

d3wrestle.com Great Lakes Regional Preview

Augsburg is hoping to run away with the Great Lakes title for yet another season. Last year, they won nine weight classes here, missing the sweep only by a last second takedown in the 285 lb. final. The Auggies have a new coach, but he is a familiar face in long time assistant Sam Barber. Barber took over for Jeff Swenson after Augsburg won their 10th NCAA championship last year, putting five in the finals and having nine All-Americans. This year, they are ranked #2 and are led by #1 ranked Travis Lang.

The strongest challenger to Augsburg will likely be North Central College, currently ranked #9 and led by a tough trio in 2x All-American Adam Johnson (133) and the Youel brothers (165 & 184), and they are fresh off their first CCIW championship in a decade. #15 Elmhurst also will factor in the team race with All-American Jake Oster (125), a solid middle of Kastel, Katz, and Doan, and freshman Mark Corsello at the top.

Of Augsburg's nine champions from last year, Seth Flodeen (125), George Lynaugh (174), Robbie Gotreau (184), and Wally O'Connor (197) return. Lynaugh and Gotreau have swapped weights since last year. Knox heavyweight Jaran Rutledge returns to defend his title of a year ago and hopes to improve on last year's 3rd place finish at the NCAA tournament.

125 lbs.

The Favorite: Seth Flodeen, Augsburg

Top Challengers: Jake Oster, Elmhurst, Mogi Bataar, St. John's

Flodeen was a national finalist last year and returns to defend his regional title. He is ranked below Oster in the NWCA rankings, but the two have yet to meet. He recently decisioned Bataar and lost to Struthers of Wartburg. He defeated Sheetz of Delaware Valley but was pinned by Music of UW-Lax and Rush of Coe. Oster is an unorthodox wrestler who gets the job done, as evidenced by his 2nd straight Wheaton title this year. His only D3 loss is an injury default to Johnson of Whitewater, an injury that kept him out for two months. Bataar won once at the NCAA last year and has losses to Flodeen, Rush, Heilman, and Faison of Lycoming, but a win over Flickinger of York.

133 lbs.

The Favorite: Travis Lang, Augsburg

Top Challenger: Adam Johnson, North Central

Both contenders are ranked in the top three in the country with Lang at #1 and Johnson at #3. Johnson has the win over 2007 NCAA champ Morgan and Lang won by fall over Helvey of Wartburg in the dual. Lang is 32-1, has won three tournaments, and also defeated Kolinski of UW-Lax twice. Johnson is an explosive 2x All-American with a win by tech fall over Salabura of Elmhurst and has a 41-2 record to lead the nation in wins.

141 lbs.

The Favorite: Jason Adams/Lucas Murray, Augsburg

Top Challengers: Brent Skorup, Wheaton; Kory Theil, Lakeland; Charlie Curran, Elmhurst

Either Augsburg wrestler is likely to take the top seed, and both have seen a lot of time in the starting lineup for the Auggies. Adams recently pinned DeCleene of Stevens Point and he defeated McKray but lost to Kelly of Wartburg at North Country. Murray wrestled in the duals against Wartburg and UW-Lax, losing to McKray, but beating Barber. At the NWCA duals, Adams lost to Hall of Delaware Valley and Murray was defeated by Mercer of Coe. Skorup has had a strong final season for Wheaton bouncing back from an off 2006-2007 year. Now up at 141, he won the CCIW, defeated Alber of Platteville, and won at Manchester. Curran has a win over Skorup, and Theil was 6th at Wheaton. Devine of North Central is also worth mentioning.

149 lbs.

The Favorite: Willy Holst, Augsburg

Top Challenger: Jeff Kastel, Elmhurst

Holst joins fellow University of Minnesota transfer Travis Lang at Augsburg and is ranked #2 in the nation. He has wins over Mauseth of UW-Lax, Harrington of Delaware Valley, and sits at 24-2 on the year. Kastel was 2nd at Wheaton and has also defeated Mauseth as well as Higgins of Platteville, Baker of Coe, and Mizer of Heidelberg. He is 36-3 with losses to Naig of Wartburg and Spence of Mount St. Joseph.

157 lbs.

