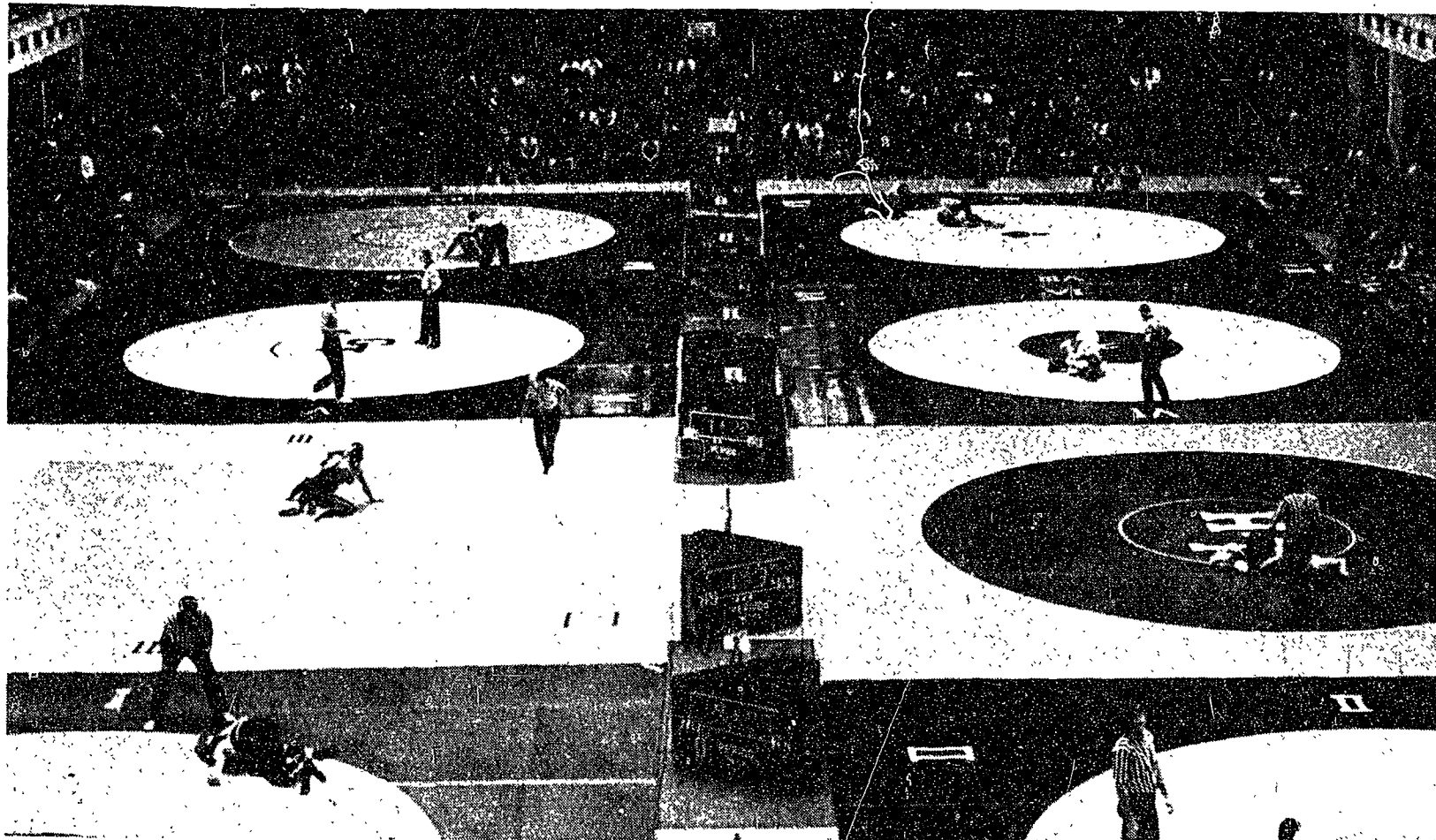


Championship Wrestling Wall-to-Wall



It Was Wrestling Wall-to-Wall as Eight Mats Were Used in Rec Hall for the Preliminary Rounds



Some Fans Took To Their Feet as the Tournament Wore On

Photography and Analysis
By Paul Levine, Sports Editor

Three Days, 464 Bouts Later, A Welcome End to the Tourney

The aches had already begun to choose their spots. They settled in the lower spinal region and crept downward through the legs. Fifteen thousand knees stiffened in protest and half as many necks squirmed from side to side.

