

No go for Mavericks at national tourney

WCHA gets six teams into NCAA showcase, but MSU left out

By Shane Frederick
Free Press Staff Writer

MANKATO — Minnesota State knocked and determined the field. That put Wisconsin and allowed into the NCAA tournament Minnesota State out. Sunday.

A series of results Mavericks coach Troy Saturday sent the Mavericks down in the

Pairwise rankings, and the tournament committee did as it has always done and stuck by the numbers when we came out a little bit short this time.”

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Six teams from the Western Collegiate Hockey Association got into the tournament: Colorado College, North Dakota, Denver, St. Cloud State, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

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NCAA men's hockey championship

East Regional, Albany, N.Y.
1-Michigan (31-5-4) vs. 4-Niagara (22-10-4)
2-St. Cloud State (19-15-5) vs. Clarkson (21-12-4)

West Regional, Colorado Springs, Colo.
1-New Hampshire (25-9-3) vs. 4-Notre Dame (24-15-4)
2-Colorado College (28-11-1) vs. 3-Michigan State (24-11-5)

Midwest Regional, Madison, Wis.
1-North Dakota (26-10-4) vs. 4-Princeton (21-13-0)
2-Denver (26-13-1) vs. 3-Wisconsin (15-16-7)

Northeast Regional, Worcester, Mass.
1-Miami (32-7-1) vs. 4-Air Force (21-11-6)
2-Boston College (21-11-8) vs. 3-Minnesota (19-16-9)

The Frozen Four will be held April 10-12 in Denver.

which is the only team in the tournament with a losing record. Head to head, the Mavericks went 2-1-1 against the Badgers this season.

However, wins by Northern Michigan in the CCHA third-place game and Princeton in the ECAC championship Saturday bumped Wisconsin ahead of Minnesota State in the Pairwise. The ranking is a system in which the top

The Mavericks finished below them slipped into the regular season in fourth the field of 16. The most controversial three teams that finished of the group is Wisconsin,

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teams in college hockey are compared to one another as a way to mimic how the NCAA determines the tournament field and regional matchups.

Wisconsin had one more comparison win than Minnesota State to go to 12th place. Notre Dame was tied with MSU for 13th, however, the Irish won the direct comparison against the Mavericks to break the tie.

Jutting did not quarrel with the final results.

“It’s not my decision to make,” he said. “It’s the sys-

tem we use in college hockey, and that’s what the committee felt was the best way to go. ... Obviously, something went against us. Something we needed to happen didn’t happen yesterday.”

Wisconsin will host the Midwest Regional, which also features North Dakota, Denver and Princeton, but that was not a factor in the selection process, officials said.

“The reality is, these are the directions we’ve been given (to follow the Pairwise),” committee chairman and University of Minnesota athletic director

Joel Maturi told the online magazine College Hockey News. “It’s something the college hockey coaches have always wanted. It really takes it out of the hands of the committee as to who makes the field.”

Minnesota State might have made it into the tournament had some of its own results been reversed this season. The Mavericks were knocked out of the WCHA tournament by Minnesota in a wild series that featured three overtime games. There were also two nonconference losses to Nebraska-Omaha, including a home loss on

Feb. 26, that sent them down the rankings and played a part in MSU’s comparison with Notre Dame and other teams.

“I don’t look back,” Jutting said. “We had a lot of big wins, too. It’s unfortunate. I thought the kids had a great season. They accomplished a lot. ... They really worked hard and improved throughout the course of the year and had a great finish from December on.”

The Mavericks ended the season with a 19-16-4 record, their second-best season in Jutting’s eight years as head coach.