



Sports

MSU hopes to finish strong at nationals

By Jim Rueda

jrueda@mankatofreepress.com

MANKATO — Considering how successful the Minnesota State wrestling team has been over the last decade, the 2009-10 dual-meet season was a disappointment for head coach Jim Makovsky and his Mavericks.

MSU limped to the finish line, dropping four of its last seven dual meets and finishing with a 9-5 overall record. The sub-par finish dropped the Mavericks to 12th in the national rankings, and they will be looking to atone with a strong finish this weekend at the NCAA Division II National Championships at Omaha, Neb.

“Our lack of depth caught up with us this year,” Makovsky said before his team left for the tournament. “We lost Jason Rhoten and Andy Pickar two years ago and couldn’t replace their scholarship money. We still had to cut money from some wrestlers who were already here.”

The reduced scholarship funds came when the Mavericks moved from the North Central Conference to the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference. The NSIC has more severe scholarship limitations.

The good news for the program is that Makovsky will actually be able to offer some incoming kids money this

year. That should help bring the Mavericks’ depth back up and make them more competitive on a national level.

As for this weekend’s D-II nationals, MSU will be represented by seven student-athletes, including No. 1-ranked heavyweight Brady Wilson. Wilson is 29-4 with 10 pins, two technical falls and three major decisions.

Other wrestlers who figure to finish high for the Mavericks this weekend are junior Andy Forstner of Madelia at 125 pounds and sophomore Aaron Norgren of Good Thunder at 184. Forstner is 21-10 and finished second in the NSIC Tournament nearly two weeks ago. Norgren also finished second and has a record of 13-9.

“Aaron really had a strong conference tournament,” Makovsky said. “And Andy has been very consistent for us all year.”

Travis Elg (149) of Mountain Lake also has a chance to do well after missing part of the season with injuries.

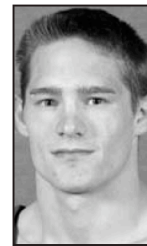
He finished third at the

NSIC meet and has an 11-14 record.

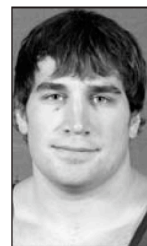
“He struggled at times this year but he’s in a good place right now,” Makovsky said of Elg. “He’s focused and he’s been there before so we expect him to do well.”

MSU’s other qualifiers are senior Justin Turek (157) of New Prague, sophomore Tel Todd (165) and junior Ben Becker (174).

The national championships begin Friday and conclude Saturday at Sapp Fieldhouse on the campus of the University of Nebraska-Omaha.



Andy Forstner



Brady Wilson