"If you've been with us all the way," the announcer said, "you have now seen 442 wrestling bouts."

And there were more to come.

It took 382 wrestlers from 102 colleges, and more than 450 bouts, just to carry the NCAA wrestling championships into their final round. And for the fans who braved the three-day, six-session tournament last week in Rec Hall, it was a lot of "wraslin'" even for the most stout-hearted and hard-bottomed of grapple followers. It wasn't too much for everybody, however.

Heaven for Some

For those who thrive on a steady diet of wrestling from November to March, 464 bouts in three days is heaven on earth. For the horde of Oklahomans who journeyed north with their string ties, leather boots and awesome teams, it was the fulfillment of an annual dream. For the knowledgeable fans from Iowa with their flat draws, it was a joyous time of talking about "amazing Dan Gable" and two others who were to become national champions. For the NCAA and Penn State officials, however, it was a giant headache.

Penn State associate athletic director Ed Czekaj served as tournament director and had the unenviable task of trying to coordinate the activities of the athletes and coaches from over 100 colleges and universities. According to those who have been part of the collegiate wrestling scene since

the days before Princeton discovered the arm bar, Czekaj and his staff ran the best tournament ever. Although a record number of competitors and record-breaking crowds swooped into Rec Hall, most observers agreed that never before had a national tournament run so smoothly.

It had to be that way for Czekaj. He... favors regional competition began prepar-

ing for the tournament last March when he visited the championships at Kent State. For this year's tourney in Rec Hall, a crew of 400 people, including officials, timers, scorers, statisticians, runners, ushers, press aides, maintenance men and parking attendants helped make the tournament go.

But from any standpoint, the tournament was too long. Veteran sportswriters and NCAA officials agreed to that. What they didn't agree upon, however, was how to shorten an event that has traditionally taken everyone who wished to enter.

As it stands now, any college or university can send its entire team to the NCAA tournament. Even teams that compete in the college-division championships can make a brief trip into the big-time when the NCAA tourney rolls around every year. But thanks to a new NCAA rule, future wrestling tour-

naments may not be encumbered by the likes of teams from Gustavus Adolphus or Moorhead State.

"A new NCAA rule which goes into effect in September will require schools to declare whether they're competing on the university or college level," Czekaj said. "Then, for college-level wrestlers to qualify for nationals, he would have to finish in the top four at the college championships. The number of entrants for the nationals should go down appreciably."

Even without the new rule, it is doubtful that next year's wrestling championships at Provo, Utah, will draw as many competitors. Many of the numerous Eastern schools whose teams don't measure up to the Midwestern powers will be reluctant to finance a cross-country trip.

Lucky This Year

"We were lucky this year not to have 500 wrestlers in the tournament," Czekaj said. "If all the Ivy League and the other Eastern schools would have brought their entire teams, we would have had 500. There should be fewer wrestlers next year, but still I think something has got to be done to set up regional or sectional competition to qualify wrestlers for the national championships. Then we won't have coaches bringing a kid with a 1-6-2 record to the tournament."

Another who feels that the national championships could stand a little trimming is Jess Hoke, editor of the Amateur Wrestling News. Hoke, generally regarded as the country's most knowledgeable authority on collegiate wrestling, recently unveiled his formula for choosing wrestlers for the tournament. Instead of regional qualifying tournaments, Hoke would have an NCAA

committee choose 16 competitors at each of the 11 weight classes.

