The 2014-15 season had many bright spots, which bodes well for our upcoming 2015-16 season. The 2014-15 team competed well in our in-season tournaments, placing fifth, seventh and third, respectively, at Roger Williams, Springfield College and RIT, but our lack of depth at the bookends of our lineup (125, heavyweight) put a little damper on our overall team dual record this past year as we finished 8-11. Here at Wesleyan, we strive to challenge ourselves in every way and this includes our wrestling schedule. A quote I love is, “If it doesn’t challenge you, it doesn’t change you.” This past year, like many years, we wrestled the #2, #14, #15 (twice), #23 (twice), #27, and #29 nationally ranked teams in the country. We competed very hard, but fell short in a few key duals that would have had a significant impact on our team record and swagger. The Cardinals fell just short vs. #23 rival Williams College, 22-20, in an exciting home dual, #27 Cortland, 22-19, as well as #29 Ohio Northern, preseason ranked #19. The team score was 22-22, but since ties are no longer allowed, we lost, 23-22, on the third tie-breaking criteria. At our Northeast Regional Championships (our NCAA qualifier), we sent another Cardinal to the NCAA tournament in senior Ryan Sblendorio ’15. This is the eighth year of the past decade that Wesleyan has been represented at the NCAA Tournament. Ryan entered the regional tournament as the fifth seed, but went 4-1 for third place. Ryan’s only loss of the regional came in the semifinals to the #1 seed, 5-3. He then defeated the #2 seed from Oneonta decisively, 10-3, for the NCAA bid.

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“Sblendo”, Ryan Sblendorio ’15 getting key back points in the quarterfinals of the NE Region vs. the #4 seed from Norwich. Ryan won in sudden-victory OT

Isaiah Bellamy ’18, defeating a returning regional placer from Southern Maine with a big double lift

A huge highlight of the year was freshman standout Isaiah Bellamy ’18. Isaiah finished his freshman campaign with a 22-6 record including reaching the finals of his first three collegiate tournaments. Two of Isaiah losses, very tight matches, came against the #5 seed in the NCAA tournament and returning All-American David Welch of Roger Williams and another loss to #4 seed of Cortland Joe Giaramita, who won the NCAA title at 197 this year. Isaiah wrestled Giaramita very tough at the regionals. This type of year was very reminiscent of the year another Wesleyan great, Dan Bloom ’10, enjoyed. Dan was a New England finalist as a freshman with a 28-11 record in 2006-07. This is a strong indication on the type of career that Isaiah can have in front of him. I believe that Isaiah Bellamy will be Wesleyan’s first multi-time All-American and with a great work ethic and improvement in his skills, has the ability to be a national champion. This is not a pressure thing. As Hall of Fame Notre Dame Football Coach Lou Holtz says, “Pressure is when you have to do something you are not prepared to do.” This is a realistic goal for Isaiah and we will be doing everything we can to help him reach this level of wrestling.
A final major highlight at the Northeast Regional Championships was the performance of Matt Pelton ’17. Matt went into this tournament unseeded and finished sixth as an all-region placer. Matt majored the #5 seed in the first round, 9-0, lost a tight 10-7 match to the #4 seed who finished third in the tournament, and beat the #8 seed who he had lost to three times the previous year. Matt went 3-3 in the tournament, but was right there in every match. Matt finished his sophomore year 17-10 and improved on his top-eight finish the previous year at the regional tournament. Matt is also a top student with a 3.57 GPA as a neuroscience & behavior major. Matt was recognized as a Scholar All-American for his achievements on the mat and in the classroom.

Matt Pelton ’17 defeats a WPI opponent who defeated him three times during his frosh year to place at the Northeast Region

2014-15 Season Achievements:

• NCAA Qualifier: 174 Lb. Ryan Sblendorio (1-2 at NCAAs)

• 3 All-Northeast Region Wrestlers:
  Ryan Sblendorio, 3rd @ 174, NCAA Qualifier; Isaiah Bellamy, 4th @ 197; Matt Pelton, 6th @ 141

Individual Records of starters:
133- Frank Crippen, So. (23-10)
141-Matt Pelton, So. (17-10), 6th place NE Region
149-Ed Pierce, So. (24-12)-10th in the nation for Tech Falls in NCAA Division III
157-Chris Siracusa, Jr. (22-14)
165-Carter Armendarez, Fr. (13-18)
165/174-Joe Koshakow So. (15-10), 3rd place Futures Tournament
165/174-Taran Carr Jr. (15-10), 1st place @ 174 Futures Tournament
174-Ryan Sblendorio, Sr. (19-7), 3rd place NE Region, NCAA Qualifer
184-Simon Levin, Jr. (25-14), team leading 11 pins
184-Dominic Pirraglia, Fr. (17-12), 4th place Futures Tournament
197-Isaiah Bellamy, Fr. (22-6), 4th place NE Region
285-John San Filippo Jr. (5-7)

