

2026 NCAA Wrestling Championship

Friday, March 20, 2026

Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Rocket Arena

Penn State

Luke Lilledahl

Semifinals Media Conference

Luke Lilledahl (Penn State) d. Troy Spratley (Ohio State), 8-3

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with the 2026 NCAA Division I wrestling championships. We just had another exciting semifinal match. We have here today Luke Lilledahl from Penn State. We're opening up with his opening statement, hoping you can reflect on your past couple days, what this match meant for you tonight, and competing tomorrow in the championship.

LUKE LILLED AHL: It's been a tough couple days with matches I've had. A lot of exchanges, getting kind of beat up. It doesn't really matter. It's part of it. Yeah, I'm just excited to wrestle tomorrow night and go showcase my skills to the best of my ability.

Q. For you in that match, you looked awesome, and you came out fast. I think that's something that was different from your quarterfinal to this match. How important was it for you to come out and set the tone right away and pick up those early takedowns?

LUKE LILLED AHL: I think setting the tone is something that I've been kind of trying to do this whole season. Really this match was the first match that I kind of went out there and did that. The most important match so far is when I kind of wrestled my best. I think that's kind of my wrestling career as a whole.

Usually tournaments, I wrestle better throughout the tournament. Hopefully tomorrow night I wrestle my best that I wrestled this weekend.

Q. Penn State preaches and all the guys preach score, score, score, offense. You guys are awfully proficient on defense as well. What's the key to that throughout the season?

LUKE LILLED AHL: I think just being present and wrestling



through every position is really important. A lot of times, guys that are really offensively proficient, they might lack that defensive category because they don't focus on it as much, but I think in our practices we work in all areas. That just gives us the state of mind that we can wrestle through any position, no matter the score and no matter the time that's on the clock.

We're just going to wrestle hard, and we're going to have fun.

Q. You're the first Nittany Lion out of several semifinals matches tonight. What's it like setting the tone for your teammates?

LUKE LILLED AHL: It's part of my job, I like to say. Obviously being the 125 and being the lightest weight, I like to go out there and kind of set the tone for how the rest of my team is going to perform because I know they're going to go out there and perform their hardest. I feel like it's kind of my duty to go out there and do it as well.

Q. After winning Big Tens, you said this is nice but this isn't the goal. You're in the finals now. How are you feeling heading into the finals?

LUKE LILLED AHL: I feel great. I kind of said this before, but I feel like tournament-wise I wrestle every match better. I still have one more match to go to close out my goal. So I'm just going to go out there and wrestle as hard as I can.

Q. The dual meet with McGowan was hard, to say the least. What might you change or what can be different in this match tomorrow night?

LUKE LILLED AHL: Obviously not a lot of scoring in that match. It's hard when guys maybe want to keep the match close and win at the end, which is something that I obviously try not to do. I try to go out there and make all the exchanges possible that can happen.

Yeah, I think just kind of maybe going back and watching the match, but also at the same time not focusing on the match too much. It's a new match tomorrow night. I hope that he comes out ready to wrestle because I know I'm



going to be ready to wrestle.

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