



Saturday,  
March 15, 2008

www.mankatofreepress.com

# Sports

## 'Super' Wilson among five to make national semis

### MSU in first in team competition

By **Jim Rueda**  
Free Press Sports Editor

**CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA** — Perhaps there's a reason why Minnesota State University heavyweight Brady Wilson warms up with a royal blue shirt boasting the trademark red and yellow Superman insignia on it.

Perhaps he knows something the rest of us don't.

Wilson appeared all but unbeatable Friday in the first two rounds of the NCAA

Please see SEMIS, Page C5

# SEMIS: MSU's Putnam big day

Continued from Page C1

Division II National Wrestling Championships at the U.S. Cellular Center. He pinned his first-round opponent in 4:13 and then needed just 26 seconds to pin William Moss of Limestone College (N.C.) in the quarterfinals.

"I'm on a mission," Wilson said. "I'm just going out to beat everybody they send out there."

MSU head coach Jim Makovsky is well aware of Wilson's intensity.

"He's dialed in right now," Makovsky said. "He knows what he needs to do and he's out there doing it."

Wilson was one of five MSU wrestlers to reach the semifinals Friday. The others are senior Nick Smith at 125 pounds, junior John Putman at 133, senior Jason Rhoten at 157 and senior Andy Pickar at 165.

The strong first-day showing has MSU in first place with 66.5 points. The University of Nebraska-Kearney is second with 57.5.

Rhoten, who took third at last year's nationals at 149 pounds, looked every bit as strong as Wilson. He stuck his first-round opponent in 4:37 and flattened his second in 4:10.

"I'm feeling good, I'm feeling confident," Rhoten said after his quarterfinal win. "I felt in control early on in both matches."

Rhoten used a funky move to open up a big lead in his second-round match. He reached in between his opponents legs from behind, controlled the arm and then flipped himself over to score near-fall points.

"I don't know what you call

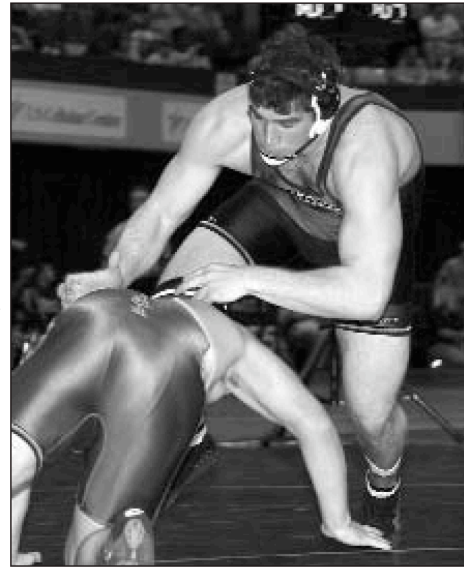


Photo courtesy of Tim Tushla

Minnesota State's Brady Wilson handles Limestone College's William Moss in a quarterfinal match Friday at the Division II National Wrestling Tournament in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Wilson pinned Moss.

it," he said, "maybe a roll over ball and chain is the best way to describe it."

"I used it quite a bit last year but not too much this season. "It's a little risky but there wasn't a lot of time left in the period when I tried it so I thought I'd be OK."

Pickar also looked strong in his two bouts, earning a pin and a 9-1 major decision. The senior is a defending national runner-up.

"Guys like Smith and Rhoten and Pickar and Wilson have all been here before, they've all won here before and they've all had their hearts broken here before, too," Makovsky said. "That's important. It's impor-

tant because it motivated them to train the right way."

Makovsky said he was also pleased with Putman's effort, which included a win by technical fall and a win by regular decision.

"I'm very proud of the way he wrestled today. He's without a doubt the most improved wrestler on our team this year."

The Mavericks begin Day 2 competition at 10 a.m. today. The championship round is scheduled for 7 p.m.

For complete tournament results, log on to <http://upperiowaathletics.cstv.com> and click on the NCAA Division II Wrestling Championships logo.

## Mavs in position for first NCAA team title

By **Jim Rueda**  
Free Press Sports Editor

### CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

— The 2008 record-setting Minnesota State University wrestling team moved a step closer to making school history Friday with a strong first-day showing at the NCAA Division II National Championships.

After 200 matches on the opening day of the tournament at U.S. Cellular Center, the Mavericks found themselves in first place with 66.5 points. Nebraska-Kearney is in second with 57.5 and Pittsburgh-Johnstown is third with 51.

Should MSU hold on to the lead and win the tournament, it would be the first NCAA wrestling team title in the program's history. Back in 1967, under leg-

endary coach Rummy Macias, the team won a National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics championship with seven All-Americans.

The 2007-08 version of the Mavericks is already guaranteed the same amount. In addition, this year's Mavericks have the school record for dual-meet victories in a season. The previous record of 16 had been set three times previously but was shattered this year when MSU rolled to a 20-1-1 record.

This season also marked the first time MSU had ever been ranked No. 1 in the nation in NCAA Division II wrestling. The Mavericks were actually ranked first twice in 2007-08. They dropped out of the top spot when they lost a dual meet

to Nebraska-Omaha in early February but then regained their No. 1 status when they won the North Central Regional two weeks ago.

"The team championship is definitely our priority," said Andy Pickar, MSU's senior 165-pounder. "You could see it in the way Tommy Putnam wrestled today. He was ahead 3-2 in the third period and was still going for takedowns like crazy. He was trying to get bonus points for the team."

Sophomore heavyweight Brady Wilson agreed: "Any one of us would give up an individual title to win a national team title. We're doing it for our seniors like Jason Rhoten and Andy Pickar and Nick Smith."

"They've worked so hard for this program. If anybody deserves it, they do."