

Top-10 Wrestlers to Watch at 197 pounds



J. Barr



R. Elam



J. Novak



J. Rademacher



S. Little



M. Stout



C. McDanel



C. Merrill



B. Berge



D. Parker

The following is a look at WIN's Top-10 ranked wrestlers, plus other notable wrestlers, at 197 pounds before the conference/NCAA qualifying tournaments. Go to WIN-Magazine.com for an updated NCAA preview after the qualifiers.

1. Josh Barr, Penn State, So., Davison, Mich.

Note: Competed at 2025 Final X, dropping two straight bouts to eventual World champ Trent Hidlay.

Season/Career Record: 16-0/36-4

2025/Career NCAA Resume: 2nd in 2025.

Regular-Season Notes: Barr heads into Big Tens with a 100% bonus rate, having racked up five falls, seven tech falls and four major decisions; Southern Scuffle champion; majored No. 5 Stephen Little, 9-1.

2. Rocky Elam, Iowa State, Sr., Kansas City, Mo.

Note: Redshirted 2024-25 season; transferred from Missouri.

Season/Career Record: 14-0/83-17

2025/Career NCAA Resume: 6th in 2024; 3rd in 2023; 4th in 2022; 5th in 2021.

Regular-Season Notes: Cyclone Invitational champion; CKLV Invite champ, defeating No. 3 Joey Novak, 7-3, and No. 4 Justin Rademacher, 4-3; Handed Massoma Endene, then of Iowa, his only loss of the season before the former Hawkeye announced his intention to take a medical redshirt; defeated No. 8 Cody Merrill, 4-1 TB.

3. Joey Novak, Wyoming, Jr., New Prague, Minn.

Note: Earned fifth-place finish as a No. 15 seed at 2025 NCAAs.

Season/Career Record: 14-2/64-22

2025/Career NCAA Resume: 5th in 2025; 2-2 in 2024.

Regular-Season Notes: CKLV Invite runner-up, falling to No. 2 Rocky Elam, 7-3; Soldier Salute champion; only other loss came to Virginia Tech's Sonny Sasso, 12-2, at the National Duals Invitational.

4. Justin Rademacher, Oregon State, So., West Linn, Ore.

Note: Won a U20 World title in men's freestyle last summer.

Season/Career Record: 20-2/34-13

2025/Career NCAA Resume: 1-2 in 2024.

Regular-season Notes: Princeton Open champion; CKLV Invite third-place finisher; defeated Stanford's Angelo Posada; dropped a 6-4 SV bout on Feb. 6 to ASU's Colton Hawks.

5. Stephen Little, Little Rock, Jr., Sturgis, Ky.

Note: Became Little Rock's second All-American, earning the distinction on the same night as Nasir Bailey in 2024.

Season/Career Record: 13-2/61-12

2025/Career NCAA Resume: 6th in 2025; 7th in 2024.

Regular-Season Notes: Southern Scuffle finalist, falling to No. 1 Josh Barr, 9-1; defeated on Feb. 22 at GMU Patriot Last Chance Open by Princeton's Mikey Squires.

6. Mac Stout, Pitt, Jr., Mt. Lebanon, Pa.

Note: Made headlines at 2025 NCAAs after Mac Stout defeated brother Luke Stout (Princeton) in Round of 16.

Season/Career Record: 16-3/65-15

2025/Career NCAA Resume: 7th in 2025; 2-2 in 2024.

Regular-Season Notes: Navy Classic champ, tech falling No. 7 Camden McDanel of Nebraska in a rematch of the 2025 NCAA 7th-place bout in which Stout earned a major decision; losses came against Iowa's Massoma Endene, Bucknell's Dillon Bechtold and Stanford freshman Angelo Posada.

7. Camden McDanel, Nebraska, So., Circleville, Ohio

Note: Earned AA honors in 2025 as a No. 20 seed.

Season/Career Record: 18-5/40-19

2025/Career NCAA Resume: 8th in 2025.

Regular-Season Notes: Dropped two bouts to No. 8 Cody Merrill; defeated Indiana's Gabe Sollars in a rematch of the 2025 NCAA Blood Round.

8. Cody Merrill, Oklahoma State, Fr., Gilroy, Calif.

Note: Coached by OK State great Daniel Cormier at Gilroy High School.

Season/Career Record: 13-3/13-3

2025/Career NCAA Resume: n/a

Regular-Season Notes: Twice defeated No. 7 Camden McDanel, defeated No. 10 DJ Parker, 1-0, in Bedlam dual; losses came against Iowa's Massoma Endene, Iowa State's No. 2 Rocky Elam, 4-1 TB, and Virginia Tech's Sonny Sasso.

9. Bennett Berge, South Dakota State, Jr., Kasson-Mantorville, Minn.

Note: Bumped up from 184 pounds.

Season/Career Record: 12-3/63-17

2025/Career NCAA Resume: 1-2 in 2025; 4th in 2024.

Regular-Season Notes: Medically forfeited out of CKLV Invitational; defeated Stanford's Angelo Posada, 3-1; other losses came against No. 2 Rocky Elam and NDSU's Devin Wasley, 9-5, on Feb. 22.

10. DJ Parker, Oklahoma, Sr., Moline, Ill.

Note: Transferred from NDSU in 2023.

Season/Career Record: 16-6/70-39

2025/Career NCAA Resume: R12 in 2025; 0-2 in 2023.

Regular-Season Notes: Lost twice at CKLV Invite to No. 4 Justin Rademacher; split matches with West Virginia's Rune Lawrence; majored Missouri's Evan Bates, 18-4, on Feb. 12.

Others to Watch

• Stanford true freshman **Angelo Posada** appears to be a man on a mission in a year where many freshmen are expected to ascend the podium on March 21 in Cleveland. Posada is 15-4 on the year and currently riding a eight-match winning streak heading into the ACC Championships with wins over No. 6 Mac Stout and a 12-4 major over VT's **Sonny Sasso**, another AA hopeful with plenty of big wins on the season.

• Brown's **Andrew Reall**, at 30-4, is much improved after posting an 11-15 record as a



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true freshman last season. Reall, who is riding an 11-match winning streak dating back to the Southern Scuffle, has a notable win this season over Bucknell's **Dillon Bechtold**, while his only losses have come against Maryland's **Bran-son John** (twice), Oregon State's No. 4 Justin Rademacher and Nebraska's No. 7 Camden McDanel.

• Iowa's **Gabe Arnold**, at 13-5 bouncing between three weights, could shake things up in the Big Ten. ■

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2025 All-American Matches at 197 (seed in parenthesis)

1st - (2) Stephen Buchanan (Iowa) dec. (4) Josh Barr (Penn State), 5-2

3rd - (3) AJ Ferrari (CSU-B) dec. (1) Jacob Cardenas (Michigan), 2-0

5th - (15) Joey Novak (Wyoming) maj. (12) Stephen Little (Little Rock), 8-0

7th - (6) Mac Stout (Pitt) maj. (20) Camden McDanel (Nebraska), 12-3