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Sports



Minnesota State University's Jason Rhoten (top), Andy Pickar and Brady Wilson (bottom) each won twice on Friday to reach the semifinals of the NCAA Division II National Wrestling Championships in Kearney, Neb. All three will challenge for national titles tonight.

Maverick trio in semifinals

MSU battling for third spot for national team title

Free Press staff

KEARNEY, NEB. — It wasn't the first day the Minnesota State University wrestling team had hoped for.

The Mavericks ventured to the NCAA Division II Championships in quest of their first title since 1965 but, after a sub-par Day 1, MSU may have to settle for third place or fourth place at best.

Minnesota State pushed three wrestlers into the semifinals Friday in 149-pound junior Jason Rhoten, 165-pound junior Andy Pickar and freshman heavyweight Brady Wilson. The rest of the MSU hopefuls all lost at least one match on the opening day.

Rhoten downed eighth-ranked Michael Delk of Fort Hays State 4-1 in his first match and followed with a pin of Chris Pingleton of

WRESTLING: Central Oklahoma has big lead

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Indianapolis in the quarterfinals. Pickar defeated John Ficht of Southern Illinois-Edwardsville 5-3 in Round 1 and added a 3-2 triumph over Taylor May of Nebraska-Kearney in the quarterfinals.

Wilson gave the Mavericks some valuable bonus points in his opening match at heavyweight. Already well ahead in his bout with Shane Odell of Carson-Newman, Wilson turned a desperation throw attempt by Odell into a fall at the 6:34 mark to advance to the quarterfinals.

Wilson then advanced to the semifinals with another fall, this one in 3:36, over Travis Clark of Findlay.

Two other Mavericks, Brandon Girtz (157) and Travis Krinkie (184) lost on Monday but rebounded to guarantee themselves All-American (top-six) finishes.

Girtz earned a 17-5 major decision over Jacob Wilson of Shippensburg but then lost 8-7 in overtime to defending national champion Brad Becker of Wisconsin-Parkside. Girtz locked up All-American honors for the first time with a 5-3 win over Mike Horton of Indianapolis

in the first round of consolations.

The eighth-ranked Krinkie started strong, topping Keeno Griffin of Newberry by a score of 7-2. He was then dropped to the wrestlebacks with a 3-2 loss to fourth-ranked Jared Hess of Central Oklahoma.

In his first consolation match, Krinkie dominated Matt Allen of Ashland with an 11-3 major decision. In doing so, he became just the sixth four-time All-American in MSU history.

The rest of the MSU field — Nick Smith (125), Jeff Pfaffinger (133), Travis Elg (141), Tim Matheson (174) and Ben Janike (197) — was eliminated on the first day.

Central Oklahoma has a commanding lead after Day 1 and host Nebraska-Kearney is in second. MSU and Upper Iowa are battling for the No. 3 spot. The Mavericks continue action at the national tournament at 10 a.m. today.