**Welker beats Makoyed in last match, as Iowa edges North Central to win its first NCWWC team title**

by Gary Abbott, USA Wrestling

Kylie Welker (Iowa) locks up Yelena Makoyed (North Central) in the 170-pound finals (Photo by AJ Grieves, Mat Focus)

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa – In its first national championship as a varsity program, with its top star winning in the final match of the evening, the **University of Iowa** won its first National Collegiate Women’s Wrestling Championships team title, edging returning champion **North Central** before a loud and excited local crowd.

Trailing by 17 points going into the finals round, Coach Clarissa Chun’s Hawkeyes needed nearly a perfect final round to make up the difference.

Organizers decided to make the 170-pound finals the last match of the finals, where Iowa star **Kylie Welker**, the No. 1 seed, battled second seeded Yelena Makoyed of North Central, a three-time NCWWC champion and the USA Wrestling Women’s College Wrestler of the Year. As if in a movie script, the team title went down to that last match. The winner would also clinch the team title for their school.

Welker got on a roll early, jumping to a 6-0 lead, putting Makoyed in danger of being pinned. In the second period, Welker popped a hip toss for four points and held Makoyed on her back for most of the period. Makoyed battled herself free, but Welker had secured a 10-0 technical fall. A North Central challenge was denied, making the final score 11-0.

With the win by Welker, Iowa won the team title with 204 points, with North Central in second with 198 points. King placed third with 163 points, and McKendree was fourth with 106 points. Iowa, the first Power Five school to add women’s wrestling, won the national title in its very first year.

Iowa had nine wrestlers in the finals, with two of the matches between Iowa teammates. When it was over, the Hawkeyes came home with six individual champions: Welker, plus **Emilie Gonzalez** (101), **Ava Bayless** (109), **Felicity Taylor** (116), **Reese Larramendy** (143) and **Marlynne Deede** (155).

Taylor and Deede won their second NCWWC titles, with their first at other schools. Taylor was a 2021 NCWWC champion for McKendree, while Deede won her title in 2023 for Augsburg.

Gonzalez and Taylor beat teammates in the finals. Gonzalez stopped Sterling Dias, 4-0 and Taylor stopped Brianna Gonzalez, 9-2. Larramendy helped the cause with a pin in the finals over Aine Drury of King in 4:10. Bayless edged Lock Haven’s Kaelani Shufeldt, 2-1, and Deede controlled Cheyenne Bowman of King, 9-3.

Cam Guerin of McKendree shows off her 4x tattoo above the USA Wrestling tattoo on her thigh after winning fourth NCWWC title. (Photo by AJ Grieves, Mat Focus)

McKendree’ **Cam Guerin** became only the third wrestler to win four career NCWWC titles, with a tight 2-1 win over Maria Baez Dilone of King at 130 pounds. After the win, she showed off her 4x tattoo on her thigh above her USA Wresting tattoo. The two previous four-timers were also from McKendree, Emily Shilson and Sydnee Kimber, both who won their fourth titles in 2023.

The Outstanding Wrestler was New Jersey City’s **Sandra Guerrero,** who pinned Jayce Foeller of Iowa in the 191-pound finals in 2:22. Guerrero becomes the first national champion in the history of the New Jersey City program.

The other two champions were **Amani Jones** of North Central (123), who beat King’s Virginia Foard in the finals, 3-1, and **Claire DiCugno** of King, who scored a 10-0 technical fall over Yele Aycock of North Central at 136 pounds.

What makes this tournament special this year is that it is a qualifier for the **U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Wrestling** at Penn State, April 19-20. The champion in each of the 10 weight classes advances to the Trials. If the champion is already qualified, there will not be any athletes qualifying from that weight class.

Earning spots in the Olympic Trials were Gonzalez, Bayless, Taylor, DiCugno and Larramendy. Guerrero said that she would not go to the U.S. Olympic Team Trials, as she was going to try out for the Puerto Rico national team instead. The other champions were already qualified for the Trials. Since the college weights are not the same as the Olympic weights, the athletes will have to select an Olympic weight class for Penn State.

**NATIONAL COLLEGIATE WOMEN’S WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**At Cedar Rapids, Iowa, March 9**

**Finals results**

191 pounds

1st - Sandra Guerrero (New Jersey City University) won by fall over Jaycee Foeller (Iowa) Fall 2:22

3rd - Traeh Haynes (North Central (IL)) won by fall over Alexa Garcia (King University) (Fall 3:53)

5th - Brittyn Corbishley (North Central (IL)) won by fall over Sara Lake (Lindenwood University) (Fall 0:21)

7th - Jayleen Sekona (Colorado Mesa University) won by tech fall over Jada Arnold (Mount Olive) (TF 10-0)

101 pounds

1st - Emilie Gonzalez (Iowa) won by decision over Sterling Dias (Iowa) Dec 4-0

3rd - Lizette Rodriguez (McKendree University) won by decision over Madison Avila (North Central) (Dec 8-3)

5th - Odelia Lopez (Schreiner University) won by decision over Jennesis Martinez (Colorado Mesa University) (Dec 2-1)

7th - Avery Kibelbek (King University) won by fall over Genesis Ramirez (Aurora) (Fall 5:49)

