

# Hermiston's Colbray headed to NCAA Championships

Iowa State sophomore will compete at 184 pounds

By ANNIE FOWLER  
STAFF WRITER

There was never a doubt Sam Colbray would one day punch his ticket to the NCAA Wrestling Championships.

One of the most successful and dominant high school wrestlers in Oregon history, Colbray qualified for the NCAAs on Sunday by finishing second at 184 pounds at the Big 12 Championships in Tulsa, Okla.

"It's exciting," said Colbray, who is ranked 10th heading into the NCAAs. "It was a goal. Coming out of high school, I was a top-ranked recruit. Our coaching staff has brought out the best in me."

The Cyclones were second in the team standings at the Big 12 tournament with 114.5 points. Oklahoma State won the title with 158 points.

Iowa State will send nine men to the NCAA Championships on March 21-23 at PPG Paints Arena in Pittsburgh.

Tournament brackets were released Wednesday, and Colbray, 21, finds himself against a familiar foe in Fresno State's Jackson Hemauer. Colbray beat Hemauer 8-7 in a dual on Jan. 13.

Colbray and fellow 2016 Hermiston High grad Bob Coleman, who is at Oregon State, are on opposite



Iowa State's Sam Colbray (right) wrestles Fresno State's Jackson Hemauer in a Jan. 13 match. Colbray won 8-7.

sides of the bracket. In fact, Coleman will wrestle the pigtail match against Chris Kober of Campbell to get into the 32-man bracket.

Should Coleman win, he would face top-ranked Myles Martin of Ohio State.

The top eight in each weight class at the end of the tournament will be honored as All-Americans.

A redshirt sophomore, Colbray opened the Big 12 Championships

with a 7-1 win over Jake Thompson of Air Force. He followed with an 11-5 decision over Kayne MacCallum of Oklahoma, then beat Tate Samuelson of Wyoming 5-2 in the semifinals.

Colbray, the top-ranked man at 184, fell to No. 2 Drew Foster of Northern Iowa, 4-1 in the finals.

Foster had an escape, a take-down and 2 minutes of riding time in the match.

Photo courtesy of Iowa State University, File

Colbray had previously beaten Foster 8-5 in a Big 12 dual Feb. 21.

"I knew he was tough on top," Colbray said of Foster. "I needed to make a small adjustment. It came back to bite me."

Colbray has twice gone to the NCAAs as a spectator, and says he doesn't expect any jitters when it comes time to step on the mat.

"It's not much different than Fargo," he said. "It's just you and

the other guy. I don't really think about my opponent, I just focus on myself. There is no pressure."

Colbray's parents, Delta and Leroy, were at the Big 12 Tournament, and already have their reservations for the NCAAs.

"They are my biggest supporters," Colbray said.

## College wrestling is a whole other beast

Colbray had an impressive portfolio as he headed to Iowa State.

He was a four-time Oregon state champion at 195 pounds. He had a 72-1 combined record his junior and senior years of high school. He also was a five-time Fargo champion, and eight-time Fargo Junior and Cadet All-American, and a four-time Tri-State champ.

He redshirted his first year at ISU, but had a 4-4 record wrestling as an independent at tournaments.

Last season, he was 15-13 at 197 pounds.

Dropping to 184 this season, Colbray has had a lot of success.

He is 26-6 overall this year. He was 13-1 in dual matches, and has won 13 of his past 16 matches.

"It's all part of the process," said Colbray, who is a pre-med student. "I had seen people go through it before. You have to invest the time and you wait for a payoff. The start of my collegiate career wasn't what I wanted, but it built me to who I am. It's just a matter of when."

# Oregon State Police calls on Legislature for backup

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
STAFF WRITER

The long roads of Eastern Oregon have gotten lonelier for Oregon State Police over the past four decades, and troopers are now lobbying to reverse the trend.

At a Joint Committee for Ways and Means hearing in Pendleton on Friday, several troopers used their off-duty hours to tell state legislators that they needed to commit to bolstering OSP's dwindling ranks.

The issue isn't limited to Eastern Oregon.

According to OSP Superintendent Travis Hampton, state police employed 624 troopers and sergeants in 1980. But despite experiencing steady growth over the past four decades, the state's trooper and sergeant count has fallen to 381 in 2019.

