



# Sports

## MSU wrestlers making the grade thus far

The Minnesota State University wrestling team program is nearing the halfway point of the 2007-08 season and it's time for head coach Jim

Makovsky to dole out his mid-term grade.

Makovsky, who is in his 15th season at MSU and recently earned his 200th career coaching victory, is usually a pretty tough grader.

This year, however, Makovsky has been encouraged by what he's seen so far.

"I was thinking about it the other day and I'd have to give us a B-plus right now," he said Wednesday. "We're really good in seven weights; we still need to shore up those other three weights."

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**JIM RUEDA**  
Free Press

## RUEDA: Pickar dealing with injury

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The Mavericks are 6-0 and ranked second in the nation in Division II behind Central Oklahoma. The seven weights Makovsky believes to be solid are 125 pounds (sixth-ranked Nick Smith, 8-2); 141 (eighth-ranked Travis Elg, 5-0); 149 (Tommy Abbott, 13-1); 157 (second-ranked Jason Rhoten, 18-2); 165 (second-ranked Andy Pickar, 3-1); 174 (fourth-ranked Tim Matheson, 6-2) and heavy-weight (third-ranked Brady Wilson, 18-2).

Pickar has missed a lot of action with a knee injury but Makovsky said he is expected to be back when the team resumes wrestling on Jan. 9. Elg has also missed some time due to illness but should also be ready when the team resumes practicing.

Makovsky says Abbott has been wrestling extremely well for a true freshman.

The Wilmington, Del., native

is backed up by another talented wrestler in Willy Mckeel. Mckeel, who has wrestled at both 149 and 157, has an 11-6 record.

Junior John Putnam has apparently won the 133-pound starting spot. He's 7-5 and has improved steadily since the start of the season. At 184, the Mavericks have received good production from both Ben Becker (10-4) and Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial graduate Cory Harnitz (4-3). Makovsky would like to see one of them grab the position and run with it.

Waseca native Tom Block (8-10) is the team's 197-pounder and the coach admits he is struggling.

"It's not for a lack of effort that he's struggling," Makovsky said. "In fact, we may have to dial back his training a little bit.

"He's pressing and that

means his internal clock is off a little bit. His head is racing ahead of his body or his body is racing ahead of his brain. Whatever it is, we need to get him in synch."

Makovsky says he'll know a lot more about his team after the dual-meet portion of the season, which is coming up. The Mavericks will participate in the National Duals in Cedar Falls, Iowa, on Jan 12-13, and also have duals against Upper Iowa and Nebraska-Omaha in February.

"Our goal is always to do well at nationals," Makovsky said. "We want to score from 100 to 110 points at nationals. We think that will give us a shot at the title."

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