

d3wrestle.com Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Preview

Wisconsin-La Crosse has been dominant in the Wisconsin conference for some time now, winning each of the last 10 WIAC championships. This year, they take their typically strong team to Appleton West High School, where Lawrence will be the host. Ranked in the top five all year, UW-Lax is anchored by top ranked Tim Palmer (165) and Josh Chelf (174). Both have been wire to wire #1 ranked wrestlers and have yet to lose to Division III opponents.

As with last year, Stevens Point is the second best team in the conference with a formidable set of upper weights in the 165-174-184-197 punch of Wozniak, Bath, Engelland, and Bollig. Also greatly improved since former UW-Lax coach Tim Fader took over is Whitewater. They have climbed to #11 in the latest poll, giving the conference three teams in the top 11 and five of seven overall in the top 30.

Returning to defend their titles from 2007 are Calhoun of Stevens Point at 125, Kolinski at 133, Palmer at 165, Chelf at 174, and Laurent at 285 (all from UW-Lax). The NWCA has 13 WIAC athletes ranked in the February 12th rankings, and several weights have more than one, making for some interesting matchups come Sunday.

125 lbs.

The Favorite: Jacob Calhoun, UW-Stevens Point

Top Challenger: Jeremy Johnson, UW-Whitewater

Calhoun returns to defend his title in a weight that is uncharacteristically weak for this conference. He has missed much of the second half with injuries, but is still the favorite. Johnson is 18-11 with a fourth place finish at Concordia. He is the likely #2 seed.

133 lbs.

The Favorite: Jordan Kolinski, UW-La Crosse

Top Challengers: Jared Kern, UW-Stevens Point; Andy Miller, UW-Eau Claire

Kolinski was sixth in the NCAA tournament a year ago after only beginning to compete in late January. This year, he is 15-3, with a win over Kern and two of his losses are to Helvey of Wartburg and Lang of Augsburg. He defeated Fechko of Heidelberg and Sarinelli of TCNJ on his way to his current #5 ranking by d3wrestle.com. Kern is just 14-12 but 5-1 against the WIAC. Miller was 3rd at Eau Claire, is 15-10, and lost to Kolinski in the finals last season.

141 lbs.

The Favorite: Austin Bautista, UW-Whitewater

Top Challengers: Vinny Alber, UW-Platteville; Chase DeCleene, UW-Stevens Point

Bautista was a national qualifier a year ago and is 25-7 this year with a recent 4th place finish at Wheaton, losing to Sanchez of Heidelberg. He beat DeCleene in the dual, but has not seen Alber yet. Alber lost 3-2 to McKray of Wartburg on his way to a 5th place finish at Wartburg. He also was 3rd at Manchester, dropping a 4-0 match to Skorup of Wheaton. He is, however, 27-4.

149 lbs.

The Favorite: Ryan Higgins, UW-Platteville

Top Challengers: Matt Mauseth, UW-La Crosse; Andy Johnson, UW-Eau Claire

Mauseth is a freshman who has done well this year, putting together a 17-6 record in his first season. He made the Wheaton semifinal before losing three in a row to place 6th. Higgins was an All-American last year but has a loss to a teammate early in the season, though he has been the consistent starter. He was 2nd at Concordia, 2nd at MSOE, 1st at Manchester, and has a 23-7 record. Johnson is 21-11 with a dual meet loss to Mauseth.

157 lbs.

The Favorite: Jesse Milks, UW-Platteville

Top Challenger: Jay Milz, UW-La Crosse; Chris Brown, UW-Stevens Point

Milks has a 4-3 early season win over the tough Milz, and is ranked in the top ten nationally. A national qualifier as freshman last year, he is 28-5 this season with a loss to nationally ranked Katz of Elmhurst and McAuley of Cornell. Milz is 18-12 with a finals appearance at Wheaton where he dropped a close one to Brew of Olivet. He also stomped Herwig of Delaware Valley while nipping Brown 2-0.

165 lbs.

The Favorite: Tim Palmer, UW-La Crosse

Top Challengers: Jake Wozniak, UW-Stevens Point; Pat Nagel, UW-Whitewater

Palmer has been the wire to wire #1 wrestler in the nation and has had a dominant season. He slipped past Zempel of Messiah in the Wheaton semifinal but has pinned Nagel and majored Wozniak. He is a returning All-American with a Midlands placement in his career list of accomplishments. As good as his competition is, he is a definite favorite. Nagel beat Rammel of Heidelberg at Wheaton before falling to Zempel to take 4th. He also beat Bogardus of Cortland at Lycoming after falling to Dahlheimer of Lycoming earlier the same day. Wozniak lost to Youel of North Central, Carlson of Chicago, and Doan of Elmhurst at the Border Brawl, but he does have wins against Weber of Wartburg and Klukow of Augsburg.

174 lbs.

The Favorite: Josh Chelf, UW-La Crosse

Top Challenger: Eric Bath, UW-Stevens Point

Chelf is one of the top 174 lb. wrestlers in college, regardless of division, a fact he proved with a fourth place finish at the Midlands. He is the defending champ at this weight and steamrolls his opponents, racking up 17 falls along the way. He was a close winner at Wheaton, however, over his NCAA finals opponent Vanderhyde of Olivet and only defeated Bath 7-6 in their dual and was on his back when time expired. Bath had a strong run at the NCAA tournament last year, losing in the first round before storming back to place third. In any other conference, he is the clear favorite; he just happens to be in this one.

184 lbs.

The Favorite: Josh Zabel, UW-La Crosse

Top Challengers: Ben Engelland, UW-Stevens Point; David Casper, UW-Whitewater

Zabel and Engelland are numbers 5 and 6 in the last d3wrestle.com and NWCA rankings and Zabel owns the 9-7 win over Engelland, a 2nd semester wrestler with a 14-2 record and a win over Youel of North Central. Zabel is 32-6, but lost to Youel at Wheaton. This is a close race that should be a great final, provided Casper, who also lost to Youel, is able to spoil the party. He already lost to Zable, but has yet to face Engelland.

197 lbs.

The Favorite: Craig Bollig, UW-Stevens Point

Top Challengers: Josh Holforty, UW-Eau Claire; Andy Moore, UW-La Crosse

Bollig has a win over Miller of Wartburg back in November and defeated Moore last month. He is 29-1 with his only loss coming in the first dual meet of the year to Hartt of Lakeland. He is ranked 3rd by d3wrestle and 4th by the NWCA with titles at the Pointer Open and Wisconsin Open. Moore has gone 21-9 with a pin over West of Delaware Valley and his backup has a win over Holforty. Holforty is 26-6 and split with Hartt.

285 lbs.

The Favorite: Dan Laurent, UW-La Crosse

Top Challengers: Sean Evans, UW-Whitewater; Nick Hoeft, UW-Eau Claire; Chad Gregory, UW-SP

Lots of turmoil at this weight, as Evans has a win over Laurent, Gregory has a win over Evans, Hoeft has a win over Evans, Laurent has a win over Hoeft, and so on. Laurent is the favorite because he won last year, defeated Evans recently, and defeated Bowers of Heidelberg, but it looks like anything could happen this weekend.