Compared to other states, Oregon is far behind the pack.

A 2016 study comparing states' patrol troopers per 100,000 people found that Oregon was second to last, leading only Florida in that statistic.

When local city and county law enforcement is included, Oregon is dead last.

OSP's long-term attrition has been felt at the local level as well.

Dain Gardner is a trooper who works for the OSP Fish and Wildlife Division out of the Hermiston worksite.

Gardner told the ways and means committee that he's used to working alone.

"Backup is not a priority to me because I know I'm not going to get any," he said. "Half the time a radio doesn't work, so it does me no good. I have to just take care of myself and I'm good with that."

But Gardner said he has trouble working his beat when he might be the only OSP trooper on duty on the Interstate 84 corridor from Portland to the Idaho border, a situation that isn't infrequent on summer Saturdays.

Michael Mayer, another trooper based in Hermiston, said he used to be one of two law enforcement personnel working out of the OSP's Heppner office, but when he transferred to Hermiston, the office closed with his departure.

Heppner hasn't been the only Eastern Oregon office to shutter.

Back in 1980, OSP staffed six troopers in Milton-Freewater. That office has since shuttered, and



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Members of the Oregon Legislature's Joint Ways and Means Committee listen to testimony during a road show listening session at BMCC on Friday in Pendleton.



EO file photo

Oregon State Police fish and wildlife trooper Ryan Sharp checks the fishing licenses of Kyle Barthel, left, and Jessy Morton in June 2018 at Hat Rock State Park.



EO file photo

An Oregon State Police trooper places the driver of a vehicle into the back of a police cruiser on Sept. 5, 2015, on Highway 37 north of Pendleton.

according to Pendleton trooper Karl Farber, OSP can only afford to patrol the north Umatilla County area once or twice per week.

"Other than that, county guys are up there working it and they're on their own," he told the committee. "Now they don't have backup because they don't have troopers up there."

The state has not only closed the Heppner and Milton-Freewater offices, but also halved the Hermiston worksite from 18 to 9.

The 26 personnel between Pendleton area command and the Hermiston worksite now cover an area that encompasses the entirety of Umatilla and Morrow counties and includes parts of Gilliam,

Grant, Union, and Wheeler counties.

Pendleton area command Lt. Mike Turner said an important part of OSP's job is to enforce traffic laws on the interstates and state highways.

At a time when traveling speeds and fatal collisions are on the rise, Turner said a lack of staff means troopers aren't able to cover as much as ground as they used to.

Turner said the other part of OSP's job is providing support to local agencies, which return the favor when they can.

Boardman Police Chief Rick Stokoe said he's noticed the difference since OSP closed its offices in Heppner and Arlington, which used to staff 12

members.

Stokoe said the Hermiston office is often too busy to completely cover Morrow County roadways, and the Morrow County Sheriff's Office now frequently sends deputies to do traffic enforcement.

Besides being frustrated as a taxpayer that the sheriff's office is diverting resources to a traditional OSP jurisdiction, Stokoe said he was concerned that Oregon was the bottom of the barrel when it came to law enforcement numbers.

"That's a pretty scary number," he said.

In order to boost OSP back to its 1980 levels and beyond, the troopers at the ways and means hearing spoke in favor of House Bill

2046.

A bill that came at the request of Gov. Kate Brown, HB 2046 mandates the state maintain at least 15 troopers per 10,000 Oregonians by 2030.

If the bill comes to pass, it would require a massive OSP hiring spree in the decade to come.

According to a fiscal impact study from the Legislative Fiscal Office, the state would need to spend \$146.4 million over ten years to hire 300 troopers and purchase 146 cars, among other expenses.

The bill is currently awaiting consideration by the ways and means committee, which deals with budget issues.

State Sen. Bill Hansell, a

Republican member of the committee whose Northeast Oregon district includes much of the area covered by OSP's Pendleton area command, said ways and means has heard "loud and clear" that OSP needs more staff.

But in his experience, the Legislature has typically been squeamish about tying funding to population numbers.

Hansell said if Oregon were to experience another recession, a trooper mandate would require lawmakers to begin making cuts to other areas to meet it.

Hansell said OSP could see staffing increases through a criminal justice package that's folded into the state budget, but it might not meet all of OSP's needs.