

Fencing

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE MEN'S AND WOMEN'S



Highlights

Notre Dame wins 2011 national title; Irish lead from start to finish en route to first NCAA title since 2005: For the eighth time in program history and third under the direction of head coach Janusz Bednarski, the University of Notre Dame fencing team has claimed the NCAA National Championship. The Irish held off Penn State to earn the title March 27 at the French Field House in Columbus, Ohio. Freshman Rachel Beck, who battled through a tough day the third day, clinched the championships with a 3-2 overtime victory against Katherine Chou of Harvard in foil.

Bednarski coached the squad to their first title since winning in 2005. The Irish also have claimed the national championship in 1977, 1978, 1986, 1987, 1994 and 2003.

After entering the day with 139 points with 54 bouts remaining for the team, the Irish wasted little to no touches, claiming 35 of those available points to take their team total to 174 points. Penn State could climb no closer than six points, totaling 168 points. St. John's remained in third, finishing with 155 points.

Beck was the bounce back story of the tournament for the Irish, rebounding from a 3-11 opening day to put together a record of 6-3 on the last day, including running off a string of five consecutive wins through rounds five and six. With the Irish needing either one more team win or a Penn State loss, Beck posted the winning touch in the overtime period against Chou to clinch the title. Overall, she ended in 17th place with a record of 9-14.

Junior Courtney Hurley earned her first NCAA gold medal after defeating Harvard's Noam Mills in the finals, 8-7. Hurley had reached the semifinals each of her first two seasons with the Irish, losing both times, before finally securing gold this season with an overtime touch. She is the 27th gold medalist in Irish program history. Overall, Hurley finished with a 19-4 pool play record with a +42 indicator.

Hurley's gold marked the first time since 2008 that the Irish have won multiple weapon titles, when Sarah Borrman (sabre) and Courtney's sister, Kelley Hurley (epee), both topped the podium. It also represents the first time in program history that the Irish have won a gold medal in both a men's and women's weapon in the same year, as Ariel DeSmet won the men's foil title on Friday.

Senior Hayley Reese also improved on her 8-6 record on day one in foil, dropping only two bouts on day four to secure a 15-8 record overall and eighth place, good for second-team All-America status. Reese becomes the 20th member of the Irish program to become a four-year All-American, joining fellow seniors Barron Nydam and Eileen Hassett on that prestigious list.

Junior Ewa Nelip climbed up the epee standing in her second day, putting together a record of 6-3 over the final three rounds to end in ninth place with a 12-11 record. She earned third team All-American honors for the top-12 finish and is now a three-time All-American.

In sabre, Hassett earned a berth into the top four for the first time in her career, finishing pool play with a record of 17-6 after a 6-3 final day. She faced off against top seeded Eliza Stone of Princeton in the semifinals, losing 15-14 on the final touch of the bout. After earning second team All-America distinction each of her first three years, Hassett grabbed first team honors for the first time in her career and became the 21st four-time All-American.

Sophomore Lian Osier put together a 4-5 second day to finish in ninth place with a record of 12-11. She becomes an All-American for the first time in her career, earning third team honors for the top-12 result.

Over the course of the first two days of the tournament (Thurs.-Fri.), the men staked the women to a six-point lead after claiming 90 points, dispersed amongst 34 points in foil, 33 in sabre and 23 in epee.

DeSmet finished pool play with a record of 18-5, earning him the three seed in the semifinal bouts. He then went on to put on a remarkable run against Penn State, dismissing David Willette in the semifinals, 15-6, before holding off Miles Chamley-Watson in the finals, 15-13, to claim the individual gold medal.

In the process he became the second straight Irish men's foilist to win gold, as Gerek Meinhardt accomplished that feat at the 2010 Championships, and became the first freshman to do so since Charles Higgs-Coulthard won in 1984. DeSmet became the 26th Irish fencer to win gold at the championships, and fifth overall in foil, joining the likes of Higgs-Coulthard, Meinhardt, Pat Gerard ('77) and Andy Bonk ('79).

Reggie Bentley teamed with DeSmet in foil, finishing his two days with a 16-7 record and a +29 indicator to earn a fifth-place finish. The showing earned him second team All-America accolades, while DeSmet earned first team All-American for placing in the top four.

Senior Avery Zuck made his final appearance at the NCAA's count, earning his best career finish in sabre with his runner-up result against the reigning champion Daryl Homer of St. John's, 15-14. He qualified for the top four with a pool play record of 18-5, earning the three seed. He then knocked off Penn State's Aleksander Ochocki of Penn State in the semifinals, 15-13. Zuck earned first team All-America status as a result of his top-four finish.

Both Zuck and DeSmet appearing in the weapon finals marked the first time in men's competition that had happened since '05 when Michel Sobieraj won the epee title and Patrick Ghattas finished second in sabre.

Nydam appeared in his fourth and final NCAA Championships, piecing together a 15-8 record for a sixth-place finish and second-team All-America distinction. Nydam closed his tournament strong for the Irish, sweeping his final round of competition with wins over Ohio State's Michael Douville (5-2) and Rhys Douglas (5-3) as well as Wayne State's Jakub Gibczynski (5-2). With his second team All-America distinction, Nydam became the 19th four-time All-American in program history, and was later joined by both Hassett and Reese on the women's side.

Sophomore James Kaull made his second consecutive appearance for the Irish in epee, finishing in 14th place with a record of 12-11. Brent Kelly, in his second NCAA appearance and first with the Irish after transferring from Columbia, concluded his tournament with a record of 11-12, good for 16th place

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2011 TEAM STANDINGS

1. Notre Dame	174	Temple.....	39	29. Hunter	6
2. Penn St.	168	16. Sacred Heart	27	30. Caltech	3
3. St. John's (NY).....	155	17. Cornell	19		
4. Princeton	150	18. Vassar	18		
5. Ohio St.	148	19. North Carolina	16		
6. Harvard	137	20. Brandeis	15		
7. Columbia	94	21. MIT	11		
8. Penn	91	Wayne St. (MI)	11		
9. Duke	74	23. Boston College	9		
10. Stanford	72	New York U.	9		
11. Northwestern	52	25. Detroit	8		
12. Yale.....	50	Drew.....	8		
13. Air Force.....	39	27. UC San Diego	7		
Brown	39	Cleveland St.	7		

