

Minnesota State University, Mankato Wrestling Update

December 10, 2006

Pfaffinger, Elg, Rhoten and Wilson Win Championships at St. Cloud State Husky Open

Senior **Jeff Pfaffinger** – 133 pounds (Blue Earth, MN)

Pfaffinger finished the day a perfect 4-0 earning him a place atop the championship podium. Pfaffinger ran his season record to 10-5 on the strength of a major decision and three decisions including a 7-3 win over Augsburg's Paul Bjorkstrand in the finals. Pfaffinger is currently ranked 4th in NCAA II.

Freshman **Travis Elg** – 141 pounds (Mountain Lake, MN)

Travis Elg captured the 141 pound title as well as the tournament's John Oxtou Outstanding Wrestler award. Elg defeated Augsburg's Quincy Osborn (ranked 3rd in Div. III) 3-1 in the semi-finals before downing the sixth ranked wrestler in Div. II, John Gamble, 8-3 in the finals. Elg participated in the tournament unattached and is currently redshirting.

Junior **Jason Rhoten** – 149 pounds (Mantorville, MN)

Jason Rhoten won his second career championship at the Saint Cloud tournament. Rhoten picked up a fall, technical fall, and major decision on his way to the finals before beating Augsburg's 2x All-American, Jared Evans, 5-3 in sudden victory in the finale. Rhoten was named NCC Wrestler of the Week this week and is currently ranked 2nd in NCAA II.

Freshman **Brady Wilson** – Heavyweight (Faribault, MN)

Wilson ran his season record 16-4 with three losses to NCAA I wrestlers - Tyler Rhodes-Northern Iowa (2-4 SV1), Tyler Rhodes-Northern Iowa (2-3), #9 ranked Jon May-Nebraska (1-3) and #2 ranked (NCAA III) John Miller-Luther (Fall 5:10). In addition,

Wilson defeated the #3 ranked wrestler in NCAA II, Andrew Ubben (3-1) at the Nebraska-Omaha Open. Wilson racked up three decision victories throughout the day before winning by default in the final. Wilson is currently ranked 3rd in NCAA II.

Junior **Nick Smith** – 125 pounds (Yankton, SD)

Smith finished the Husky Open with a 2nd place finish. Smith won by decision over Jaime Rocha of Augsburg 9-5 in the semi-finals before falling to Seth Flodeen in the championship round 5-4. Smith is ranked 2nd in NCAA II.

Senior **Brandon Girtz** – 157 pounds (Forest Lake, MN)

Girtz ran his season record to 16-3 with two losses coming from nationally ranked NCAA I wrestlers - #11 C.P. Schlatter-Minnesota (1-4) and #15 Ryan Morningstar-Iowa (1-3). Girtz earned a fall in each of his first two matches on the day and a 10-4 decision over returning All-American, Jacob Malone of Saint Johns in the semis. Girtz came up just short in the finals with a 3-0 loss to Jeremy Anderson (ranked 1st in Div III) of Augsburg College. Girtz is ranked 7th in NCAA II.

Senior **Ben Janike** – 197 pounds (Waseca, MN)

Ben Janike finished the Husky Open with a 4-1 record on the day. Janike defeated Justin Bronson of Minnesota in the quarterfinals. After falling 6-4 to the eventual tournament champion in the semis (Ryan Phillips, Upper Iowa), Janike came back with two wins in the consolation bracket to garner a third-place finish.

Freshman **Andy Forstner** -125 pounds (Madelia, MN)

Forstner claimed a fourth-place finish at 125. Forster opened with a fall over Travell Miller of Upper Iowa and followed with a 4-1 win over Matt Nyvold of Concordia. After falling to teammate Nick Smith in the quarterfinals 7-1, Forstner came back with a 7-6 win over 5th seeded Mogi Baatar of Saint Johns. Forstner is wrestled unattached and is currently redshirting.

Sophomore **Efrain Ayala** – 141 pounds (Grand Island, NE)
Ayala finished 6th at 141 for the Mavericks. Ayala reached the semi-finals with three wins including a 6-1 win over Augsburg's Jason Adams. Ayala was knocked off by Upper Iowa's John Gamble 9-4 in the semis before medical defaulting to sixth. Ayala is currently ranked 5th in NCAA II.

