

**For release, Monday, December 16, 10:30 a.m. MT**  
**Inaugural Cliff Keen National Collegiate Women's Wrestling Championships set for Adrian College in Michigan, March 6-7, featuring NCAA women's wrestling programs**

Adrian College will host the First Annual Cliff Keen National Collegiate Women's Wrestling Championships (NCWWC) in Adrian, Mich. on March 6-7, 2020. All NCAA varsity women's wrestling programs at the DI, DII, and DIII levels are eligible and welcome to enter.

This is a historic event, as it is the first national-level tournament for college women's wrestling programs from NCAA-affiliated universities only.

Organized by the Women's Collegiate Wrestling Coalition, the NCWWC is an important step in the process of receiving NCAA Emerging Sport Status for women's wrestling. In June 2019, the NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics recommended that all three NCAA divisions add women's freestyle wrestling as an emerging sport. These NCAA divisions are considering the women's wrestling bid this year, and official Emerging Sport Status could be achieved as early as August 2020.

The Cliff Keen National Collegiate Women's Wrestling Championships is not an official NCAA Championship yet, but will be held annually until the sport receives Emerging Sport Status, then qualifies as an official NCAA Championships with 40 NCAA institutions.

College programs which have been invited to the NCWCC at Adrian College include: Adrian College (MI), Augsburg University (MN), Colorado Mesa University (CO), East Stroudsburg University (PA), Emmanuel College (GA), Ferrum College (VA), Fontebonne University (MO), Gannon University (PA), King University (TN), Lakeland University (WI), Limestone College (SC), Lindenwood University - St. Charles (MO), Lock Haven University (PA), MacMurray College (IL), McKendree University (IL), North Central College (IL), Pacific University (OR), Presbyterian College (SC), Schreiner University (TX), Simon Fraser University (BC, Canada), Tiffin University (OH), University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (WI), Westminster College (MO)

The Women's Collegiate Wrestling Coalition was created to bring the sport of Women's Wrestling through NCAA emerging sport status to become a fully-sanctioned NCAA championship sport. As stated in the WCWC vision, the organization is dedicated in the guidance, leadership and governance for the sport of women's wrestling at the collegiate level based on fair and safe competition, while adding competitive varsity opportunities for female student-athletes. For more information, visit its website at <https://thewcwc.com/>

"We are excited to be able to host the inaugural women's wrestling championship. It's an honor to add this one to the long list of regional and national tournaments we have hosted. It's always special when you help something new come into being and we intend to put on a great event. We hope everyone comes to watch the high level competition and join us in this excitement," said Michael Duffy, Athletic Director at Adrian College and NCWCC Tournament Director.

"This event is significant because it's opening a door to the NCAA that will expand the breadth and depth of women's collegiate wrestling opportunities," said Sally Roberts, Founder and Executive Director of Wrestle Like A Girl. "It will also serve to support more athletic and academic scholarships; it will create and support more future leaders that will strengthen our national fabric and add significant value to the conversation of equality and opportunity for all."

"This NCWWC tournament is a very exciting step for women's wrestling. With the upcoming Emerging Sport Status vote happening in January, this event is a precursor to what will hopefully become the NCAA Championships for women's wrestling in the near future. The level of competition will be fantastic. It will be a great opportunity for our NCAA-school programs to showcase their athletes and the sport of women's wrestling as a whole," said Julia Salata, Executive Director of the WCWC and a Wrestle Like A Girl employee.

“This competition is a huge step forward, as we continue to grow college women’s wrestling. USA Wrestling is excited to support the Cliff Keen National Collegiate Women’s Wrestling Championships. This will be a historic first step for NCAA institutions which sponsor women’s freestyle wrestling. It will be a great showcase of our talented women student-athletes. We thank Adrian College for its leadership in hosting the tournament, and appreciate the hard work from our coalition members in creating this opportunity,” said Rich Bender, USA Wrestling Executive Director.

Additional details on the tournament, including session times, ticket prices, event broadcast, sponsors, media accreditation and more will be announced shortly. Mark your calendar for March 6-7, and join us at Adrian College in Adrian, Mich. for the First Annual Cliff Keen National Collegiate Women’s Wrestling Championships