

SIUE Freshman Justin Ruffin Advances to Day Two of NCAA Wrestling Championships

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PITTSBURGH, Pa. - Freshman Justin Ruffin advanced to day two of the NCAA Wrestling Championships at PPG Arena.

Fellow SIUE freshman Colton McKiernan was eliminated after two close matches on day one. He was defeated 6-4 by Lehigh's Jordan Wood and 7-3 by George Mason's Matt Voss.

"I felt like they came out and wrestled," said SIUE Head Coach Jeremy Spates. "They both came to compete, especially as freshmen. They didn't seem to have a lot of nerves."

Ruffin moved on in the 157-pound consolation bracket with a decisive 7-0 victory over North Carolina's Joshua McClure. Ruffin earlier dropped a 6-0 decision to Lehigh's Josh Humphreys.

"Last year I came here as a spectator," said Ruffin. "My coach in high school brought me as a graduation present just to get a feel of what it was. I planned on competing here next year. Now I'm here and I'm excited. I made it to the second day so I'm pumped."

Ruffin improved his season record to 18-11 and next faces 10th seeded Steve Bleise of Minnesota.

"I want to keep the momentum into tomorrow and finish with All-American status," added Ruffin.

Spates said both wrestlers' calmness will help them in the long run.

"Qualifying is really a big deal, and their demeanor is a big part of that," he added.

2019 NCAA Division I Championships Results for SIUE

157

Justin Ruffin (18-11) scored 0.5 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Josh Humphreys (Lehigh) 20-7 won by decision over Justin Ruffin (SIUE) 18-11 (Dec 6-0)

Cons. Round 1 - Justin Ruffin (SIUE) 18-11 won by decision over Joshua McClure (North Carolina) 20-13 (Dec 7-0)

285

Colton McKiernan (21-13)

Champ. Round 1 - Jordan Wood (Lehigh) 23-3 won by decision over Colton McKiernan (SIUE) 21-13 (Dec 6-4)

Cons. Round 1 - Matt Voss (George Mason) 31-7 won by decision over Colton McKiernan (SIUE) 21-14 (Dec 7-3)