



2018-19 Athletics Accomplishments

* Penn State earned its 20th Top 15 finish in the 26 years of the NACDA Learfield IMG College Directors' Cup, placing No. 13. The Nittany Lions have placed in the Top 15 in 9 of the last 10 years. Penn State is among only nine programs nationwide to have finished in the Top 25 in all 26 final Directors' Cup rankings.

* The Nittany Lions were No. 3 in the final Learfield Directors' Cup winter standings, earning their 14th consecutive Top 5 winter finish. Penn State and Stanford are the nation's only institutions to place in the Top 5 in the final winter Directors' Cup standings in each of the past 14 years.

* Penn State also was No. 3 in the Learfield Directors' Cup final fall standings. The Nittany Lions have placed in the Top 3 in the final fall standings nine times. Penn State and Stanford are the only schools with 12 consecutive Top 10 finishes after the fall sports season.

* Forbes ranked Penn State No. 10 among the nation's "Top 25 Schools That Dominate Academically and Athletically."

* In a five-year survey conducted by Yahoo Sports!, Penn State ranked No. 9 among all 65 Autonomy 5 athletic programs for the second consecutive year.

* During Sandy Barbour's initial five years of leading Penn State Athletics, its student-athletes have earned the 10 highest semester 3.0 grade-point average totals, including a record 3.17 GPA (spring 2019 semester), 26 teams (multiple times) and 520 students (2017 fall) with a 3.0 GPA or higher.

The Nittany Lions have captured six NCAA Championships in women's soccer, women's volleyball and wrestling and won 29 conference championships and tournament titles (24 Big Ten, 5 EIVA) during Barbour's tenure.

STUDENT-ATHLETE ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

* In November 2018, the NCAA released its annual graduation study of institutions across the nation, which revealed Penn State student-athletes earned a record-tying Graduation Success Rate (GSR) of 90 percent compared to the 87 percent average for all Division I institutions for students entering from 2008-09 through the 2011-12 academic year.

Eight Nittany Lion squads posted a perfect 100 percent Graduation Success Rate.

* The 2018 NCAA Graduation Rates Report also showed that Penn State student-athletes had a four-year federal graduation rate of 79 percent, No. 4 among Big Ten institutions and significantly above the 67 percent Division I average.

* Penn State student-athletes continued to raise the bar in 2018-19. A school record total of 167 Nittany Lion students graduated during the 2018 fall and 2019 spring semesters, with additional graduates to come in August. The total included a spring record 133 graduates following the spring semester.

* Nittany Lion students broke several more school academic records during the 2019 spring semester, including:

- 3.17 grade-point average (overall record);
- 58 students with a 4.0 semester GPA (overall record);
- 505 students earning 3.0 GPA or higher (spring record; first time over 500);
- 245 students earning 3.5 GPA for Dean's List honors (spring record).

*A record-tying 26 teams earned a 3.0 grade-point average or higher, for the third consecutive semester, during the 2019 spring term. A total of 65 percent of Nittany Lion students earned a 3.0 GPA or higher, one point off the school record.

* A total of 518 student-athletes posted a 3.0 GPA or higher last fall, the second-highest total in school history. The students posted an overall 3.15 grade-point average and 26 teams earned a 3.0 grade-point average or higher during the 2018 fall semester to tie the school mark.

*Also, a fall semester record-tying 64 percent of student-athletes earned a 3.0 GPA or higher.

*For the third time in four years, Penn State students broke the school record, as 117 Nittany Lions garnered Big Ten Distinguished Scholar Awards for earning a 3.7 GPA or higher during the 2018-19 academic year. The previous high was 97 honorees in 2016-17.

A total of 15 students earned a perfect 4.0 GPA in 2018-19. A total of 811 Nittany Lions have been selected a Big Ten Distinguished Scholar since the program began in 2008-09.

* The NCAA reported that 13 Penn State teams earned perfect APR scores of 1,000 during the 2017-18 academic year, an increase of one from the previous year. A total of 18 teams (out of 29) equaled or surpassed their multi-year (four-year) APR score from the 2018 NCAA APR report.

* Four Penn State teams – women's cross country, women's fencing, men's golf and wrestling -- earned NCAA Public Recognition Awards. The four squads posted multi-year Academic Progress Rate scores in the top 10 percent nationally for their respective sport through the 2017-18 academic year (data from 2014-15 through 2017-18).

