



Sports

MSU wrestlers finish 5th in D-II

FINDLAY, OHIO — Led by six All-America performances, the Minnesota State University wrestling team ended up in fifth place Saturday at the NCAA Division II National Championships at the University of Findlay. No. 1-ranked Nebraska-Omaha won the team title with 117 points.

"I am proud of the fact that we had six wrestlers (earn) All-American honors," MSU coach Jim Makovsky said. "(But) we are all disappointed in our team's finish. The expectations of our program has risen and when you don't bring home at least a trophy for a top four finish we view it has a goal not achieved."

MSU sophomore Nick Smith opened the day with a semifinal match against second-ranked Cody Garcia of Nebraska-Omaha. Smith gave up a takedown in the first and went on to lose 9-1.

He bounced in the consolation bracket with a strong win over Shane Caruthers of Central Oklahoma. Smith scored two deep double-leg takedowns en route to the 5-3 win.

In his third-place match, Smith took on returning All-American Ryan McCabe of Adams State and came through with a 15-7 win. His third-place finish at nationals concluded with a 29-15 overall record.

MSU senior Zach Stevens was the recipient of a medical forfeit in his first consolation match of the day. That sent him to the consolation semifinals where he delivered a 10-1 major decision over Patrick Sharp of New Mexico Highlands.

In his third-place match, Stevens took an early lead over Brian Pitts of Adams State but yielded a takedown with fewer than 20 seconds left to lose 6-4 and finished fourth. He con-



Nick Smith (left) finished third at 125 pounds; Zach Stevens was fourth at 141 pounds.

cludes his only MSU season with a 24-12 record.

Returning 174-pound finalist Travis Krinkie fell to the consolation bracket right away Saturday with a 9-5 loss to returning All-American Michael Jackson of Indianapolis. Krinkie came back with an 8-3 win over Aaron Meister of Fort Hays State to move into the third-place match.

Once there, he took on in-region foe Clinton McNaught of Upper Iowa. Krinkie came up short with a 13-7 loss. The Blue Earth native finishes fourth at nationals with a 21-6 overall record.

The Mavericks' other placers Saturday were senior John Koons (6th, 184), junior Jeff Pfaffinger (7th, 133) and sophomore Andy Pickar (7th, 165). The six All-American performers is one better than last season, and is the most since Makovsky's 1993-94 squad had seven.

"Our lightweights (Smith, Pfaffinger and Stevens) did an outstanding job for us, but we stumbled in the middle and upper weights," Makovsky said. "It was a tight team race and you have to do all the little things right at a national championship."

"Bottom line, we made too many mistakes. We will miss the seniors next year and the experience our underclassmen gained will pay dividends."