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WRESTLING UPDATE

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NESS AND SCHLATTER SHARE MVP HONORS AT WRESTLING BANQUET

Minneapolis – The Minnesota Wrestling team held their annual season-end awards banquet on Apr. 18, closing the book on another successful season of Golden Gopher Wrestling. Many awards were handed out on the evening, with outgoing seniors Jayson Ness and Dustin Schlatter highlighting the winners as they shared team MVP honors.

Ness also collected the first award of the night, as he received his Dan Hodge Trophy that he won in late March. The Bloomington, Minn. native finished one of the best seasons ever by a Gopher wrestler, closing a perfect season at 31-0 at 133, with his second Big Ten title and first NCAA title. He was also awarded his fourth All-America certificate and the award for Most Falls.

Schlatter finished the year with a deceiving 14-3 record, after battling injuries for the duration of the season. After battling back from injury to start the season, the Massillon, Ohio native won 14 straight matches across two weight classes (157, 165) before an injury forced him to default out of both the Big Ten and NCAA tournaments, resulting in two losses to his record. Schlatter was a near guaranteed win when he was in the line-up, defeating some of the nation's top-ranked wrestlers along the way.

For his effort and determination in battling back from injury to take the mat the NCAA Tournament, Schlatter was also awarded the Fraser Dean Most Courageous Wrestler award. Finally, his third honor of the night came in the form of the team Academic Award, as he had the Gopher's highest GPA in the fall semester. Sharing the Academic Award with Schlatter, with the best fall GPA among freshman, was Kevin Steinhaus (Pennock, Minn.).

The Gophers' named Zach Sanders (Wabasha, Minn.) the winner of the Most Dedicated Award. Just a sophomore, Sanders finished the season with a 29-7 record, and placed third and the Big Ten Tournament before claiming his second All-America honor at the NCAA Championships.

The Chris Berglin Most Improved Wrestler Award went to Sonny Yohn (Alamosa, Colo.), who earned his first All-America certificate at the NCAA Championships last month. Yohn finished the season with a 27-13 overall record, and a 21-12 mark at 197. In his first season at 197 he finished as the Big Ten runner-up, and an All-American, after missing the NCAA Tournament at 184 last season.

Also gaining his first All-America honor this march – in maybe the season's most exciting match – was Mike Thorn (St. Michaels, Minn.) who was rightfully honored as the winner of the Most Exciting Wrestler award. Thorn finished 29-7 winning his first Big Ten championship at 141 before capping his season with a whirlwind 56 second match, finishing with a pin to take seventh place honors. Thorn tallied nine falls and a team-high 11 major decisions on his season.

Ben Berhow (Hayward, Minn.) was named the winner of the Verne Gagne Scholarship/Leadership Award, after the junior had his best career performance at both the Big Ten and NCAA Tournaments. Berhow went 23-13 on the season and placed third in the Big Ten. Three freshman earned their first letters, taking home "M Club" First-Year Awards. Thane Antczak (Prairie Farm, Wis.), Mario Mason (Moorestown, N.J.) and Cody Yohn (Alamosa, Colo.) all saw time in the line-up throughout the season, with Mason and Cody Yohn placing at the Big Ten Tournament and qualifying for their first NCAA Tournament. Cody Yohn wrestled at three different weight classes on the season before finding a home at 165, and was the winner of the Gophers' Most Outstanding Freshman Award.

Golden Gopher Wrestling finished the season ranked No. 5 in the country with a 12-5 dual meet record and a 7-1 record to finish second in the Big Ten dual meet season. They placed second at the Big Ten Tournament with two champions (Ness, Thorn), and seventh at the NCAA Tournament with four All-Americans (Ness, Sanders, Thorn, Sonny Yohn).

Minnesota graduates seniors Matt Everson (Mitchell, S.D.), Nate Matousek (Glencoe, Minn.), Ness and Schlatter, but returns eight starters and three All-Americans.

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