Academic Achievements
• 11th in the Nation “Scholar All-American Wrestling Team” GPA (3.44)

2 Scholar All-Americans
• Ryan Sblendorio ’15 - 3.36 GPA, 20-9 record, eight pins, career record 61-27, third place Northeast Region, NCAA Qualifer at 174
• Matt Pelton ’17 - 3.57 GPA, 17-10 record, career record 39-28, sixth place Northeast Region

8 Academic All-NESCAC (3.35 or higher GPA)

N.E.W.A Conference Awards

2nd Team All NEWA Honorable Mention All-NEWA All-NEWA Rookie Team
174 – Ryan Sblendorio 133 – Frank Crippen 197 – Isaiah Belamy
197 – Isaiah Bellamy 141 - Matt Pelton
**Talented New Cardinals for 2015-16**


**Dylan Jones 125** 85-21 overall record, two-time Oregon state placer (third 2015 & seventh 2014), three-time league champ, four-time league finalist, four-time region placer including a region title as a senior

**Shane Ross 133** 109-18 overall record, fifth and second at Texas state championships, three-time state qualifier, three-time district champ, two-time regional finalist

**Jonathan Oh 133** 63-33 overall record, 32-4 as a senior, Connecticut state champ, Connecticut open placer

**James Matias 141** 125-28 overall record, three-time league finalist, three-time all-Suffolk County, N.Y. state qualifier

**Nicholas Taylor 141/149** 64-31 overall record, two-time district 17 placer (fourth), part of four-time district team champions, two-time section champs, group 5 team state finalists 2015

**Roy Forys 165** 141-24 overall record (most in Becton HS history), three-time N.J. state qualifier, region champ, two-time region runner-up, two-time top-12 in state, four-time county placer

To ensure we continue to conduct a first-rate program, it is our need to annually raise $25-30K.

**Wesleyan Wrestling Top Annual Budget Items for 2015-16:**

**The Essentials to running the wrestling program during the year:**

- Training apparel (sweats, training shirts, shorts) - $6,000
- Travel (Bus) - $3,500
- Hotels - $3,500 (we have five overnight trips this year)
- Team meal for each event during the season - $2,500
- Assistant Wrestling Coach (need to retain top quality people who make us better) - $4,500
- Recruiting costs (travel to events, recruit database info - you are who you recruit) - $2,500
- Bring our non-starting wrestlers to the Futures Tournament - $500
- Annual Wrestling Awards Banquet/Dinner - $3,000
- Bring assistant to NCAA Championships - $1,500
- Student-athlete welfare/health-cleaning items for locker room, wrestling room, skin cleanliness - $800
- Offer guarantees to have more home matches each year - $1,000

**Finish the Biddiscombe Wrestling Room**

- Paint ceiling of room - $4,000
- Trophy case to showcase all of Wesleyan’s achievements with domed lighting on the case as you enter the room - $6,000
- Add some training bikes - $4,000

**TOTAL: $29,300; ($43,300 with the final upgrades to the Biddi Wrestling Room – we named our room in fall 2012)**
Wesleyan wrestling has raised the bar in recent years. We need your help to continue this pattern. To keep the program moving to higher levels of success and achievements, fundraising efforts need to match those we are seeing on the mat and in the classroom.

**There are two main methods to make your donation to Wesleyan Wrestling:**

1) **Make a check donation** to “Wesleyan Wrestling” and mail it to Drew Black-Freeman Athletic Center, 161 Cross Street, Middletown, CT 06459.

2) **Donate on-line:** [http://give.wesleyan.edu/athletics](http://give.wesleyan.edu/athletics) - this link is right on our athletics webpage now. A new, great feature for providing assistance to our wrestling program.

When you get to the “Giving Priorities” box, click the down arrow & click on “Wrestling”. That simple, that fast, and your donation will come to Wesleyan Wrestling!

Thank you!

**LEVELS OF SUPPORT:**

- Varsity $25+
- All-Conference $50+
- Conference Champ $100+
- All-American $250+
- National Champ $500+
- World Champ $1,000+
- Olympic Champ $5,000+
- Hall of Fame $10,000+

**Most Recent 2014-15 Contributors to the Wesleyan University Wrestling Program**

THANK YOU!

