



**2004 NCAA DIVISION II WRESTLING
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS
HOSTED BY MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
MYERS FIELD HOUSE &
BRESNAN ARENA IN TAYLOR CENTER
MARCH 12 & 13, 2004**

NCC Foes North Dakota State And Nebraska-Omaha In Race For Championship
Central Oklahoma, Pittsburgh-Johnstown And Western State Round Out Top Five

Mankato, Minn. --- As North Dakota State University and the University of Central Oklahoma eyed each other warily, with only six points separating the two teams at the beginning of the Saturday session, it was the University of Nebraska-Omaha that took advantage of the morning to vault into the race.

NDSU holds a slim 3.5-point lead over UNO, 95-91.5, while UCO slipped to third place with 78.5 points after Session III was completed. The Mavericks have three wrestlers in the championship bracket while the Bison have only two wrestlers in the top bracket. Also with three wrestlers in each bracket are the Bronchos.

By all appearances, UCO's Jason Tapia victory over NDSU's Thad Pike in the 174-pound category was enough to push the Bronchos into the team lead. The next Bison wrestler Brian Kraemer, at 197, picked up a needed win to keep the team score close. Throughout at all the noise made by both the Bison and Broncho fans, it was the Mavericks who were moving into the top spot with key performances at 125, 149, and in the heavyweight division.

With the top three teams only 6.5 points apart, and Western State back in fourth place only nine points behind but with three wrestlers in the finals, the team title may well be decided by what happens in the consolation bracket. Those wrestlers contending for third place will impact how their respective teams place overall.

CHAMPIONSHIP BACKET PREVIEW

The tournament moves from the Myers Field House and into Bresnan Arena in Taylor Center for the championship matches. This venue is where the University of Central Oklahoma will attempt to come from behind and win its 15th national team title and third straight.

Looking to stop that title run are two North Central Conference foes, North Dakota State University and the University of Nebraska-Omaha. NDSU would like nothing more than to take home a national title in its final season at Division II, while UNO would like to ruin both team's plans by taking the title for themselves. Somewhat surprising Western State also has the opportunity to make a big leap should their three wrestlers become national champions. Five schools have two to three wrestlers in the championship bracket, thus making the team title race highly competitive.

What started out Friday morning with 158 wrestlers representing 33 schools vying for individual national titles is now down to 20 individuals from 12 institutions hoping to obtain that prize.

THE CONTENDERS

At 125, UNO's Dustin Tovar, ranked sixth nationally, will face Western State's Jared Haberman for the title. Haberman is the 2003 national runner-up at 125 and presently ranked first in the nation.

In the 133-pound division, three-time defending national champion and number one ranked, Cole Province is girding to enter the history books by becoming only the third wrestler in NCAA Division II history to win four consecutive titles. Standing in his way is San Francisco State's Donald Lockett. Lockett is presently ranked second in the nation.

A rematch at 141 pounds will take place tonight. Defending national champion Shane Barnes from Adams State will square off once again with Merrick Meyer from Truman State. Barnes is presently ranked first while Meyer is ranked fifth.

At 149 fourth ranked Adrian Jiron (Western State) will grapple with seventh ranked Patrick Allibone (Nebraska-Omaha) for the national title.

There will be no repeat champion in the 157-pound division this year as Jack Quintana (Western State) knocked off defending national champion Paul Carlson (NDSU) in the semis. Quintana finished third at the 2003 tournament and is presently ranked second. Travis Koppenhafer (Adams State) finished seventh in 2003 and is ranked third. Colorado bragging rights are also on the line with this match.

Another battle of number one and number two takes place at 165. Two-time defending national champion Shawn Silvis (UCO), ranked first in the country, battles number two ranked Waylon Lowe (Findlay) for the gold.

With serious implications towards the team title, UCO's Jason Tapia, ranked second nationally, will wrestle Pittsburgh-Johnstown's John Burda tonight at 174 pounds. Tapia knocked off NDSU's Thad Pike in the semi-finals, thus helping out the Broncho's battle for the team title.

In a final North Central Conference tilt, NDSU's Matt Herman will contest Augustana's number one ranked Tom Meester in the 184-pound classification.

At 197, number two-ranked Jeff Sylvester (Nebraska-Kearney) wrestles NDSU's Brian Kraemer. Kraemer was the national runner-up in 2003 and is ranked fourth nationally. Sylvester, ranked second, was seventh in 2003.

Finally, and also weighing in heavily towards determining the team title, Nebraska-Omaha's heavyweight Les Sigman takes on Ft. Hays State's Andrew Ubben in the evening's final match. Sigman is the defending national champion in this category while Ubben finished fifth last year.

Championship History

<u>Year</u>	<u>Champion</u>	<u>Host Site</u>
1963	Western State	Northern Iowa
1964	Western State	Northern Iowa
1965	Minnesota State	Colorado Mines
1966	Cal Poly	Minnesota State
1967	Portland State	Wikes
1968	Cal Poly	Minnesota State
1969	Cal Poly	Cal Poly
1970	Cal Poly	Ashland
1971	Cal Poly	North Dakota State
1972	Cal Poly	Oswego State
1973	Cal Poly	South Dakota State
1974	Cal Poly	Cal State Fullerton
1975	Northern Iowa	East Stroudsburg
1976	Cal State Bakersfield	North Dakota State
1977	Cal State Bakersfield	Northern Iowa
1978	Northern Iowa	Northern Iowa
1979	Cal State Bakersfield	South Dakota State
1980	Cal State Bakersfield	Nebraska Omaha
1981	Cal State Bakersfield	UC Davis
1982	Cal State Bakersfield	UW-Parkside
1983	Cal State Bakersfield	North Dakota State
1984	SIU Edwardsville	Morgan State
1985	SIU Edwardsville	Wright State
1986	SIU Edwardsville	SIU Edwardsville
1987	Cal State Bakersfield	SIU Edwardsville
1988	North Dakota State	Nebraska-Omaha
1989	Portland State	Calif. (Pa.)
1990	Portland State	UW-Parkside
1991	Nebraska Omaha	North Dakota State
1992	Central Oklahoma	Northern Colorado
1993	Central Oklahoma	South Dakota State
1994	Central Oklahoma	Southern Colorado
1995	Central Oklahoma	Nebraska Kearney
1996	Pitt-Johnstown	Northern Colorado
1997	San Fransico State	North Dakota State
1998	North Dakota State	Southern Colorado
1999	Pitt-Johnstown	Nebraska Omaha
2000	North Dakota State	South Dakota State
2001	North Dakota State	Northern Colorado
2002	Central Oklahoma	UW-Parkside
2003	Central Oklahoma	West Liberty State