

University of Minnesota Athletic Communications

244 Bierman Field Athletic Building • 516 15th Avenue SE • Minneapolis, MN 55455

(p) 612.625.4090 • (f) 612.625.0359



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Pat McCabe (mcca0512@umn.edu / 612-203-3028)

WRESTLING UPDATE

April 27, 2010

NESS, THORN CLAIM GOLDEN GOLDYS

Minneapolis - The University of Minnesota Athletic Department held the fourth annual Golden Goldys last night (Apr. 26) honoring athletic excellence over the past year. An ESPY style event, Golden Gopher Wrestlers Jayson Ness and Mike Thorn each walked away as winners, adding yet more trophies to their case.

Ness claimed the night's top honor, winning Male Athlete of the Year, on the strength of his National Championship. The Bloomington, Minn. native put together one of the best years in the century long history of Golden Gopher Wrestling. He finished 31-0, just the sixth perfect season in program history, and racked up 19 falls along the way. With 19 pins, he posted the third highest total in program history, behind his record 20 from 2008.

2008 also marked the last time Ness won a Golden Goldy, also for Male Athlete of the Year, making him the only two-time winner in an individual category. Cole Konrad also won Male Athlete of the Year in the inaugural Golden Goldys in 2007, giving wrestling three of the four winners in history of the event.

Ness capped his year with his first NCAA title and fourth All-America honor. He won his second Big Ten title and was named Big Ten Wrestler of the Year. At the NCAA Tournament he earned Outstanding Wrestler of the Championships, becoming just the second Gopher to do so. At the conclusion of the season he was bestowed the highest honor in college wrestling as the winner of the Hodge Trophy, awarded to the top amateur wrestler in the country.

Ness beat out baseball's Derek McCallum, cross country and track & field's Hassan Mead, track & field's R.J. McGinnis and swimming's Michael Richards in the category.

Thorn earns his first Golden Goldy, as Male Breakthrough Athlete of the Year. The junior from St. Michael, Minn. won his first Big Ten title this past season, and earned his first All-America honor at the NCAA Championships. Thorn placed fifth at the Big Ten Championships as a sophomore, and went 0-2 at the 2009 NCAA Tournament, before breaking out this season.

Thorn finished a career best 29-7 this season, dropping his losses from 17 in 2009. He was ranked in the top-10 all season, climbing as high as third in the country. He led the team with a career high 11 major decisions, and was second on the team with nine falls. As the two seed at the Big Ten Tournament, he beat the top seed and nation's No. 2 wrestler for the title, and then went 4-2 at the NCAA tournament with a 56 second fall in his last match to place seventh and earn All-America accolades.

In one of the most competitive categories, Thorn beat out basketball's Devoe Joseph, baseball's Michael Kvasnicka, golf's Ben Pisani, and football's Nate Triplett.

In addition to Konrad's honor on 2007, wrestling was also the 2007 team of the year, the only previous time they won two Golden Goldys at one event.

-UM-

