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COLLEGE WRESTLING

COLEMAN WINS PAC-12 TITLE

Oregon State junior will compete at the NCAA Championships at 184 lbs

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

As a freshman at Oregon State University, Bob Coleman posted a 6-26 record. There was a time when he didn't win a match for two months.

For the 2016 state wrestling champion from Hermiston High School, it was a hard pill to swallow, but he knew there would be a learning curve from high school to college.

Fast forward two years.

Coleman, 20, won the Pac-12 184-pound title Saturday at Wells Fargo Arena in Tempe, Ariz., and punched his ticket to the NCAA Championships.

"I was just honored to get the opportunity," Coleman said. "Winning a Pac-12 title is not something I expected when I started at Oregon State. To win it is out of this world. It still hasn't sunk in."

All told, Oregon State won four titles and will send six men to the NCAA Championships on March 21-23 at PPG Paints Arena in Pittsburgh.

Tournament brackets will be announced on Wednesday. Each of the 10 weight classes will consist of a 33-man bracket. The top eight in each weight class will be honored as All-Americans.

It's the first Pac-12 title for Coleman (16-14), who won a tight contest in the semifinals against Jaen Petersen of Arizona State by a 9-7 decision. He then faced Judah Duhm of Stanford in the finals, winning

4-2 and qualifying for the NCAAs.

Coleman, a 5-foot-11 junior, lost to Petersen in their Jan. 20 Pac-12 match.

"When I wrestled him in the dual, I had a bunch of mistakes I could fix," Coleman said. "The Stanford kid upset the No. 1 seed (Dom Ducharme of Cal-State Bakersfield) on the other side of the bracket in overtime."

In the championship match against Duhm, the bout was scoreless after the first round, and in the second, Coleman took a 2-0 lead with an escape and a technical violation by Duhm.

Duhm got an escape with 1:30 left in the third round, but Coleman registered a takedown with 57 seconds remaining for a 4-1 lead. Duhm got a late escape for the 4-2 final.

Coleman was able to share his victory with his parents Janna and Craig, and other family members.

"Mom had to take all these photos so there was proof it happened," Coleman said with a laugh. "They booked their tickets to nationals this morning."

If Coleman had not won the title, he would not have advanced to nationals. The Pac-12 does not have enough teams to earn extra berths, unless wrestlers are highly ranked.

"Wrestling on the West Coast is not like it is on the East Coast," Coleman said. "There are not a lot of schools out west."

A familiar face

Coleman might run into former Hermiston teammate Sam Colbray at the NCAAs, depending on the bracketing. Colbray was second in the Big 12 Championships at 184 pounds for Iowa State to earn his trip.

The two met once already this season. Coleman wrestled Colbray

on Feb. 11, in a nonleague dual in which Iowa State made the trip to Corvallis. Coleman suffered a 13-4 loss.

"The first time I wrestled Sam was in an exhibition match in junior high," Coleman said. "He beat me then, too. He has always been a weight above me and got the best of me. As far as accolades go, he has everything. I was just his practice partner."

It might not seem odd for two former high school teammates to meet on the mat in college, but Coleman said it doesn't happen often.

"It's a big deal in collegiate wrestling," he said. "Especially two guys from the same high school, at the same weight. The Pac-12 announcer said it was a first for him. It's pretty cool. It was good to wrestle Sam and see how far I've come."

Starting young

Coleman began his wrestling career in the third grade, but it wasn't until his junior year of high school that he started to dominate.

"My junior year, I got to work with Kyle Larson every day," he said. "(Then coach) Shawn Williams helped me develop my skills and that made the difference."

Coleman finished second at the 5A state tournament at 170 pounds his junior year, and posted a 26-5 record.

As a senior, he beat Crater's Cavin Gillispie 6-2 to win the 182-pound title. He finished with a 43-2 record, and the Bulldogs won the state team title.

The college life

Coleman joined the ranks of Hermiston wrestlers past and present at OSU in the fall of 2016.

He earned his place in the lineup and has taken his share of beatings.

"I have started for three years, but

I have taken a lot of lashes," he said. "Now, I'm going to the NCAAs. It has been surreal. Growing up in Hermiston, you look up to a lot of guys. Jeremy Larson and Joey Delgado won Pac-12 titles. I'm on the same playing field as them now, but I don't think I belong there."

It gets better than that.

Coleman, Colbray and Tyler Berger (who transferred to Crook County his senior year) were all starters in the lineup at Hermiston from their freshman year on up.

Now, all of them will be at the NCAAs. Berger, a senior at Nebraska, will be making his fourth appearance at 157 pounds.

"That's pretty good for a town of 17,000," Coleman said.

College wrestling also has given Coleman a chance to see a lot of the United States, which he appreciates.

"Just to get the opportunity to wrestle in college is surreal," he said. "To get to travel the U.S. because of the sport is awesome."

Even if it means shorter holiday breaks.

In late December, Coleman competed in the Ken Kraft Midlands Championships in Chicago.

He opened the tournament with a 9-4 win over Penn's Jalen Laughlin, then recorded an 11-4 decision over Princeton's Kendall Elfstrom. He then would lose in the quarterfinals and in his consolation match.

