

## 2010 EASTERN WRESTLING LEAGUE TOURNAMENT PREVIEW

By Allen Brown, Gregg Henry and Bruce Closson ([WrestlingReport.com/EWL Site](http://WrestlingReport.com/EWL))

The 35<sup>th</sup> annual EWL Tournament will be held at West Virginia University on March 7, 2010. Edinboro was crowned the champion of the 2009 EWL tournament, with the Fighting Scots followed in placement order by West Virginia, Bloomsburg, Pittsburgh, and Lock Haven while the Golden Eagles of Clarion edged Cleveland State for sixth place. The Fighting Scots have claimed the EWL tournament out-right championship the past five years (2005 through 2009), following a tie with West Virginia in 2004.

This time around, however, we could very well see a change at the top. The University of Pittsburgh is a top 20 nationally ranked dual meet team this season, finishing the year with an excellent record of 17-1-1. The Panthers won the 2010 EWL dual meet title, going 6-0 in league matches, which included a late February 21-13 win over Edinboro. Coach Rande Stottlemeyer's Panthers have a nice mix of young wrestlers and veterans, and appear to be the team to beat heading into the March 2010 EWL Tournament.

Edinboro placed second in the 2010 EWL dual meet race, going 5-1 on the year, and the Scots look to be the team most likely to challenge the Panthers for the 2010 EWL tournament title. Three squads taking aim at the upper tier will be Clarion, West Virginia, and Bloomsburg. Last season Ben Stehura, then in his first year as head coach at Cleveland State, was the EWL "rookie" coach, and this year's rookie is Robbie Waller, who has taken over as head coach of the Lock Haven University Bald Eagles. Both Cleveland State and Lock Haven struggled through the 2010 dual meet season, but both squads are preparing to do well in the EWL championships and to build momentum for the future. Who wants it?

Below is a weight-by-weight preview of the 2010 EWL Tournament. Keep in mind that, on February 25, 2010, the NCAA announced a total of 284 automatic-qualifier allocations for the Division I qualifying tournaments, including 19 for the EWL. The number of automatic EWL qualifiers is noted below for each EWL weight class.

Moreover, the NCAA will name 46 additional at large qualifiers prior to the March 18-20 Tournament in Omaha, Nebraska. These at-large qualifiers will be in addition to the 284 automatic qualifiers from the qualifying tournament. Presumably the EWL will have a number of wrestlers who will be at-large selections and take their talents to the 2010 NCAA Tournament. The NCAA plan is to have exactly 33 wrestlers in each weight class at the 2010 NCAA's.

125 Pounds – (The top 2 finishers automatically qualify for the 2010 NCAA Tournament.)

The 2009 EWL champion at this weight, Paul Donahoe of Edinboro, has graduated, but one of the top contenders for the 2010 EWL title also competes for Edinboro in junior, Eric Morrill. Mr. Morrill has won the Oklahoma Gold tournament, the PSAC's, the Reno Invitational, and has held a top 10 national ranking at 125 pounds this season.

Two excellent freshman 125 pounders aiming for the 2010 EWL finals are Anthony Zanetta of the University of Pittsburgh and Shane Young of the host institution West Virginia University. Zanetta, a true freshman and former PIAA champ out of Keystone Oaks High School, zipped through the EWL dual meet season undefeated (6-0), including a stunning 4-1 decision over Eric Morrill late last month. Young, also a true frosh, is a three-time PIAA titlist (Penn-Trafford High School) who

also sports a late-February decision (10-7) over Eric Morrill. The 125-pound showdown could be worth the price of admission.

Aiming to place high will be Nick Hyatt, a junior from Lock Haven, who placed fourth at this weight at the 2009 EWL's, and 2009 PIAA champ, Joe Waltko, of Clarion University. Bloomsburg University's likely entrant is freshman James Bak, and the Cleveland State Vikings probably will mat freshman Ron Butler.

133 Pounds – (The top 2 finishers automatically qualify for the 2010 NCAA Tournament.)

The 2008 and 2009 EWL champ at 133 was Jimmy Conroy out of the University of Pittsburgh. However, Mr. Conroy could have a rocky road to his third EWL crown, as the 2009 EWL runnerup at 141 pounds, Colin Johnston of West Virginia, has dropped to 133 pounds this season, and has a dual meet win over the two-time league champion.

Another grappler with a 2010 dual meet win over Conroy is Lock Haven hot-shot John Trumbetti, a sophomore out of New Jersey. Conroy, Johnston, and Trumbetti all have held national rankings during this season. Taking the round-robin format one step further and worthy of noting is Edinboro's 133 pounder, Kyle Fluke, a junior from State College, PA, who followed a late February 4-2 loss to Conroy with a 2-0 win over Colin Johnston the next day.

Also, keep an eye on Bloomsburg senior, Jason Guffey, who is a two-time EWL place winner focused on making the finals this year, and Clarion junior Jay Ivanco, who was the 2009 EWL runnerup at 125 and grabbed second place at 133 in December of 2009 at the PSAC tournament. The Cleveland State entrant likely will be freshman Zech Huff, from Sturgis, Michigan. May the best man win!

