



Sports



Minnesota State wrestling coach Jim Makovsky (left) and baseball coach Dean Bowyer were among the coaches who said they were pleased that the Northern Sun MSU's bid.

MSU coaches ready for NSIC

By Brian Ojanpa
Free Press Staff Writer

MANKATO — The consensus of Minnesota State coaches regarding the school's move to a new athletic conference? Let's get it on.

"I'm excited to just have this finalized," wrestling coach Jim Makovsky said. "I've got a lot of respect for NSIC coaches, and for us (the transition) is going to be pretty seamless."

Minnesota State and three other North Central Conference schools — St. Cloud State, Augustana and Minnesota-Duluth — all were accepted into the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Athletic Conference on Monday.

The moves were spurred by the impending demise of the North Central, which has been decimated in recent years by member schools' opting to either move down from NCAA Division II status or, more commonly, to move up to Division I competition.

MSU baseball coach Dean Bowyer anticipates that the switch will go without a hitch for his program.

"We play quite a few of those NSIC teams now anyway," says Bowyer, who feels the only question mark is how

COACHES: Loss of scholarships frustrating

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the new 14-school NSIC will align a league that likely will be divided into two divisions.

Bowyer said the benefit of that will be a decrease in travel, because divisional foes will be in relatively close proximity.

Women's soccer coach Chris Miskec, like her coaching peers, says she's not happy about the loss of athletic scholarships the league switch will

entail — the NSIC doesn't allow as many as the NCC — but she says there will be more competitive balance in her sport.

"In the NCC, for years there were only two teams with winning nonconference records. The NSIC has become a much stronger overall group in soccer, and schools consistently playing successful programs will make everyone better."

Men's track and cross country coach Mark Schuck takes

the long, philosophical view of changing times.

"I dance with the girls that are there. We'll survive," he says.

The veteran coach points out that the school was a member of the NSIC precursor league, the Northern Intercollegiate Conference, as recently as 1981.

"It was as good as any conference around — as good as the NCC, and probably better than the NCC is now."