

# Ed Ruth wins title at 174-pounds

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It was one of the biggest matches of Ed Ruth's career and he came skipping out of the tunnel and onto the raised platform mat with a smile from ear to ear.

The top-seeded Ruth took on arguably his toughest opponent in third-seeded Nick Amuchastegui from Stanford in Saturday night's 174-pound final, which was one of the most anticipated of the weekend as both wrestlers were unbeaten on the season and on a collision course all year.

In last year's national quarterfinals, Ruth defaulted due to injury against Amuchastegui.

But this year, Ruth was not to be denied as he dominated the Cardinal wrestler with a 13-2 major decision.

Ruth said compared to last year, he is now a completely different wrestler. The only time he would think back to last year's quarterfinals would be when fans would say something to him or he would read the chatter on the Internet.

The 174-pounder from Harrisburg had a 5-2 lead after the first period, when he got near fall points. A second period escape and takedown extended Ruth's lead to 8-3 going into the final period.

Ruth was then able to finish off Amuchastegui in the third period using a takedown, and a near fall. He was able to ride out his opponent to close out the match and finished with 3:39 of riding time.

And the emotions Ruth was experiencing in the final moments of his match and subsequently after was everything he had expected it would have been.

"Unbelievable feeling, especially when you're on the mat and you have the title within your grasp," the 174-pounder said. "It's amazing."

Ever the free spirit, after his post-match interview with ESPN, Ruth ran around the perimeter of the Scottrade Center floor pumping his fist in celebration and acknowledging the large contingent of Penn State fans that were attendance.

Ruth dyed half of his hair teal for the national tournament. It was the second phase of what he wanted to do with his hair for the postseason run. For the Big Ten championships two weeks ago, Ruth bleached half of his hair blonde.

But although Ruth is an easygoing guy, the wrestling community has learned he is not as nice inside the circle of the wrestling mat.

When a reporter told Cael Sanderson after Saturday's final that Ruth's personality doesn't seem to fit the rest of the team because he is an "enigma," the coach quickly asked, "Why is that?"

Sanderson said his job as a coach is stay out of his wrestlers way and just make sure they are taking care of the big things.

"If Ed Ruth wants to color his hair green, well, just say, 'you better back it up out on the mat and be Ed Ruth and be the guy that can color his hair green because you're that good,' " the coach said. "And he certainly did that."

Before the 174-pound final even began, Ruth already had a tough act to follow.

The match before him, 165-pound teammate David Taylor dominated his final and 149-pounder Frank Molinaro won his final two matches before.

Ruth said watching Taylor go out and win by technical fall, gave him something to try and emulate in his match.

"Watching them [Molinaro and Taylor] go out and wrestle the way they did, seeing how they put their blood, sweat and tears into it, it really just gets the momentum going," the 174-pounder said.