109 pounds

1st - Ava Bayless (Iowa) won by decision over Kaelani Shufeldt (Lock Haven University) Dec 2-1

3rd -Samantha Miller (Mount Olive) won by fall over Kendra Ryan (North Central) (Fall 1:11)

5th - Jaslynn Gallegos (North Central) won by tech fall over Danielle Garcia (King University) (TF 12-2)

7th - Isabella Morales (Colorado Mesa University) won by injury default over Jenavi Alejandro (Tiffin University) (Inj. 0:00)

116 pounds

1st - Felicity Taylor (Iowa) won by decision over Brianna Gonzalez (Iowa) Dec 9-2

3rd - Samara Chavez (King University) won by fall over Sydney Petzinger (North Central) Fall 5:19

5th - Melanie Mendoza (King University) won by decision over Carleigh Czerneski (Adrian College) Dec 7-0

7th - Karissa Turnwall (Emmanuel College) won by fall over Abby Nelson (Wisconsin Stevens Point) Fall 2:27

123

1st - Amani Jones (North Central (IL)) won by decision over Virginia Foard (King University) Dec 3-1

3rd - Montana Delawder (King University) won by decision over Shelby Moore (McKendree University) (Dec 7-2)

5th - Alexandra Fitzgerald (Sacred Heart) won by fall over Mia Macaluso (East Stroudsburg University) (Fall 4:13)

7th - Victoria Seal (Simon Fraser University) won by tech fall over Nichole Moore (McKendree University) (TF 12-2)

130

1st - Cameron Guerin (McKendree University) won by decision over Maria Victoria Baez Dilone (King University) Dec 2-1

3rd - Alexis Janiak (Aurora) won by decision over Sara Sterner (North Central (IL)) (Dec 9-6)

5th - Cassia Zammit (Presbyterian) won by decision over Ngao Shoua Whitethorn (Wisconsin Stevens Point) (Dec 7-3)

7th - Salome Walker (North Central (IL)) won by decision over Kylie Rule (Wartburg) (Dec 17-9)

136

1st - Claire DiCugno (King University) won by tech fall over Yele Aycock (North Central (IL)) TF 10-0

3rd - Viktorya Torres (McKendree University) won by fall over Grace Stem (Lock Haven University) (Fall 2:38)

5th - Lilly Luft (Iowa) won by decision over Jade Trolland (Simon Fraser University) (Dec 6-2)

7th - Taylor Graveman (North Central (IL)) won by tech fall over Holly Beaudoin (Colorado Mesa University) (TF 11-0)

143

1st - Reese Larramendy (Iowa) won by fall over Aine Drury (King University) Fall 4:10

3rd Place Match - Alara Boyd (North Central (IL)) won by fall over Maddie Kubicki (Presbyterian) (Fall 0:50)

5th - Zoey Lints (Elmira College) won by fall over Yasmine Oliveira (King University) (Fall 0:25)

7th - Ella Schmit (Iowa) won by fall over Erica Schroeder (Colorado Mesa University) (Fall 2:13)

155

1st - Marlynne Deede (Iowa) won by decision over Cheyenne Bowman (King University) Dec 9-3

3rd - London Houston (North Central (IL)) won by fall over Dalia Garibay (Colorado Mesa University) (Fall 2:15)

5th - Bella Mir (Iowa) won by decision over Madison Sandquist (Sacred Heart) (Dec 3-0)

7th - Alex Hofrichter (Dubuque) won by fall over Nina Makem (Augsburg University) (Fall 1:18)

170

1st - Kylie Welker (Iowa) won by tech fall over Yelena Makoyed (North Central (IL)) TF 11-0

3rd - Tristan Kelly (McKendree University) won by tech fall over Cara Broadus (Sacred Heart) (TF 10-0)

5th - Love Daley (Sacred Heart) won by tech fall over Kami Senlycki (Wartburg) (TF 10-0)

7th - Stella Steigler (Lock Haven University) won by fall over Henlee Haynes (Presbyterian) (Fall 2:16)

**Final Team Standings**

1             Iowa, 204.0

2             North Central, 198.0

3             King, 163.0

4             McKendree, 106.0

5             Colorado Mesa, 68.5

6             Sacred Heart, 61.0

7             Lock Haven, 59.0

8             Presbyterian, 50.5

9             Mount Olive, 39.5

10           Wisconsin Stevens Point, 38.0

11           Aurora, 35.0

12           East Stroudsburg, 33.5

13           Simon Fraser, 33.5

14           Emmanuel, 33.0

15           New Jersey City, 30.5

16           Adrian College, 27.5

17           Elmira College, 24.5

18           Schreiner, 24.0

19           Augsburg, 22.0

20           Wartburg, 21.0

21           Dubuque, 17.0

22           Tiffin, 13.0

23           Lindenwood, 11.0

24           Emory & Henry, 7.5

25           Simpson, 7.5

**U.S. Olympic Team Trials Qualifiers**

Emilie Gonzalez of Iowa (101)

Ava Bayless of Iowa (109)

Felicity Taylor of Iowa (116)

Claire DiCugno of King (136)Reese Larramendy of Iowa (143)