

d3wrestle.com Metropolitan Conference Preview

Dave Icenhower has had the TCNJ Lions in the top 20 of every national tournament since he took the helm, and the team has won 24 Metropolitan titles over the 29 years of the conference, including last year. This season, TCNJ is ranked 17th as a team by the NWCA and hopes to defend its Metro title with the likes of returning national qualifiers Ray Sarinelli and Greg Osgoodby.

Nipping at the heels of TCNJ will be balanced squads from Wilkes University and NYU. NYU is ranked ahead of the Lions, but fell 30-6 in an early season dual meet. Wilkes dropped a narrow 20-18 dual at the end of last month. King's and York are also in the national rankings and have some excellent individuals, while Centenary was previously ranked and could make some noise.

Back to defend their titles from 2007 are Kyle Flickinger (York) at 125, NCAA champ Dave Morgan (King's) at 133, and Greg Osgoodby (TCNJ) at 174. Sarinelli of TCNJ was also a national qualifier last year at 133, and Mike Gummerson (Centenary) was a national qualifier at 125 who has moved up to 133 this season, making 133 one of the more interesting weights in the tournament.

125 lbs.

The Favorite: Kyle Flickinger, York

Top Challengers: Shaun Farnham, Wilkes; Kyle Christensen, NYU; Evan Velez, Hunter

Flickinger is a returning All-American who was 2nd at King's and first at York. He split with Farnham, defeated Christensen and pinned Sheetz of Delaware Valley. He also has a loss to Bataar of St. John's. Velez has a win over Farnham, while Christensen has defeated Velez. Though Flickinger is the favorite, it appears to be anybody's weight class based on who shows up ready.

133 lbs.

The Favorite: Dave Morgan, King's

Top Challengers: Mike Gummerson, Centenary; Ray Sarinelli, TCNJ

All three contenders were qualifiers last year, but Morgan got the job done, winning in the finals to be the sole NCAA champion of three Metro finalists. Each contender is ranked in the top ten, and it should be a great weight class. Gummerson pinned Sarinelli in the dual and had Morgan on his back before losing by decision at Ursinus. Morgan has two wins over Gummerson and defeated Sarinelli as well. He is a clear favorite, but the challengers are not intimidated.

141 lbs.

The Favorite: Stephen Hult, NYU

Top Challengers: Jon Stillo, Centenary; Brandon Prentice, Wilkes

Hult is back after a few years off and has barely skipped a beat after some early season losses before dropping to 141. At this weight, he has yet to lose to a D3 opponent. Hult thumped Stillo 9-0 and has not faced Prentice. Ranked #6, he is an easy pick to win the Metro title.

149 lbs.

The Favorite: Bud Croswell, Elizabethtown

Top Challengers: Erik Smith, Wilkes; John Barnett, TCNJ

Croswell is the top ranked Metro wrestler at 149 and has a recent win over Smith by a 6-2 score. He also has a last second win over Shank of Gettysburg. Smith defeated Barnett in overtime while Croswell and Barnett have not matched up. All-American Tyler Branham was manning this weight for the Lions, but he has not wrestled in a few months, so Barnett made the move up from 141. Barnett has a win over Gin of Messiah who beat Croswell and Smith this season. Magill of NYU could also play a role here.

157 lbs.

The Favorite: Takafumi Hashimoto, NYU

Top Challenger: John Niedrich, York

Niedrich is the top challenger to Hashimoto, but this is a deep, deep weight for the Metro. Greene of King's, Heisey of Elizabethtown, Penberthy of Wilkes, and DiColo of TCNJ are all capable wrestlers who could win this tournament. Hashimoto is 22-3 with a razor thin win over Niedrich in their dual. Niedrich is the only wrestler to have defeated Goldstein of Gettysburg this year who Hashimoto sat out against in the NYU-Gettysburg dual. Both Niedrich and Hashimoto have close wins over Greene while Niedrich has two wins over Penberthy. DiColo has a close loss to Niedrich and a win over Penberthy to go with 2nd place finishes at Ursinus and Ithaca.

165 lbs.

The Favorite: Justin Bonitatis/Al Wonesh, TCNJ

Top Challengers: Frank Heffernan, Wilkes; Brian Alwine, York

The two TCNJ wrestlers have been splitting time at the end of the season, and both are talented enough to win here. Bonitatis has traded pins with Zempel of Messiah and Wonesh recently topped Heffernan, who defeated Alwine. He was also 3rd at Ithaca while Wonesh was 2nd. Duffy of Centenary is dangerous and could ruin someone's weekend.

174 lbs.

The Favorite: Greg Osgoodby, TCNJ

Top Challenger: Mike Reilly, King's; Naum Shuminov, NYU; Andre DeCristo, Hunter

Osgoodby is back to defend his 2007 title and sits at #6 in the d3wrestle.com rankings. He is 29-4 with losses to Priest of Ithaca, Chelf of UW-Lax, and MacWhinnie of Stevens, who he split with. Reilly is a 2nd semester transfer to King's who has had success right off the bat minus a loss by fall to Shuminov in a first period headlock and an 8-2 decision to Horn of Elmhurst. DeCristo started strong with the championship at Ithaca over Priest and a pin over Shuminov in a dual but has yet to face Reilly or Osgoodby.

184 lbs.

The Favorite: Nick Coleman, NYU

Top Challengers: Jim Tomczuk, TCNJ; Shawn Bradley, Wilkes; Zach Martinez, King's

Coleman surprised some with his All-American run last year after a runner-up finish at the Metro tournament and he has furnished a 27-5 record this season. He has a few bad losses this year and DNP at the Simpson tournament after garnering the 2nd seed. However, he is coming on strong at the right now and has wins over LeBlanc of Cortland and Quinlan of Bridgewater State. Way back in November, Tomczuk wrestled Coleman and lost 3-1 in overtime, but he has a losing record on the season. Bradley is 11-5 and Martinez is 14-11. A motivated Coleman could cruise here.

197 lbs.

The Favorite: Zach Pizarro, Wilkes

Top Challengers: Shawn VanWingerden, TCNJ; Hank Conklin, York; Brian Scher, Hunter

Pizarro has gone undefeated against conference foes, including 5-1 over VanWingerden, 9-5 over Conklin, and 8-6SV over Scher. He is right on the edge of the d3wrestle.com rankings and is a definite #1 seed at 197 this weekend. Conklin has a 10-3 win over VanWingerden but a loss to Bonaventura, the backup to Scher. Van Wingerden beat Bonaventura back in November.

285 lbs.

The Favorite: Luke Panizzi, York

Top Challengers: Andrew Feldman, Wilkes; Steve Carbone, TCNJ

Panizzi is #10 in the d3wrestle.com rankings and has not lost in conference action this year. He won by injury default over Feldman and won 4-3 over Carbone at York before falling in the finals to Bilquist of Delaware Valley. He was also second to Hiffa of Oneonta at King's. Feldman pinned Carbone last month and was pinned by Borchers of Wartburg.