- Bill & Janet Robichaud P’05
- Allan F. Williams ’61
- Mike Charlton ’89
- Phi Rho Literary Society & Brian Lichtenstein ’84, P ’17-honoring ’83 Team & Ira Skolnick, Steve Goldberg
- Dr. Steven Goldberg ’83
- Barry Family Foundation (Robert & Deborah) c/o Loeb & Loeb P’12
- EF & PM Glassmeyer
- Pirraglia Realty Corp. Tom & Lauretta P’18
- The Whizzer ’72
- Henry “Hank” Andersen ’40, MA’48
- Ed Brown ’90
- Alan Wiener ’63
- Missy Brown ’89
- Andrew Craighead ’83, P ’17
- Paul Boison ’77
- Kenneth Klem
- James Gramentine ’56
- Vincent & Ann Marie deLalla P’07, P’11
- Ed Rosenbaum ’75
- Loren Lichtenstein
- Chris Larkey
- Paul Boison ’77
- Dr. Matthew Skalla ’85
- Dr. Andrew Parsons ’84
- Martin Koshakow & Dr. Carol Weiss P’17
- Adam Klein & Melanie Smith P’18
- Robert Levin & Mei Negishi P’16
- Allan & Elizabeth Bongo P’18
- Daniel & Debra Lemieux P’17
- David & Cynthia Pelton P’17
- Kevin Egolf ’05 & Amy Egolf ’07
- Joe & Rita Roosa P’13, P’16
- Francis K. Moll Jr. ’54, P’84
- Scott Karsten ’74
- Emely Karandy ’75
- Gregory Hurd ’10
Annual Wrestling Awards Banquet

After each season we have a semi-formal banquet so we may reflect on the past season and recognize the team and each individual for their improvements, successes and achievements. This year we again celebrated at the First & Last Tavern on Main Street in Middletown. This year's special award recipients were:

- **Excellence in Wrestling, Leadership, & Scholarship (MOW)** – Ryan Sblendorio ’15 (two-time conference placer, two-time Scholar All-American, NCAA Qualifier, two-time captain, received this award in 2014)
- **Excellence in Scholarship** - Keonmin Hwang ’16 (3.68 GPA in Chemistry & Molecular Biology)
- **Ironman Award** - Simon Levin ’16 (25-14 record overall)
- **Gorrarian Award** (most falls) - (11 pins) Simon Levin ’16 (25-14 record overall)
- **11th Man Award** – Dominic Pirraglia ’18, James Hamilton ’16, Mike Baratz ’15, Zach Larabee ’15
- **Most Improved Wrestler** – Frank Crippen ’17 (23-10 record)
- **Newcomer of the Year** – Isaiah Bellamy ’18 (22-6, fourth in the NE Region, finalist in three tournaments)
- **Turnaround Wrestler of the Year** - Joe Koshakow ’17, Robert Rosenberg ’17
- **Cardinal Dominant Wrestler Award** - Ed Pierce ’17 (10th in the nation for technical falls in NCAA Division III, six tech falls, seven pins, 24-12 overall record)
- **SENIOR APPRECIATION AWARD** – Ryan Sblendorio, Zach Larabee, Mike Baratz

Scholar Athletes at our annual Scholar Athlete Banquet: L to R: Matt Pelton ’17, Ryan Sblendorio ’15, Chris Siracusa ’16, team faculty mentor Allan Berlind, Simon Levin ’16, Mike Baratz ’15, front/center Coach Drew Black

Every year since 2007, we have showed the Derek Moore (2007 NCAA Champ & OW) leg turn series DVD. It has been an instrumental tool in our individual and team success on the mat. This year I surprised the team by having the man, the myth, the D-MO Legend come to our room in person for the D-MO series. The team loved it!!

We kicked the New Year off with 2007 NCAA D1 National Champ, Derek Moore. Team with Derek Moore in January practice
Only the third four-time NCAA Champ in history, 2015 NCAA Champ Logan Stieber of Ohio State at clinic in Rhode Island pictured with Coach Black

Wrestling Alum at Assistant Coach, Blair Tugman’s MMA Bellator Fight held at the Mohegan Sun Arena in Conn. on Friday night July 17th. In attendance from L to R: Chris Alvanos ’11, Justin Metz ’13, Gideon Levy ’13, Kyle Roosa ’13, Nick Scotto ’13, Coach Black

Athletics Director Mike Whalen ’83, four-time New England wrestling champ for the Cardinals, was inducted into the Middletown Sports Hall of Fame in February, 2015

Our Head Football Coach and Director of Wesleyan Wrestling Operations Dan DiCenzo was inducted into the New England Wrestling Association (NEWA) Hall of Fame as a coach at our annual NEWA Dual Championships in January, 2015

Josh Berkovic ’10, three-time All NEWA and two-time NEWA finalist, is pursuing a UFC contract. Josh defended his West Coast Fighting Title and is undefeated in his professional fighting career. Josh was also featured on the Fox Sports network on “Ultimate Fighter” this past spring as an assistant coach with Team Melendez. Josh is the strength & conditioning coach for Mark Melendez, one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world. I got a kick out of the commentators making comparisons to Dr. Hannibal Lecter. They commented that Josh is very intelligent, reflective, philosophical, but don’t turn your back on him, because he will get you.
Tobochnik ’13 was seventh in the nation with 15 pins in 2012-13.

