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OU wrestlers contend for All-America honors

By Eric Reikowski, media relations assistant

Four members of the Oakland University wrestling team will compete in the National Collegiate Wrestling Association Individual National Championships March 12-14 on the campus of Hampton University in southern Virginia. The competition will feature some of the nation's premiere collegiate wrestlers vying for All-America honors.

"We've worked really hard getting this team approved by the OU administration," said team president Kyle Nieporte. "We got four guys through to nationals and this is just the beginning of our success."

In January, the OU wrestling club finished in fourth place at the NCWA Team Championships, positioning itself among the nation's top collegiate wrestling programs in only its second year in existence.

Now, four OU wrestlers—Jacob Orban-Jones, Jaysen Brandt, Peter Waskiewicz and Garrett Johnston—will compete as individuals in a quest to become king of their respective weight divisions.

The four men qualified for nationals after placing in the top eight in their weight divisions at the North Central Conference Championships held February 28 at Grand Valley State University. Johnston, conference champion of the 184-pound division, earned a coveted number one seed in the upcoming competition.

"I'm pretty excited to go," said Johnston, who will be making his second consecutive appearance at nationals. "It's definitely an honor and a great experience."

Johnston said he is looking forward to the unique challenges of competing on the national stage.

"All year you see the same wrestlers, but when you go to nationals everyone's different," he explained. "They have a different style of wrestling so that's something you have to adapt to."

With more than 150 schools in the NCWA, the event is expected to draw hundreds of athletes and fans from across the country. Johnston sees the competition not only as a chance for personal success, but also as an opportunity to help take Oakland's wrestling program to a new level.

"I'm not just looking to place," Johnston said. "I really want to do well to represent OU and get our name out there."

SUMMARY

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