

# 10 NCOs Lead Army Wrestling Team to 15th Armed Forces Championships Title

By Gary Abbot - USA Wrestling

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BREMERTON, Washington — Ten NCOs won gold medals to lead the Army wrestling team to its 15th consecutive Armed Forces Championships title this weekend, bringing home team titles in both Greco-Roman and freestyle wrestling.

The Army wrestling team defeated the Marines 27-6 in the deciding third round of the Greco-Roman competition, which took place Saturday at Naval Base Kitsap, Washington. Both teams entered the final dual meet unbeaten. The Army previously defeated Navy and Air Force.

The Marines finished second at the competition with a 2-1 record. Air Force (1-2) was third and the Navy (0-3) was fourth.

“This is one of the smallest, but toughest tournaments in the world,” said Bruce Robinson, the Army’s Greco-Roman coach. “It is always really, in essence, about pride and service. We have 15 in a row. We take this very seriously. The Marines, Air Force and Navy come here to fight. There is a lot of pride that is shown with this.”

Seven of the eight Army Greco-Roman wrestlers won individual gold medals. They included Sgt. Jermaine Hodge (59 kg./130 lbs.), Pfc. Michael Hooker (66 kg./145.5 lbs.), Sgt. Justin Lester (75 kg./165 lbs.), Sgt. Timothy Bleau (80 kg./176 lbs.), Sgt. Courtney Myers (85 kg./187 lbs.), Sgt. Caylor Williams (98 kg./215 lbs.) and Spc. Matthew Lamb (130 kg./286 lbs.) All of the Army champions were an unbeaten 3-0 in their weight classes, except Myers, who was 2-1 and won the gold on tiebreakers.

The only other individual champion was Capt. Bryce Saddoris (71 kg./156 lbs.) of the Marines, who went 3-1. Of the individual champions, Lester, Williams and Saddoris were all teammates on the 2015 Greco-Roman World Team that competed at the World Championships in Las Vegas in September. Lester is a two-time World bronze medalist and a 2012 Olympian.

Hooker, Saddoris, Lester and Williams repeated as Armed Forces champions from last year.

The champions in the Greco-Roman division qualified for the Olympic Team Trials, which will be April 9-10 in Iowa City, Iowa. Of the eight champions, six had already qualified. Hooker and Bleau are new qualifiers for the Olympic Team Trials.

There was one women’s Greco-Roman match, as two-time World bronze medalist Sgt. Sally Roberts of the Army scored on multiple gut

wrenches to earn an 8-0 technical fall over Petty Officer 3rd Class Abril Ramirez of the Navy.

## Freestyle

In freestyle wrestling, which took place Feb. 21, the Army defeated the Marines by a score of 24-8 in the deciding third round of the competition. The Army previously defeated the Navy 31-2 and the Air Force, 33-2.

The Marines finished second with a 2-1 record. Air Force (1-2) was third and the Navy (0-3) was fourth.

"I always feel good with a win," said Shon Lewis, the Army's freestyle wrestling coach and head wrestling coach of the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program in Fort Carson, Colorado. "It makes the beer a little bit better and not as bitter. I was happy with the win. With freestyle, the Armed Forces are traditionally known for Greco, but this is a very exciting tournament. I always say it's the toughest tournament in the United States. To come out with a win against the other services means a lot. I don't know how many in a row it was. I still cherish it, but for some of these young Soldiers, the first time competing in the Armed Forces and be part of a team championship, it means a lot for them."

Individual champions for the Army included Sgt. Max Nowry (57 kg./125.5 lbs.), Spc. Ryan Mango (61 kg./134 lbs.), Sgt. Vladyslov Dombrovskiy (74 kg./163 lbs.), Sgt. Victor Terrell (86 kg./189 lbs.) and Spc. Endhyr Meza (125 kg./275 lbs.). Hooker also took gold in freestyle, to pair up with the gold he had already earned in Greco-Roman.

Nowry, Dombrovskiy and Terrell are repeat champions from last year.

There was one women's freestyle match. There, two-time World bronze medalist Roberts earned a 10-0 technical fall over Ramirez.

## Army medals

In men's Greco-Roman wrestling, the following Soldiers won medals:

- 59 kg/130 lbs. weight class: Gold, Sgt. Jermaine Hodge
- 66 kg/145.5 lbs. weight class: Gold, Pfc. Michael Hooker
- 71 kg/156 lbs. weight class: Silver, Sgt. Jamel Johnson
- 75 kg/165 lbs. weight class: Gold, Sgt. Justin Lester
- 80 kg/176 lbs. weight class: Gold, Sgt. Timothy Bleau
- 85 kg/187 lbs. weight class: Gold, Sgt. Courtney Myers
- 98 kg/215 lbs. weight class: Gold, Sgt. Caylor Williams
- 130 kg/286 lbs. weight class: Gold, Spc. Matthew Lamb

In women's Greco-Roman wrestling, the following Soldier took home a medal:

- 63 kg/138.75 lbs. weight class: Gold, Sgt. Sally Roberts

In men's freestyle wrestling, the following Soldiers won medals:

- 57 kg/125.5 lbs. weight class: Gold, Sgt. Max Nowry
- 61 kg/134 lbs. weight class: Gold, Spc. Ryan Mango
- 65 kg/143 lbs. weight class: Gold, Pfc. Michael Hooker
- 70 kg/154 lbs. weight class: Silver, Spc. Isaac Dukes
- 74 kg/163 lbs. weight class: Gold, Sgt. Vladyslov Dombrovskiy
- 86 kg/189 lbs. weight class: Gold, Sgt. Victor Terrell
- 97 kg/213 lbs. weight class: Silver, Pfc. Lucas Sheridan
- 125 kg/275 lbs. weight class: Gold, Spc. Endhyr Meza

In women's freestyle wrestling, the following Soldier took home a medal:

- 63 kg/138.75 lbs weight class: Gold, Sgt. Sally Roberts

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