Junior **Willy Mekeel** – 149 pounds (Sterling, IL)
Mekeel entered the tournament as the sixth seed and ended with a fourth-place finish. Mekeel came away with three wins on the day including a 17-4 major decision over Concordia's Zach Schumack in the quarterfinals.

Freshmen **Ben Becker** – 174 pounds (Fort Dodge, IA)
Ben Becker claimed fifth place finish at 174. After losing in round one to Travis Birhanzl of Southwest Minnesota State 8-3, Becker came back with three falls in the consolation bracket. Becker finished with a record of 4-2 on the day. Ben participated unattached and is currently redshirting.

Sophomore **Ryan Cross** – 184 pounds (Faribault, MN)
Cross defeated #4 seed Aaron Young of Itasca by fall in the opening round. Cross then went on to defeat Phil Bruschuk by injury default before medical-defaulting to a sixth-place finish.

Sophomore **Tom Block** – 197 pounds (Waseca, MN)
Tom Block finished 5th place at 197 going 5-2 on the day. Block picked up a major decision and three victories by decision including a 4-2 sudden victory win over Minnesota's Brent Eidschink.

Freshmen **Corey Harnitz** – 197 pounds (Mankato, MN)
Harnitz finished the Husky open with a sixth-place finish at 197 for the Mavs. Harnitz reached the semi-finals with an opening

round fall in 1:40 over Itasca's Nolan Bouchar and a 6-4 quarterfinal victory over Brent Eidenschink of Minnesota. Harnitz was defeated by fall in the semi-finals by Jesse Laber of the University of Mary. Harnitz medical-defaulted his final two matches.

For complete tournament results and brackets, they are available at: <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/athletics/sports/wrestling/news.asp>

On Deck – Reno Tournament of Champions

The Mavericks will take a ten day break from competition and focus on final exams before traveling to the Reno Tournament of Champions in Reno, Nevada on December 20th. The RTOC features many of the top Division I schools in the country and several of the top non-division I programs as well.

MSU-Mankato in the National Rankings

The Mavericks are currently ranked 3rd in the latest NCAA II Coaches Poll behind Central Oklahoma and Nebraska-Kearney.

The Mavericks have eight individuals ranked in the top eight in NCAA II.

2nd ranked	125 pounds	Nick Smith	
Junior	Yankton, SD		
4th ranked	133 pounds	Jeff Pfaffinger	Senior
	Blue Earth, MN		
5th ranked	141 pounds	Efrain Ayala	
Sophomore	Grand Island, NE		
2nd ranked	149 pounds	Jason Rhoten	
Junior	Mantorville, MN		
7th ranked	157 pounds	Brandon Girtz	
Senior	Forest Lake, MN		
4th ranked	165 pounds	Andy Pickar	
Junior	Brainerd, MN		

3rd ranked	184 pounds	Travis Krinkie
Senior	Blue Earth, MN	
3rd ranked	Heavyweight	Brady Wilson
Freshman	Faribault, MN	

Head Wrestling Coach Jim Makovsky is in his 14th season at the helm of the Minnesota State wrestling team. As the head coach of the Mavericks, Makovsky has a record of 156-62-2. He recorded his 150th win with over West Liberty State on January 11, 2006 in Shippensburg, PA. His overall record in seventeen seasons as a head coach stands 182-81-4. His MSU career win-loss percentage (71%) ranks him third among active NCAA II wrestling coaches.

In the 2005-2006 season, Makovsky guided the Mavericks to a fifth-place finish at the **NCAA II National Championships**, second at the **NWCA National Dual Meet Championships** and compiled a 14-2 dual meet record with both losses coming from three-time NCAA II national champions Nebraska-Omaha. Nine team members qualified for the prestigious event and six wrestlers came home placing in the top eight, earning NCAA II All-American status. The past two seasons, the Mavericks have compiled a 30-5 dual meet record with four losses to three-time defending NCAA II Champion Nebraska-Omaha.

Makovsky has coached fifty-three All-Americans and seven National Champions. Makovsky recently served a two-year term as the President of the National Wrestling Coaches Association for Division II and serves as a board member on the National Wrestling Coaches Association.

Makovsky is assisted by Brandon Reichel (5th season), Ty Eustice (1st season), Mathias Bitz (1st season), Cory Beckman (1st season), Zach Stevens (1st season), Andy Schmalzriedt (1st season) and Mike Neimczyck (2nd season).

