



PRIDE WINS EIGHTH STRAIGHT CAA TITLE

Chesapeake, VA -- The Hofstra Pride captured their eighth straight Colonial Athletic Association title on Saturday, winning the CAA Championships with 106.5 total points and six NCAA Automatic Qualifiers. Old Dominion finished second for the third straight year with 86.5 total points, while Rider nipped at third with 57.5 points.



The conference will send 20 automatic qualifiers to the NCAA Tournament in two weeks, including the six from Hofstra, five from Old Dominion, four from Rider, two from George Mason (including the CAA Tournament's Most Outstanding Wrestler, 174 pound champ Bagna Tovuujav) and one each from Boston University, Binghamton and Drexel. The NCAA committee will meet on Monday and release the remaining at-large bids on Wednesday, March 11.

The Hofstra Pride maintained its streak of consecutive CAA titles since joining the league in 2002, winning by 20 points at Oscar Smith High School in Chesapeake, Virginia. Hofstra had three champions, tying Old Dominion for the most at the tournament.

In all, eight number one seeds won the title at their weight class, with only two upsets. The first was Most Outstanding Wrestler Bagna Tovuujav, who posted a sudden victory win over Hofstra's top seeded and 9th ranked senior Alton Lucas in the finals. Hofstra's Paul Gillespie was another terrific story at the 2009 CAA Championships. As a six seed, Gillespie beat the number three, number two and the top ranked wrestler at his weight to win the 149-lb weight class.

Old Dominion junior Jesse Strawn also had an exciting day on the mats for the Monarchs, wrestling back in the consolation bracket. In his first match of the day, against Rider's Mike Miller, Strawn and Miller were tied with just ten seconds remaining in regulation when Strawn not only got the takedown, but got Miller on his back and scored a pin with just one second remaining. Strawn then had to face Hofstra's Joe Fagiano in the third/fourth place matchup and was trailing the whole match before reversing Fagiano with just seconds remaining to win by one, 5-4 and guarantee his second trip to the NCAA Tournament.

The Colonial Athletic Association will be well-represented at the 2009 NCAA Tournament in St. Louis, Mo., as 13 of the 20 qualifiers were either the one or two seed at their weights. Eleven of the automatic qualifiers are nationally ranked, including eight in the current Top Ten, according to the *USA Today*/InterMat/NWCA poll.

2009 Colonial Athletic Association NCAA Automatic Qualifiers

125: James Nicholson, Old Dominion

125: Steve Bonanno, Hofstra

133: Lou Ruggirello, Hofstra
141: Ryan Williams, Old Dominion
149: Paul Gillespie, Hofstra
157: Jonny Bonilla-Bowman, Hofstra
157: Mike Kessler, Rider
165: Chris Brown, Old Dominion
165: Jason Lapham, Rider (True Second Win Over Ryan Patrovich, Hofstra)
174: Bagna Tovuujev, George Mason*
174: Alton Lucas, Hofstra
174: Eric Decker, Old Dominion
174: Hunter Meys, Boston University
184: Josh Patterson, Binghamton
184: Doug Umbehauer, Rider
197: Cayle Byers, George Mason
197: Jon Oplinger, Drexel
197: Jesse Strawn, Old Dominion
197: Joe Fagiano, Hofstra
285: Ed Bordas, Rider

*Most Outstanding Wrestler

True Placewinning Alternates in case of injury:

133: Kyle Hutter, Old Dominion
141: Justin Accordino, Hofstra
149: Mike Roberts, Boston University
285: Kyle Frey, Drexel