This is Wesleyan’s third wrestler in the last six seasons, also added seven pin falls with a 24-12 overall record this past season. Call me, email me, let me know if you would/could host a great event. Some food, drink, flat screen TVs, and a great time. Thank you!!

Coach Blair Tugman, now beginning his fourth year with us as a top assistant coach has great passion for training, preparation and competing. Coach Tugman has had 3 MMA fights this past year going 2-1 in the Bellator cage at the Mohegan Sun. His last fight in July was a heart breaker, but he is looking for a possible rematch this upcoming year. Coach Tugman has been instrumental in our team success and we are excited for many more to come.

The 2016 NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships are being held at the world’s most famous arena, Madison Square Garden, March 17-19. I want to have a Wesleyan Wrestling reunion in NYC. I am looking for someone who could host a social while we watch the wrestling championships and catch up on old and new times. Call me, email me, let me know if you would/could host a great event. Some food, drink, flat screen TVs, and a great time. Thank you!!

The A+ Program (Athletic Advantage Program) has been in existence since 2008 and is now being implemented across the athletic department. Its primary goal is to enhance the student-athlete experience by connecting current our wrestlers with alumni, providing career counseling, and much more. Below are aspects of the program through which you can become involved!

1) Mentor program – pairing current wrestlers with alumni who can provide sage advice on classes, living at Wes, and careers beyond.
2) WeShadow – Inviting a current wrestler to shadow you at work to learn more about your profession.
3) Internships – Offering a one-week to eight-week internship (paid or unpaid) to a current undergraduate wrestler.
4) Speaker series – Come to campus to share your insights about Wesleyan, your career, or how Wes wrestling helped you become what you are. Please follow up with Drew Black if you are interested in any of the above opportunities. It is a great way to stay involved, to give back, and to stay connected with the current program. It is another exciting development in our program that will continue to separate us as the premier program not only in the NESCAC, but in the country!

Drew Black - <dblack@wesleyan.edu> - (860) 685-2907
Wesleyan Wrestling Hall of Fame Nomination Information

I have wanted to have our own team HOF for years. We have a very storied history in Wesleyan Wrestling. Let’s get some names generated. We will have inductions at home matches as well as homecoming weekend each year.

To submit a nomination, send it to me via email dblack@wesleyan.edu or fax it to 860-685-2691 put ATTENTION: DREW BLACK, or send a letter or this form to me at: Freeman Athletic Center, 161 Cross St., Middletown, CT 06459

When making nominations, please note the following:

Looking for extraordinary ability, achievement, contribution to the sport as a ....

- **Wrestler** – candidates nominated in this category must have displayed extraordinary ability while participating on the wrestling team.
- **Coach** – candidates nominated in this category must have made outstanding contributions in coaching and/or with professional or higher level coaching organizations
- **Contributor** – outstanding contributor to wrestling through clinics, writing, organizations, support of Wesleyan Wrestling, as an administrator, volunteer work, professional athletics or international sport organizations
- **Team** - outstanding record or accomplishments such as conference championships, regional championships, NCAA Championship, most team wins in a season, etc...

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**2015-16 Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 14</td>
<td>Roger Williams Tournament@</td>
<td>RWU</td>
<td>10:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Doug Parker Invitational</td>
<td>Springfield</td>
<td>10:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 5</td>
<td>RIT Invitational</td>
<td>RIT</td>
<td>9:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 8/9</td>
<td>Lycoming Duals#</td>
<td>Lycoming</td>
<td>10:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Trinity/Roger Williams/WPI</td>
<td>WPI</td>
<td>12:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>NEWA Duals</td>
<td>Bridgewater St.</td>
<td>10:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Springfield</td>
<td>HOME</td>
<td>6:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 6</td>
<td>Williams/Oneonta St./Ithaca</td>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>12:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Lycoming/Oswego St.</td>
<td>HOME</td>
<td>12:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>NEWA Futures Championships</td>
<td>RWU</td>
<td>11:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>27/28</td>
<td>Northeast Championships</td>
<td>RWU</td>
<td>11:00/10:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>NCAA Div. III Tournament^</td>
<td>Cedar Rapids, IA</td>
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@scrimmage  ^by qualification only  ^opponents TBA