down. He went Hamlin. He got behind me. We have been working a lot on defense. So I tried kicking away, kind of looked like I was kicking out-of-bounds, maybe I was, maybe I wasn't. But then he got -- he built up above my knee, had to get back into him, attacked his hands. I thought he was going to finish, and then I just tried to make something happen. I got a roll. Touched his leg, he fell, and got a takedown.

Q. Talking yesterday, you mentioned, and throughout the last couple of years, you've talked about how details matter to you and how important those are. Were there any little details in that scramble that you think helped?

PARKER KECKEISEN: Attacking hands. Attacking hands, getting my quad, my knee to face the ground, man, Roper is on me a lot, Doug is on me a lot for those small little details and if you do the little things, big things happen.

So I'm grateful for coaches that coach hard and for big moments like that. That's where the training comes in, and that's why I'm thankful for God for great people in my life that will be critical.



Criticism is not a bad thing. I don't think feeling bad is bad all the time. Sometimes you've got to feel bad to make adjustments. I was just talking to my girlfriend, like I need criticism to do better. It was like I'm going up to the stands and not giving her attention, and it's like, all right, I need to know that so I can do better. I probably shouldn't have said that, but that's okay.

Q. You started your year against Carter Starocci, and you're going to end it against the same opponent. What improvements are you going to have show in order to flip the result and end it with a win?

PARKER KECKEISEN: I'm going to have to get forward pressure and trust myself more. He's a great competitor. I feel like I'm a great competitor. And just have that confidence going out there that I can wrestle the best and beat the best.

Q. You mentioned forward pressure. Carter has some of the most suffocating forward pressure in the country.

PARKER KECKEISEN: I felt it.

Q. How do you deal with that?

PARKER KECKEISEN: I think by going out there and letting my training take over. Like you said, great coaches that are critical and loveable, but actually I got to say that part. Just go out there and trust in myself. And, you know, to beat a guy like that, you're going to have to have defense, defend leg attacks and get to leg attacks and score.

So just go out there and trust myself. Trust who God made me be, trust my skills and keep getting in the front seat, as me and Shane would talk about. Shout-out Shane. Therapy is cool. Therapy is good.

Q. Parker, we've got a four-time champ against a defending champ. As a competitor, is this the kind of thing that really gets you motivated? Also for the sport of wrestling, how cool is it to be part of

something like that?

PARKER KECKEISEN: Man, it is super cool. I'm very blessed to be able to wrestle in these cool, cool moments. Getting to be able to wrestle in Rec Hall. I never got to wrestle in UNI, never got to wrestle in Carver, that's a cool place. Gallagher was sick. A packed McLeod Center is pretty darn cool. So it's very special, and I'm very blessed to be able to do it. What else did you ask?

Q. (No microphone.)

PARKER KECKEISEN: For the sport, four-timer, one of the best collegiate wrestlers ever? I think I'm a pretty good collegiate wrestler, too. I know I am. He's going to make history, and I'm trying to stop history.

I'm a wrestling fan. I can't wait for -- I'm going to go to Cleveland next year and be like, dang, I wish I was wrestling. That's how it's going to be. It's hard for me to watch my teammates. I got teammates in the blood rounds, teammates in the semis, and I can't get into the match. I'm a wrestling fan at heart. I love wrestling. And it's something I would want to watch. You know what I mean? Like I want to watch it. But I get to live it first.

Q. Parker, congrats on the win. Carter's arguably the talk of this entire tournament, and we all know why, obviously, nobody has gone for five before. For you, what you've done in wrestling, you are a national champ, a Hodge trophy finalist. Does it put an extra chip on your shoulder going into this match, being that a lot of the attention is going to be on your opponent?

PARKER KECKEISEN: Honestly, I don't think so. I think what an opportunity to go wrestle free and surrender the outcome. One of my goals this whole tournament was wrestling is an art, right? I get to go out there and express what I think wrestling is.

I was watching this barbecue thing, and it was like Texas barbecue, each place has their own expressions what Texas barbecue is. So I get to go out there and express what I think wrestling is. And I think that's a very cool opportunity.

So I'm going to go out there and do that, try to express what I think wrestling is, and I get an opportunity to wrestle in the national finals against a four-time national champ and try to take him out. What a sweet opportunity.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Parker Keckeisen.

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