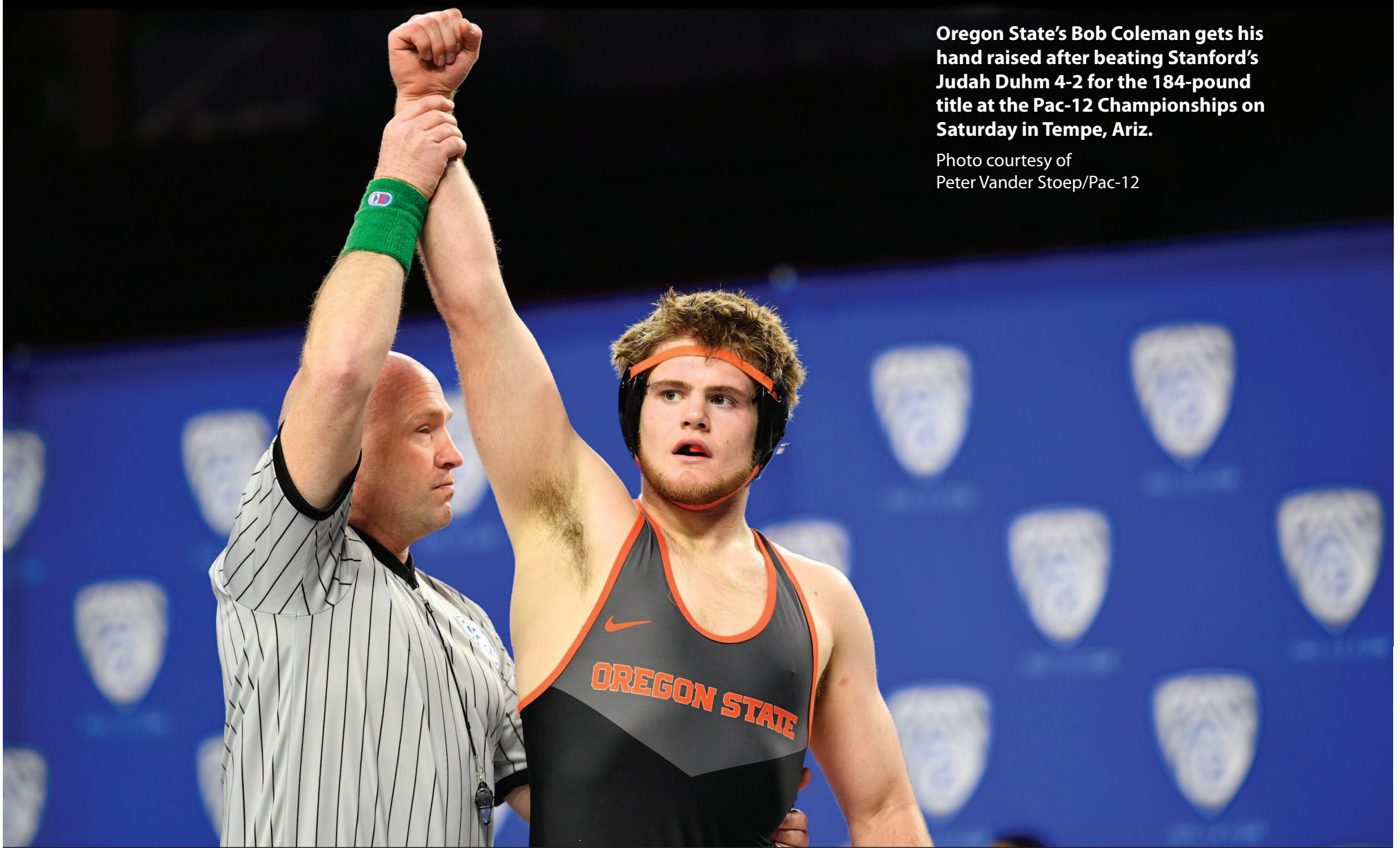
"I had a four-day Christmas break, and everyone else had a month," he said. "There are a lot of tournaments on the East Coast and it's a heck of an opportunity."

Coleman, who arrived at OSU with 60 college credits in his pocket, will graduate in the spring with a degree in agricultural business. With one season of wrestling still available, he's not sure if he will return.

"We'll see after nationals," he said.

Oregon State's Bob Coleman gets his hand raised after beating Stanford's Judah Duhm 4-2 for the 184-pound title at the Pac-12 Championships on Saturday in Tempe, Ariz.

Photo courtesy of Peter Vander Stoep/Pac-12



Hermiston trio to play in basketball All-Star Classic

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

The basketball season continues for a trio of Hermiston seniors.

Jordan Thomas, Ryne Andreason and Cesar Ortiz

will play in the SWX All-Star Classic set for March 24, at Yakima Valley Community College.

The girls game will be played at 4 p.m., followed by the boys game.

Admission is \$5 for adults

and \$3 for students, seniors and military.

The 6-foot-5 Thomas was a first-team all-Mid-Columbia Conference selection. She averaged 15.53 points a game for the Bulldogs, which ranked second in the

conference.

Andreason, a second-team MCC pick, averaged 17 points a game for Hermiston, which earned the league top 3A seed to regionals.

Ortiz, an honorable mention selection, averaged 13.5

points a game, with a season high of 25 points.

The All-Star game was first held in 1994, and continued for 22 years until taking a break in 2016-17.

This is the second time Andreason has played in the

game. He had eight points and six rebounds in last year's game — a 131-106 loss to Yakima.

For the Hermiston girls, recent players include Sara Ramirez (2015) and Maddy Juul (2018).