

Wrestling: Hofstra Opens The New Year At The Southern Scuffle In Chattanooga Monday

Courtesy: Hofstra Athletic Communications

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Hempstead, NY – The Hofstra Wrestling team returns to competition after a 21-day lay-off for final exams and the holiday break when they travel to Chattanooga, Tennessee for the 2018 Southern Scuffle, presented by Compound Sportswear. The two-day tournament will be held on Monday and Tuesday, January 1 and 2 in McKenzie Arena on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Billed as the one of the top three in-season collegiate wrestling tournaments in the nation, the Southern Scuffle starts each day at 10:00 a.m. The full schedule of events and information on tickets and the new hospitality passes are available on [TheSouthernScuffle.com](#).

The Southern Scuffle will be streamed live on [FloWrestling.com](#). Fans can follow the live scoring updates of each weight class on [Flo Arena](#) with links on this page as well as the Hofstra Wrestling schedule page on [GoHofstra.com](#).

The 26-team field includes eight teams which placed in the top 25 at the 2017 NCAA Division I Wrestling Championship and nine teams which are currently ranked in InterMat's Top 25 Division I Tournament poll. Among the participants are defending NCAA National Champions and current second-ranked Penn State, fourth-ranked Oklahoma State, sixth-ranked Lehigh, seventh-ranked North Carolina State, 10th-ranked Virginia Tech, 13th-ranked Northern Iowa, 21st-ranked North Carolina, 23rd-ranked Virginia and 25th-ranked Duke.

Others participating include Air Force, Appalachian State, Cal State Bakersfield, Campbell, Chattanooga, The Citadel, Cleveland State, Drexel, Gardner-Webb, George Mason, Hofstra, Lock Haven, Navy, Northern Colorado, Stanford, Utah Valley and Virginia.

Individually, 20 All-Americans, seven NCAA Champions, and 61 wrestlers currently ranked in the top-20 are expected to compete including four top-ranked grapplers in the FloWrestling rankings of December 20 in Penn State's Zain Retherford (149), Jason Nolf (157), Vincenzo Joseph (165) and Bo Nickal (184).

Hofstra, which is expected to field a full team for the Southern Scuffle, continues to be led by undefeated, senior heavyweight Michael Hughes. The Smithtown, NY native is 15-0 this season with seven wins by pin, two tech falls, and six by decision including one major victory. Hughes is ranked 7th at 285-pounds by InterMat, The Open Mat, Amateur Wrestling News and TrackWrestling this week.

Hofstra red-shirt junior Nezar Haddad is 8-7 on the year at 197-pounds while sophomore Sage Heller is 5-5 at 165-pounds this season. Hofstra is making its seventh appearance in the Southern Scuffle in 2018 and the first since 2014 when the Pride placed 17th with 33.5 points.

After the Southern Scuffle, the Pride will return to Long Island for the LIU Post Duals in Brookville, NY on Sunday, January 7. The Pride will face Clarion at 10:30 a.m., EIWA-foe Columbia at 1:30 p.m. and American International at 3 p.m. at the LIU Post Duals.

Jim Sheehan
Sports Information Director
Hofstra University
1000 Hempstead Turnpike
Hempstead, NY 11550
516-463-6764 – Office
516-523-6692 – Cell
516-463-5033 – Fax
[www.GoHofstra.com](#)
Jim.B.Sheehan@Hofstra.edu