The Favorite: Kyle Katz, Elmhurst

Top Challenger: Beau Hansen, Augsburg

Katz has done very well this year to climb the national rankings to #4 with wins over Grothus of Coe, Hanson of Loras, Miller of Ohio Northern and a split with Milkes of Platteville. His losses are to Brew of Olivet, Wernimont of Wartburg, and other non-D3 opponents. He was 3rd at Wheaton and is 31-6. Hansen also beat Grothus as well as Milz of UW-Lax but was eliminated on the first day at the Sunshine.

165 lbs.

The Favorite: Ben Hoover, Maranatha

Top Challengers: Ben Youel, North Central; Brandon Klukow, Augsburg; Tony Doan, Elmhurst; Troy Carlson, Chicago

Hoover is the one bright light at Maranatha, transferring in from Manchester this year. He was Outstanding Wrestler at North Central with wins over Carlson and Youel, and was Outstanding Wrestler at MSOE as well. Youel does have a win over Hoover in November, but Doan just beat him last week in the CCIW final. One cannot overlook Doan's 14 other losses as he has split with a lot of wrestlers like Youel, Carlson, Savenok of Wheaton, and Cruickshank of Olivet. Youel did, however, top Wozniak of Stevens Point and Nagel of Whitewater at the Border Brawl. Klukow is easy to overlook with 14 losses, but Augsburg always shows up ready to compete at the Regional.

174 lbs.

The Favorite: Phil Moenkedick, Concordia (MN)

Top Challengers: George Lynaugh, Augsburg; Toby Boltz, Wheaton; Greg Schroeder, North Central

Moenkedick is a tough freshman with over 30 wins and recent wins over Lynaugh and Kreman of Wartburg at North Country. He is 31-4 on the year and was flying under the radar until recently, but now he should be the top seed. Boltz is tough to score on at 26-3 with an overtime loss to Vanderhyde of Olivet, a close loss to Schroeder (to go along with multiple wins), and bad loss to Jones of Messiah. Jones also pounded Schroeder, who is 26-13, 16-1. Lynaugh is 19-9 and won this tournament at 184 last season. He has a win over Kreman as well.

184 lbs.

The Favorite: Ben Youel, North Central

Top Challengers: Robbie Gotreau, Augsburg; Dustin Baxter, St. John's

Youel matches teammate Johnson with 41 wins against just four losses and won the Wheaton title with a win over Zabel of UW-Lax. He also defeated Figgins from Loras twice, and two of his losses are to Djoumessi of Wartburg and Engelland of Stevens Point. Gotreau was an All-American at 174 last year and has split with Zabel. Wilcox of Delaware Valley beat him at the NWCA duals, as did Fishel of Johns Hopkins, and Lalla of Coe. He does have a win over Baxter. Baxter has defeated Lalla and Osgoodby of TCNJ wrestling up a weight.

197 lbs.

The Favorite: Paul Hartt, Lakeland

Top Challengers: Wally O'Connor, Augsburg; Tony Neumann, Concordia (MN)

Hartt was on the verge of putting it all together last year, but he faltered at Wheaton and then lost some upsets in the regional. This year, he is up at 197 where he just won Wheaton and has a 34-1 record, good for 3rd in the latest NWCA poll. He defeated Moore of UW-Lax in the finals at Wheaton. His biggest win to date is a 4-2 decision over Bollig of Stevens Point. His one loss is to Holforty of Eau Claire. O'Connor was the regional champ last year and placed at the NCAA tournament, but he has losses to Moore, Bollig, Miller of Wartburg, and West of Delaware Valley. He actually has a losing record this season on an admittedly tough schedule. Neumann is 26-13 with a 1st at Elmhurst and a 9-0 loss to Bonander of Luther.

285 lbs.

The Favorite: Jaran Rutledge, Knox

Top Challengers: Adam Sutter, Lakeland; Mark Corsello, Elmhurst

Rutledge is back to defend his title and look to become an All-American once again. He had an early setback to a Wartburg backup at the Dick Walker, after which he dropped out of the tournament, but has been strong since. He has defeated Sutter in the finals of MSOE and Wheaton where he also topped Corsello in the semis. Corsello has a win over Borchers of Wartburg and Evans of Whitewater, but he also has 11 losses, including ones to Bowers of Heidelberg and Arnett of Wabash. All three are in the latest NWCA poll and have designs on qualifying to the championships.