* For the third time in four years, the Nittany Lions broke the school record for Academic All-Big Ten honorees, with 368 student-athletes earning the recognition in 2018-19 for posting a 3.0 grade-point average or higher. The yearly record total was boosted by marks re-written by the winter (91) and spring/at-large (183) sports.

* Six teams broke or tied their all-time yearly high for Academic All-Big Ten honorees in 2018-19.

* Penn State is second among all Big Ten institutions with 6,603 Academic All-Big Ten honorees since 1991-92, its first year of competition in some Big Ten sports.

TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS AND TOP FINISHES

* The Nittany Lions captured one NCAA Championship and six Big Ten Conference crowns in 2018-19. The wrestling squad delivered its fourth consecutive and eighth national championship in the past nine years, crowning three individual national champions.

The men's lacrosse team advanced to the NCAA semifinals for the first time in program history and the men's and women's fencing squad placed second at the NCAA Championships.

* Penn State has won 79 national championships all-time, including 51 NCAA titles. The Nittany Lions' 51 NCAA Championships rank No. 5 nationally and are the highest total of any institution east of the Mississippi River.

* The Nittany Lions have won 21 NCAA Championships since 2007, tied for third-highest in the nation and nearly double the next closest Big Ten institution (11).

* The Nittany Lions won six Big Ten titles in 2018-19: women's soccer, wrestling (regular season and championship), men's gymnastics and men's lacrosse (regular season and championship).

* Penn State has won 113 Big Ten Championships or tournament titles since capturing its first in 1992-93, the third-highest total in the conference over that span.

* Eight of Penn State's 10 highest yearly totals for Big Ten Championships won have occurred since the 2008-09 academic year. The Nittany Lions have won at least five Big Ten titles in five of the past seven years.

* Eighteen Penn State programs competed in their respective NCAA Championships and the football team played in the Citrus Bowl for a total of 19 squads advancing to NCAA post-season competition.

* Six Nittany Lions were crowned NCAA individual champions in men's fencing, women's swimming and diving, women's indoor track and field and wrestling, giving Penn State a combined 19 individual national champions the past three years and 168 all-time.

* Twelve Nittany Lions won Big Ten individual championships, giving Penn State a combined 34 individual conference titles the past three years.

STUDENT-ATHLETE INDIVIDUAL ACADEMIC & ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS

* Senior men's gymnast Noah Roberson became just the sixth three-time recipient of the NCAA Elite 90 Award across all sports. Roberson graduated in May with a 4.0 grade-point average as a double major in biomedical engineering and mechanical engineering, serving as a student marshal. He earned undergraduate and master's degrees through the Schreyer College's integrated undergraduate-graduate program. The Elite 90 Award is presented to the student-athlete with the highest cumulative GPA participating in each of the NCAA's 90 championships.

* Four Nittany Lions earned CoSIDA Academic All-America® accolades: Emily Ogle (women's soccer) and Noah Roberson (men's gymnastics) earned their second Academic All-America® honor, while Kerry Abello (women's soccer) and Blake Gillikin (football) earned their first. Roberson is a two-time first-team Academic All-American®.

The quartet of honorees boosted Penn State's all-time total to 205 CoSIDA Academic All-Americans®, which ranks No. 4 among all Division I institutions and No. 5 among all NCAA schools.

*Senior Ally McHugh earned the gold medal in the 1650 freestyle at the NCAA Women's Swimming and Diving Championships to become the program's first national champion. McHugh posted a school record time of 15:39.22, shaving nearly eight seconds off her winning time at the Big Ten Championships, where she won the 1650 free for the second consecutive year.

*Junior Danae Rivers became the women's track and field program's first indoor national champion when she roared from behind to capture the 800-meter crown in a school record 2:03.69. Rivers also won the Big Ten Indoor 800-meter title for the third consecutive year and the conference's Outdoor 800 and 1500-meter crowns for the second time in her career.

*Senior Karol Metryka won the NCAA men's saber championship to lead the Nittany Lions to a second place finish at the national championships.

* Bo Nickal won the Dan Hodge Trophy, marking the third consecutive year a Nittany Lion was named the nation's top collegiate wrestler. A three-time NCAA Champion, Nickal joined former Nittany Lions Zain Retherford, David Taylor and Kerry McCoy, along with head coach Cael Sanderson, as winners of the Hodge Trophy.

* Bo Nickal was selected the Big Ten Jesse Owens Male Athlete of the Year. Nickal became the third Nittany Lion to win the honor, joining men's gymnast Luis Vargas (2005) and wrestler David Taylor (2014).