141 Pounds – (The winner automatically qualifies for the 2010 NCAA Tournament.)

The 2009 EWL champion at 141 pounds and favorite to repeat at this weight is nationally ranked Tyler Nauman of the Pittsburgh Panthers, a sophomore from Middletown, PA. Strong possibilities for semi-finalists and fighting for high placements are Greg Lewis of Clarion, Joel Webster of Edinboro, and Owen Wilkinson of Lock Haven. Mr. Lewis is a two-time EWL place winner, having placed sixth in 2006 at 141 and fifth in 2009 while competing at 149 pounds.

The Bloomsburg Huskies have been wrestling Ian De Sol at this weight, a junior from Schenectady, NY. The West Virginia Mountaineers have had three different grapplers competing against their EWL opponents this season at 141 pounds – Anthony Curcio, Christian Hartsell and Ryan Romano. Cleveland State's 141 pounder is Mike Mencini, a redshirt freshman out of Twinsburg, Ohio.

149 Pounds – (The top 2 finishers automatically qualify for the 2010 NCAA Tournament.)

Matt Fittery, who won the 2009 EWL title at this weight competing for Lock Haven, has graduated. This season there does not appear to be a clear-cut tournament favorite at 149, although the wrestler with the highest national ranking and undefeated status (6-0) through the EWL dual meet season is Clarion true freshman, James "Snapper" Fleming.

Three excellent EWL grapplers also aiming for the crown at this weight class are Torston Gillespie (Edinboro), Josh Roosa (Bloomsburg), and Eric Albright (Pittsburgh), while a dark-horse is Mike Rowe. Mr. Rowe is a senior, who transferred to West Virginia from the Nebraska Cornhuskers of the powerful Big 12 Conference. Look for Cleveland State to enter senior Dan Castillo at this weight, and Lock Haven to mat junior Zach Kell.

157 Pounds – (The top 2 finishers automatically qualify for the 2010 NCAA Tournament.)

The 2009 EWL outstanding wrestler, Matt Moley of Bloomsburg, returns at 157 pounds. Mr. Moley, now a senior, also is a two-time NCAA All-American, having placed eighth in the 2008 NCAA's and sixth at the 2009 event. Moley's possible opponent in the 2010 EWL finals is Clarion senior Hadley "Full Gas Tank" Harrison. Mr. Harrison, from McKean, PA, is a four-time PSAC place winner, a three-time EWL medalist, a two-time NCAA qualifier, and is known for his constant attacking style of wrestling.

The remaining five competitors who will be in the battle to place high are Donnie Tasser (Pittsburgh), John Greisheimer (Edinboro), Seth Creasy (Lock Haven), Corey Carlo (Cleveland State), and Kyle Eason (West Virginia). Mr. Eason is a sophomore from Harrisburg, PA, who competed in high school for powerful Central Dauphin High School.

165 Pounds – (The top 3 finishers automatically qualify for the 2010 NCAA Tournament.)

Edinboro's Jarrod King, from Connellsville, PA, has won the EWL title at this weight the past two years. Mr. King is now a graduate student after transferring to Edinboro from the University of Oklahoma. During King's three seasons competing for the Fighting Scots, he has won titles at the PSAC tournament, the EWL's, the Oklahoma Gold tournament, the Reno Invitational, the Eastern Michigan Open, and, by the way, at the 2009 NCAA Tournament!

Two other excellent, veteran wrestlers at this weight are Rick Schmelyun of Bloomsburg and Donnie Jones of West Virginia. King, Schmelyun and Jones all have held high national rankings this season. Also of note, Schmelyun, who twice has received wild-card bids to the NCAA tournament, has a victory over King earlier this season. Donnie Jones, who was a bluechip wrestler for Greenberg-Salem High School (PA), is a two-time EWL finalist, a two-time NCAA qualifier and is a very quick and fun-to-watch competitor.

Four other solid wrestlers at this weight are Adam Counterman (Pittsburgh), Rob Michaels (Cleveland State), Kevin Dufresne (Lock Haven), and Nick Milano (Clarion). Milano is a true freshman, who competed in high school for Erie's Cathedral Prep.

174 Pounds – (The winner automatically qualifies for the 2010 NCAA Tournament.)

Kurt Brenner, 2009 EWL champion for West Virginia University, has graduated. The wrestler having the inside track at the 2010 EWL's is veteran Phil Moricone of Edinboro. Mr. Moricone is a graduate student at Edinboro and hails from Derry, New Hampshire. He is a two-time NCAA qualifier, who missed most of last season because of injury but has rebounded to post a strong 2010 campaign.

Dave Sullivan of Pittsburgh and Nate Graham of Bloomsburg are capable of reaching the EWL finals. Sullivan is a senior from Dingmans Ferry, PA, who transferred to the University of Pittsburgh from East Stroudsburg back in 2007. Graham is a junior from New York State who this season, has finished second at the Buffalo Open, placed second at the Navy Classic, and won the PSAC Tournament.

