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Varner Wins, ISU Wrestlers Take Second at Midlands

EVANSTON, Ill. – Iowa State finished second at the Midlands Championships for the third-straight year Wednesday evening in Welsh-Ryan Arena. The second-ranked Cyclone squad, which scored 144.5 points, capped the event by crowning Jake Varner as an individual champion at 197 pounds in the 2009 tournament's finals. Iowa's squad placed first with 168.5 and Central Michigan (118) followed with third place.

Iowa State's Varner added a second Midlands Championship to his impressive wrestling resume with a 6-1 decision of Wynn Michalak of the Chippewa Wrestling Club. Varner controlled the post-collegiate competitor by allowing only one point from an escape. The Cyclone had previously been a champion of the event as a sophomore at 184 pounds in 2007.

The 47th edition of the Midlands, hosted by Northwestern, featured over 360 individual entries from around the country. Iowa State's wrestlers amassed a 48-30 record over the two-day tournament.

Making his third-straight Midlands finals appearance at 165 pounds, ISU's Jon Reader was unable to topple top-seed Andrew Howe of Wisconsin. Reader fell to the Badger in triple-overtime, 3-1 (SV2). The defeat was Reader's first loss of the 2009-10 season, as his record drops to 11-1.

An amazing string of big wins ended for ISU redshirt freshman Andrew Long as he fell in the 125-pound final to Iowa's Matt McDonough by decision, 9-7. The Creston, Iowa native lead 5-2 after the first period but could not overcome a late barrage of takedown attempts by his opponent. Long recorded a 4-1 mark in the tournament to improve his season record to 14-2.

In the last finals match of the evening, third-seeded Cyclone heavyweight David Zabriskie fell to the upset-minded No. 8-seed, Jarod Trice of Central Michigan, 3-2. Zabriskie was unable to find a shot in the last period to take the lead on the larger Chippewa heavyweight. Zabriskie was 4-1 in his senior try at the Midlands and has an 11-1 overall mark this season.

ISU 149-pounder Mitch Mueller made the most of his fourth trip to the Midlands by notching his best finish ever. Mueller, who hails from Iowa City, Iowa wrestled to fourth place after previously placing sixth as a sophomore and a freshman. Mueller fell in the final Midlands session to Bucknell's Kevin LeValley by a score of 2-0 in the third-place match. Mueller notched a record of 5-2 in the Midlands to advance to 16-4 in his senior campaign.

Cyclone senior Nick Fanthorpe capped his fourth Midlands outing with a fifth-place finish at 133 pounds. Fanthorpe edged Iowa's Nate Moore in overtime, 2-1 (TB1). Fanthorpe recorded a 4-2 Midlands record and stands at 6-3 overall.

Senior 174-pounder Duke Burk fell in the fifth-place match to Missouri's Dorian Henderson by a score of 3-1 (SV). Burk's 3-3 mark in the tournament drops his overall record to 10-4.

Sophomore Jerome Ward clinched a seventh-place Cyclone finish at 184 pounds in the afternoon session of Midlands wrestling by receiving a medical forfeit. Ward went 4-2 in his second trip to the event.

The second-ranked Cyclones return to action with a road trip to dual No. 6 Minnesota Jan. 3 at 2 p.m. in the Sports Pavilion.

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