

# 2026 NCAA Wrestling Championship

Friday, March 20, 2026

Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Rocket Arena

## Minnesota

## Max McEnelly

### Semifinals Media Conference

Max McEnelly (Minnesota) d. Angelo Ferrari (Iowa), 3-2

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the 2026 NCAA Division I wrestling championships press conference. We're excited to be joined by Max McEnelly from Minnesota.

Max, I was wondering if you could reflect on the past couple days, your match tonight, and competing tomorrow for a championship.

MAX McENELLY: The national tournament, it's something different, man. Unless you've gone through it, you really don't realize what it takes to compete for this whole tournament.

Just waking up on day 2, your body is already sore, things hurt. That's just kind of the way wrestlers are built, keep going and keep pushing.

The matches, everybody's tough. So going out there every single match knowing that guys are going to fight until the last whistle is something that you've just kind of got to break through. You've got to break their spirit as you go throughout the match. Everyone starts out tough, but by that third period and into overtime, guys start to fade.

Overall, couldn't do it without my teammates, my family, friends, coaches, and all the people that support me.

**Q. Max, you've made the NCAA semifinals twice now, super hard matches. You lost a devastating match last year to Parker Keckeisen. How does it feel to get this and make the finals this year?**

MAX McENELLY: It feels good, man. Everyone dreams of running out on Saturday night wrestling for the NCAA championship. To be so close last year and to have it ripped away, it's something that doesn't go away after the next day. You have to live with that all the way up until the next NCAA Tournament.



To come out here when the pressure is on, everyone has been waiting to see this matchup, and to come out and get the victory, feels good. Job's not finished. We've got another match. This is just another building block.

**Q. Max, can you talk a little bit deeper that match with Ferrari there in the semis. Seemed like you almost had to win it on his style, going to the ride-outs, that sort of thing, as opposed to getting it done from the neutral position. Adaptability in that match and just overall thoughts on the matchup.**

MAX McENELLY: Just overall thoughts, going into it, like I've obviously seen how he's been wrestling, likes to drop to the knee, likes to give not much pressure forward. Everybody knows that going in to wrestle him.

It's kind of tough to wrestle him and put a lot of pressure on him because that's how he gets to his offense. You kind of see that with -- when he wrestled Dustin Platt last year in the Iowa dual, you could tell when Platt would pressure him, that that's when Ferrari is best at attack. Everyone who watched him wrestle kind of knows that.

Going out there, I just knew I had to be patient, go the distance if I needed to go the distance, and ultimately just winning the ride-outs. That's not how I want to win, but at the end of the day, it's the NCAA Tournament. Sometimes matches go that far.

**Q. Max, can you talk a little bit about Rocco Welsh, your Big Ten finals match last year, and what you're going to do to adapt and change for this match in the finals?**

MAX McENELLY: I don't think there's really anything that I need to change. Just got to go out there and be myself, be the guy that I've been through the whole year. Go out and impose my will on him and score as many points as I can.

Yeah, he's a great competitor, great wrestler. There's a lot of good guys at this weight -- Ferrari, Sinclair, Welsh, me. All of us just competitors and want to win. When you lose, it sucks. But getting the opportunity to face those guys is



something that I don't think any of us would give away or give up.

**Q. One of the traits that I see with you that I see with Rocco a lot is you guys have amazing foundational discipline. One of the things I notice about seeing you wrestle the last few times is you're incredibly smart and key in pivotal situations. Where did that skill come from? How do you develop that, and how do your coaches make you as good as that trait that you have?**

MAX McENELLY: To be honest with you, I think it's something that some guys have and some guys don't have. When all the pressure's on and the pressure is the highest, I almost find myself to be the most calm. It's when I'm expected to win and expected to go out there and get a tech fall is kind of when my heart rate rises.

When the pressure is on and everybody's watching, I think I'm just so focused on what I'm supposed to do and just keeping the main thing the main thing.

Go out there and stay in good position and just take what's there. You don't need to go after something that's unnecessary and give up stupid points. Sometimes that's just wrestling, and if you're wrestling hard, you give up a takedown. I gave up two takedowns in matches previous going for stuff.

In big matches, it's just about composing your will, staying calm, and just finding a way to win.

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