Aiming to place high in the 2010 EWL's are Steve Cressley of Clarion, Marcus Effner of Cleveland State, and Matt Watson of West Virginia. Cressley is a redshirt freshman from Punxsutawney, PA, while Effner is a graduate student from Garfield Heights, OH, and Matt Weston is a sophomore out of Michigan. Lock Haven's likely entry will be junior Derek Caldwell, a Pennsylvania native.

184 Pounds – (The top 2 finishers automatically qualify for the 2010 NCAA Tournament.)

The 2009 winner of this weight class, Chris Honeycutt of Edinboro, is redshirting this season, but the 2009 runnerup, Zac Thomusseit of the University of Pittsburgh, is back, and focused on winning the 2010 EWL title. Thomusseit's only loss in EWL vs. EWL dual meet competition this season was to Pat Bradshaw of Edinboro. Bradshaw went 5-0 in the EWL dual meet series, and won the 2009 EWL crown competing at 197 pounds.

Two other 184 pounders looking to upset the front-runners are Jeremie Cook of Lock Haven and Clint Podish of Clarion. Cook is a junior from Venice, FL, who twice has placed third in the EWL tournament. He used to play baseball for Lock Haven, but now is concentrating his collegiate athletic efforts on only a single sport: wrestling. Clint Podish, of Waynesburg, PA, is in his third year at Clarion, and has battled his way through a difficult season, being in and out of the lineup due to injury. If Podish is healthy for the EWL tournament, he is capable of placing in the top three.

The Huskies' 184 pounder is rugged Derek Coffey, from Lewisburg, PA, who transferred to Bloomsburg from Old Dominion University. Cleveland State's 184 pounders are sophomore Danny Michaels and redshirt frosh Nick Anthony. The likely entrant for the host institution West Virginia University is Robert DeSano. DeSano is a sophomore from Hayfield, Virginia, who last season placed fourth in the inaugural National Collegiate Open, held at Clarion University.

197 Pounds – (The winner automatically qualifies for the 2010 NCAA Tournament.)

Pat Bradshaw from Edinboro, who won the 2009 EWL Tournament at 197 pounds, now competes for the Fighting Scots down at 184. Who will win the 2010 EWL crown at this weight class?

There are four wrestlers likely to be in the hunt for the 2010 title. All have winning records in this season's EWL vs. EWL dual meet competition, but none is undefeated. One of these grapplers is Salem, New Hampshire native, junior Shawn Fendone of the Fighting Scots, who is Bradshaw's successor in the 197-pound weight class.

Three additional premiere EWL 197 pounders in the hunt to bag the title are nationally ranked Matt Wilps of Pittsburgh, Kyle Rooney of West Virginia, and Alex Thomas of Clarion. Mr. Wilps is a sophomore from Pittsburgh (Chartiers Valley High School) while Rooney is a junior, out of Cincinnati, Ohio, who has shown marked improvement as the current season progressed. Young

Alex Thomas is a true freshman from Seaford, Delaware, who has a season highlight of having won the PSAC crown back in December (2009) by first-period fall.

In addition to the above mentioned grapplers, keep an eye on Brian Shaw of Bloomsburg, Harry Turner of Lock Haven, and Jeff Shuller of Cleveland State. Messrs. Shaw and Shuller are seniors, and young Mr. Turner is a redshirt freshman.

285 Pounds – (The top 3 finishers automatically qualify for the 2010 NCAA Tournament.)

The 2009 champion at 285 pounds, Rashard Goff of Cleveland State, has graduated. Goff's successor to the EWL heavyweight title could be Brandon Williamson of West Virginia University. Mr. Williamson, who is nationally ranked, rolled through the EWL dual meet season, taking on all comers, and going undefeated at 6-0. From Connecticut, Williamson transferred to WVU from Nassau Community College (NY), where he won the national junior college (NJCAA) tournament back in 2008.

Two highly ranked EWL heavyweights aiming for the top of the podium this weekend are Ryan Tomei of the University of Pittsburgh and Chris Birchler of Edinboro University. From Irwin, PA, Tomei is a junior, who this season has won the Buffalo Open, finished second at the Penn State Open, and placed at the powerful Midlands Tournament. Out of New Jersey, Chris Birchler transferred from East Stroudsburg to Edinboro this past fall, and this season was runnerup at the November Oklahoma Gold tournament, won the PSAC Tournament, and finished a solid third place at the huge Southern Scuffle. Bircher, by the way, finished top 12 at the 2009 NCAA Tournament at heavyweight, falling just one win short of claiming All-American honors.

Also in the battle to place high will be Quintas McCorkle of Clarion, Dan Craig of Lock Haven, Zac Walsh of Bloomsburg, and Chris Weber of Cleveland State. Mr. McCorkle is a sophomore out of northern Virginia, Dan Craig is a sophomore from Paw Paw, Michigan, Mr. Walsh is a sophomore from Morris Knolls, NJ, and Weber is a true freshman, who hails from New Berlin, Wisconsin.

The EWL has a ton of athletic heavyweights, and the big guys will settle it on the mat March 7 at the 2010 EWL Tournament at West Virginia University.

We hope all you fans enjoy the EWL Tournament, and we wish all the wrestlers the very best!  
Thank you.