

Nov. 12, 2006
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BENNETT, 10 OTHERS PLACE AT MSU OPEN

EAST LANSING, Mich. - Junior Marc Bennett (184 pounds) took home first place, as 11 Hoosier wrestlers placed in eight different weight classes at the Michigan State Open on Sunday, Nov. 11. Redshirt freshman Trevor Perry finished in second place at 174 pounds, while four other wrestlers took third-place finishes.

Brandon Becker (157), Matt Coughlin (149), Max Dean (165) and Angel Escobedo (125) all took third place in their weight classes, while Justin Curran (197) and Paul Young (157) each took fourth. Freshman Nathan Everhart placed fifth at 197 pounds in his first collegiate competition, while Dave Herman (HWT) and Kurt Kinser (149) each finished sixth. In the lone matchup between IU wrestlers on the day, Becker bested Young in the third-place bout.

Bennett, who went 12-16 at 174 pounds a year ago, went 5-0 on the day including two pins. The unseeded Bennett shocked the field, besting all of the top three seeds to take the title with a 3-2 victory over top-seed Alex Clemson. Clemson was ranked third in the country by the National Wrestling Coaches Association entering the season. Perry won his first four matches to advance to the championship bout with Penn's Matt Herrington. Herrington took the match 5-2 to claim the title at 174.

Redshirt freshmen Escobedo and Coughlin fulfilled the promise they showed a year ago, with each moving on to the third-place bouts in their respective weight classes. Escobedo won four of his first five matches, with his lone loss coming to second-seeded Obenson Blanc of Lock Haven. Coughlin won three in a row to open the event before being bested by Edinboro's Gregor Gillespie.

Curran and Everhart both had excellent outings at 197 pounds, with each winning his first three matches to reach the semifinals. Curran, who wrestled at 184 a season ago, was topped 9-3 by top-seeded J.D. Bergman of OSU before winning his next match to move on to the third-place bout. Everhart upset third-seeded Tony Lyssiotis in the second round with a 4-3 decision, but was bested by Michigan's Nick Roy in the semifinals to move to the consolation bracket.

Returning NCAA qualifiers Herman and Dean each picked up where they left off a season ago, winning their first three matches to move to the semifinals. Herman then lost a pair of matches, to third seed Joe Fendone and fourth-seed Corey Morrison before taking moving on to the fifth-place bout. Dean was topped by UNC's Keegan Mueller before defaulting Penn's Jeff Zannetti and besting third-seeded Rocky Cozart 3-2 to earn third.

Bloomington South products Kinser (149 pounds) and Young (157 pounds) each fell in their first career matches, but rallied for strong performances in the consolation bracket to place in their respective weight classes. Kinser won five matches in a row before being topped 3-1 by third-ranked Rob Hitschler of UPenn. Kinser faced Ohio State's Jason Johnstone in the fifth-place match.

Young won six matches in the consolation bracket, including one fall and one major decision, to face off with Becker in the third-place bout. Along the way, the freshman took decisions over fifth-seeded Tony Greathouse of Michigan State and second-seeded Eric Neil of Central Michigan. Becker, the top seed at 157, won his first three matches, but was upended in the semifinals by fourth seed Matt Hill of Edinboro. Becker topped Penn's Gene Zannetti 6-5 before topping Young to take third place.

At 141 pounds, freshman Nick Walpole registered a fall 1:53 into his first career match, pinning Penn's Andrew Valenti. Walpole then was bested in a hard-fought contest with fourth-seeded Ryan Williams of Old Dominion, with Williams taking a 1-0 victory. Walpole won a pair of matches in the consolation bracket, including a 13-0 major decision over Central Michigan's Michael Holt, but came up one match short of placing in the weight class.

In the 133-pound bracket, IU's Ted Strychalski (1-2) and Andrae Hernandez (2-2) were each defeated by Michigan State's Jeff Wimberley in the championship bracket. Jose Escobedo pinned Greg LaCour of Edinboro in the first round before being bested by top-seeded Matt Valenti of Penn. Strychalski and Hernandez each tallied victories in the consolation bracket before being topped in their second bouts.

At 125 pounds, sophomore Wesley Fike went 1-2 on the day, taking a 4-2 decision over EU's Greg Sill. Scott Kelly and Alex Warren were downed in the opening round of the 141-pound bracket, but Kelly rallied for two wins in the consolation bracket before falling to EU's Ryan Morgan 7-3. Newcomers Ryan Pribble (1-2) and Bryan Beard (0-2) each began their collegiate careers in the 157-pound bracket, while Elijah Cook went 1-2 at 165 pounds. Cook registered his first career pin in the consolation bracket, dropping Michigan State's Jeff Ponder in 3:31.

True freshman Eric Cameron went 0-2 in his first collegiate competition in the 174-pound bracket, while classmate Jantzen Minton went 2-2 in his first outing as a Hoosier. Justin Kuhn also participated in his first college action, going 0-2 at 197 pounds. In the heavyweight division, redshirt freshman Maurice Gunn went 1-2, pinning Eastern Michigan's Brian Johnson in the consolation bracket for his lone victory.

The Hoosiers will be in action again at the Missouri Open in Columbia, Mo., on Sunday, Nov. 19.

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