* NCAA individual champions Ally McHugh (women's swimming and diving) and Bo Nickal (wrestling) were named Penn State's Female and Male Student-Athletes of the Year.

* Jason Nolf (wrestling) and Emily Ogle (women's soccer) were selected Penn State's 2018-19 Ernest B. McCoy Memorial Award winners for their academic and athletic achievements.

* Ally McHugh (women's swimming and diving) and Jason Nolf (wrestling) were selected Penn State's recipients of the 2019 Big Ten Medal of Honor.

* Jessica Jones (women's gymnastics) and Gavin Turner (men's fencing) were awarded 2019 Big Ten Post-Graduate Scholarships.

* Kelsey Crow (women's hockey) and Nick Scott (football) were tabbed Penn State's 2018-19 Big Ten Sportsmanship recipients.

WRESTLING WINS FOURTH CONSECUTIVE NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP, LED BY TRIO OF INDIVIDUAL CHAMPS

*Led by three national champions, the Penn State wrestling team captured its fourth consecutive and eighth NCAA title in the past nine years under the Coach Cael Sanderson. Bo Nickal (197 lbs.) and Jason Nolf (157) captured their third consecutive NCAA individual national titles and Anthony Cassar (285) won his first NCAA crown.

Nickal finished the season with a 30-0 record (120-3 career) and was selected the 2019 NCAA Most Dominant Wrestler and the Hodge Trophy recipient. Nolf finished the season with a 31-0 mark and was 117-3 in his career with a school record 60 pins. Cassar delivered a 30-1 season, winning the Big Ten and NCAA titles in his first appearances in both events.

The Nittany Lions also won the Big Ten Wrestling Championship for the sixth time in the past nine years. Nolf, Nickal and Mark Hall and Anthony Cassar all won conference individual crowns. Nickal and Nolf were selected Co-Big Ten Wrestlers of the Year and Nolf was named Co-Outstanding Wrestler of the Big Ten Championship.

*It was a landmark season for the Penn State men's lacrosse team, which won its first Big Ten Championship and advanced to its first NCAA Championship Weekend. Led by Coach Jeff Tambroni, the Nittany Lions also won their first Big Ten Tournament title, were the No. 1 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament and broke the school record for victories in a season with a 16-2 mark. Grant Ament and Chris Sabia were selected USILA first-team All-Americans. Ament also was among five finalists for the Tewaaraton Award, presented to the nation's top collegiate lacrosse player.

*The Nittany Lion women's soccer team captured its 19th Big Ten Championship, winning the title outright for the 15th time. Led by Coach Erica Dambach, the Nittany Lions advanced to the NCAA quarterfinals for the third consecutive year. Junior Kaleigh Riehl earned first-team United Soccer Coaches All-America accolades and senior Emily Ogle was a second-team All-American, in addition to her CoSIDA Academic All-America® selection.

*The men's gymnastics team won its fourth Big Ten Championship and finished No. 6 at the NCAA Championships, under the direction of Coach Randy Jenson. Stephen Nedoroscik (2nd, pommel horse) and Noah Roberson (3rd; rings) earned All-America accolades. Roberson, who graduated with a 4.0 grade-point average, was selected the NCAA Elite 90 recipient in men's gymnastics for the third consecutive year.

*The men's and women's fencing team finished second at the NCAA Championships. Senior Karol Metryka won the men's saber championship to lead the Nittany Lions, coached by Wes Glon. Sophomore Zara Moss was the women's saber runner-up for the second consecutive year.

*The women's volleyball squad advanced to the NCAA quarterfinals, being ousted by eventual national champion Stanford. Junior Kendall White was selected a first-team AVCA All-American and Jonni Parker earned third-team All-America honors in addition to being named Big Ten Freshman of the Year for Coach Russ Rose.

*The football squad, led by Coach James Franklin, was No. 12 in the final College Football Playoff rankings, remaining one of just six programs to finish in the Top 15 of the final CFP rankings in each of the past three years.

*The men's tennis team posted a 20-9 record and delivered the program's third all-time NCAA Tournament victory. Directed by Coach Jeff Zinn, the ITA Regional Coach of the Year, the Nittany Lions were 8-3 in Big Ten matches and tied the program's all-time high with the No. 3 seed in the conference tournament. Senior Constant De La Bassettiere was a first-team All-Big Ten selection and participated in the NCAA Men's Singles Championship, being ousted by the eventual national champion.

July 18, 2019