

MINNESOTA STATE 27, UPPER IOWA 9



Pat Christian

Minnesota State University's Andy Pickar earned some back points on this move and went on to defeat Upper Iowa's Mitch Norton 15-7 at 165 pounds. Pickar went into the match rated second in Division II while Norton was rated fourth.

Depth and domination

Mavericks adjust lineup, score big win against Peacocks

By Jim Rueda
Free Press Sports Editor

MANKATO — Someone once said that the mark of a champion is the ability to adapt.

The fourth-ranked Minnesota State University wrestling team had to do some big-time adapting this week in the wake of injuries to two key competitors. MSU's makeshift lineup came through Thursday night, downing seventh-rated Upper Iowa 27-9 at Bresnan Arena.

"At 3 o'clock Wednesday afternoon we're looking at starting our Murderer's Row lineup for the first

time this season," MSU coach Makovsky said. "Then Travis Elg has somebody step on his ankle and he tweaks his knee. And then Brandon Girtz, who's been sick off and on all week, gets sick again and we have to start scrambling."

Fortunately for MSU fans, the Mavericks had more than enough depth to handle the setbacks. Second-ranked Nick Smith returned to the lineup at 125 pounds, Efrain Ayala replaced Elg at 141, Willy Mekeel covered the 149-pound slot and second-ranked Jason Rhoten moved up to 157 to take over for Girtz.

"Smith and Ayala are both not 100 percent but both wrestled well tonight," Makovsky said. "And Rhoten is just a warrior out there. He was giving up a few pounds but he wrestled a very smart match."

Having lost two of the first three bouts, Mekeel got MSU back on the winning track at 149 pounds with a 13-10 decision. Rhoten followed with an impressive 4-3 win over Travis Eggers at 157 before second-ranked Andy Pickar downed fourth-ranked Matt Norton by a 15-7 major decision at 165.

That set the stage for the biggest upset of the meet. At 174, UIU's eighth-rated Brady Hakeman took on unranked Tim Matheson. Hakeman put Matheson on his back in the early going, but Matheson rolled out

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of it, putting Hakeman on his back and pinning him in just 1:40.

"I was down there looking up and I just rolled through it," Matheson said. "I had him pretty tight so I knew as soon as I got him to his back I could pin him. It felt pretty good."

Makovsky agreed: "That was huge for us. Tim has good hips and he came out of it with a hip heist and the next thing you know we're getting six points out of it."

MSU's sixth-ranked Travis Krinkie followed with one of his better matches of the season, downing Tony Gehling 25-11.

"It was nice to see Travis

open it up," Makovsky said. "When he gets that physical, intense swagger going he can really light it up."

Upper Iowa's fifth-ranked Ryan Phillips edged Ben Janike 8-5 at 197 before MSU's third-ranked heavy-weight Brady Wilson shut out eighth-rated Dan Goodson 4-0.

The win lifts MSU to 11-3

in dual meets and drops Upper Iowa to 6-1. The Mavericks are back in action on Feb. 9 when they host Nebraska-Omaha at 7 p.m. at Bresnan Arena.

Minnesota State 27, Upper Iowa 9
125—Tyler Mumbulo (UI) dec. Nick Smith 6-0;
123—Jeff Praffinger (MSU) maj. dec. Mike Naumann 12-4; 141—John Gumble (UI) maj. dec. Efrain Ayala 11-3;
149—Willy Mekeel (MSU) dec. Andy Norton 13-10;
157—Jason Rhoten (MSU) dec. Travis Eggers 4-3;
165—Andy Pickar (MSU) maj. dec. Mitch Norton 15-7;
174—Tim Matheson (MSU) pinned Brady Hakeman 1-40; 184—Travis Krinkie (MSU) maj. dec. Tony Gehling 25-11; 197—Ryan Phillips (UI) dec. Ben Janike 8-5; HW—Brady Wilson (MSU) dec. Dan Goodson 4-0.