

### *d3wrestle.com Centennial Conference Preview*

After five consecutive Centennial Championships, the run of Ursinus College atop the Centennial Conference could be ending in a year when they host the tournament in the face of a strong push from the newly invigorated Merchant Marine Academy. Two years of strong recruiting have the Mariners poised to make a run at the top of the conference. Though not nearly as high profile as the Iowa Conference, the Centennial stands to improve on last year's total of two All-Americans, even though both Andrew Winfield of McDaniel and Matt Loesch of Muhlenberg no longer suit up for their respective teams.

The champs at each of the first three weights return, though each has moved up to the next weight this year as Phil Greene (USMMA), Billy Hall (Muhlenberg), and Rob Kein (Muhlenberg) will try their luck at the next class up. Brandon MacWhinnie (Stevens Institute) also moves up from 165 to 174 and attempts to become the seventh four time Centennial champ in the 15 years of its existence. Returning to the same weight are champs Matt Shank (149) and Andrew Goldstein (157) of Gettysburg, along with Eric Fishel (184) of Johns Hopkins and Joseph Tartar (285) of Muhlenberg. Stephen Kingsland (125) of Ursinus was the lone wildcard selection this year and has yet to be beat in an abbreviated season at 125. In total, 9 of the 11 qualifiers from last year return.

#### **125 lbs.**

The Favorite: Stephen Kingsland, Ursinus

Top Challenger: Jordan Alfaro, USMMA

Kingsland returns to the weight where he placed 2<sup>nd</sup> last year, doing enough to qualify as the lone Centennial wildcard selection. This year, he has wrestled just 17 times, but he has won them all. Jordan Alfaro is the top challenger in a weak weight class who lost 2-0 to Kingsland in their dual meet. Brisson of Stevens Institute of Technology is the only other wrestler with a winning record, and he sits at 12-11. Gettysburg and Washington & Lee have no entry here.

#### **133 lbs.**

The Favorite: Phil Greene, USMMA

Top Challengers: Dan Glover, Ursinus; David Shubick, Washington & Lee

As stated before, Greene was the champ at 125 last year, going 0-2 at the NAAs. This year, he has been adjusting to 133, compiling a 14-7 record coming into the conference championships. Despite his record, he comes in as the favorite with wins over all the top challengers, though he split with Glover. The upper weights in the conference have a greater accumulation of talent than these bottom two.

#### **141 lbs.**

The Favorite: James Beshada, USMMA

Top Challengers: Billy Hall, Muhlenberg; Pat Conrad, Stevens

Beshada is a freshman who recently topped defending 133 lb. champion Billy Hall of Muhlenberg in a close 7-5 match. Hall is extraordinarily tall for his weight class at over six feet, and is a tough matchup for any 141 lb. wrestler. Conrad has a close loss to Beshada and has yet to meet Hall.

**149 lbs.**

The Favorite: Matt Shank, Gettysburg

Top Challengers: Dan Twito, USMMA; Rob Kein, Muhlenberg; Chris Springer, Ursinus

Shank is the returning champ with 111 career wins who won a match at the NCAA tournament last year. He is the only athlete in the weight to have defeated all seven of the other wrestlers, though he has close losses to Kein and Twito along with his wins. Kein, Twito, and Springer have gone in a circle with Twito beating Kein, Kein beating Springer, and Springer beating Twito. A lot will come down to seeding in this weight, and the Centennial wildcard will likely come from 149.

**157 lbs.**

The Favorite: Andrew Goldstein, Gettysburg

Top Challengers: Charles Favia, Stevens; Scott Lowe, USMMA; Josh Pagano, Ursinus

The oft-injured Goldstein has put together a 22-2 record this year with both losses to Niedrich of York. No one else has been able to stop the athletic Bullet who has over 100 takedowns in those 24 matches. He has not faced Favia, Lowe, or Pagano yet, but he is the defending champion who has skirted in and out of the bottom of the rankings this year. Favia defeated Lowe 6-5 in overtime in their one match and should be the #2 seed with only four losses to his credit to go along with his tournament championships at the Central Jersey Open and Doug Parker Invitational. Pagano has three wins over Lowe.

**165 lbs.**

The Favorite: Vincent Renaut, USMMA

Top Challengers: Mike Schwager, Ursinus; Patrick Stanley, Johns Hopkins; Anthony Boniello, W&L

Renaut is a freshman who placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 2007 NHSCA Senior Nationals, outperforming expectations before bringing his talent to King's Point. Schwager is a dangerous wrestler with a great headlock, Boniello made the finals last year and has a win over Schwager, and Stanley is a tough freshman with a win over Boniello. Pat Doherty of Gettysburg has come back from a 9-9 start to win 12 in a row to stand at 21-9 going into the tournament. He could be a spoiler.

**174 lbs.**

The Favorite: Brandon MacWhinnie, Stevens Institute of Technology

Top Challenger: Justin Fitch, Muhlenberg

An overwhelming favorite, MacWhinnie has a single Division III loss this year, and he avenged it one week after suffering it at the hands of Osgoodby of TCNJ. Ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation, MacWhinnie is a three time Centennial champ and the defending Centennial Wrestler of the Year. Fitch may be able to hang with him, but it is unlikely he can do so for seven solid minutes.

**184 lbs.**

The Favorite: Eric Fishel, Johns Hopkins

Top Challengers: Matt Horn, Muhlenberg; Troy McGuinness, USMMA; Nate Murren, Ursinus

Fishel is the defending champ, but he recently suffered a tough loss to McGuinness in a conference dual. He has, however, defeated at least one returning All-American this year and will still be favored this weekend at Ursinus. He pinned Horn, but has not wrestled Murren of Ursinus, who has also beaten Horn. McGuinness defeated Murren as well, but lost to Adamson of Washington & Lee.

**197 lbs.**

The Favorite: Eric Vincent, USMMA

Top Challenger: Tyler Schmidt, Johns Hopkins

Vincent is another good freshman for the Mariners. He is one of the few Centennial wrestlers in the national rankings and he is having a very good season, marred mainly by a strange loss to teammate Judd Connell at the Citrus Invitational. Connell is the USMMA heavyweight this season. He has, however, pinned Schmidt in the first period and won at the Doug Parker Invitational and should be a serious favorite here.

**285 lbs.**

The Favorite: Matt Williams, Ursinus

Top Challengers: Brock Glotfelty, McDaniel; Joseph Tartar, Muhlenberg; Bobby Christopher, Gettysburg; James Roarty, Stevens; Judd Connell, USMMA

This weight class will be a mess to seed, as most of the wrestlers here have won and lost in the conference almost at random. Williams has won two and lost one to Christopher, split with Glotfelty, and beat Roarty. All in all, he has wins over all but Tartar, who he has not wrestled, but has suffered conference losses as well. Glotfelty has beaten Christopher, Williams, and Tartar, but lost to Connell. The draw will have a lot to say about who wins this weight, as any of at least six wrestlers look to have realistic chances to represent the conference in Iowa.