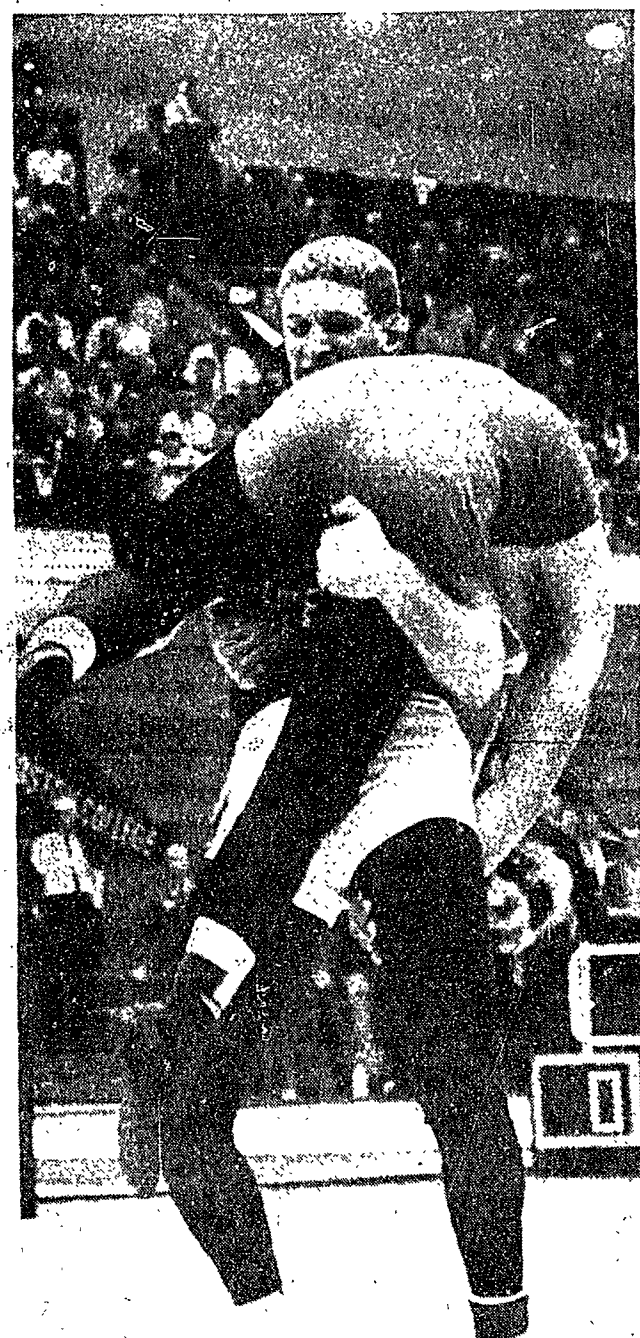
The formula provides for three of the 16 competitors to come from the powerful Big 8 conference while two would be selected from the Big 10, two from the East and so on, with three places left open for random choices. Under this plan, only 176 wrestlers would advance to the nationals. To test the plan, he personally selected 16 wrestlers in each weight class before last week's tournament.

Of the 66 place winners in the tournament, Hoke had listed 60. No champion or runner-up had been omitted in the Hoke forecast and only one third-place finisher was overlooked. One fourth place, one fifth and three sixth-place finishers were the only other medal winners which Hoke failed to mention.

"What ever the results of my predictions," Hoke said before the tournament, "it should be realized that a committee could do even better. This was only one man judging all the wrestlers in the... picked 60 of 66 winners country."

But even if Hoke had chosen every place-winner in his correct position and had pre-

(Continued on page twelve)

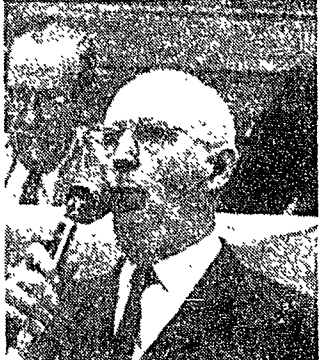


State's Rich Lorenzo Was in Fine Shape Here But Eventually Lost, 2-1, in the Semi-Finals

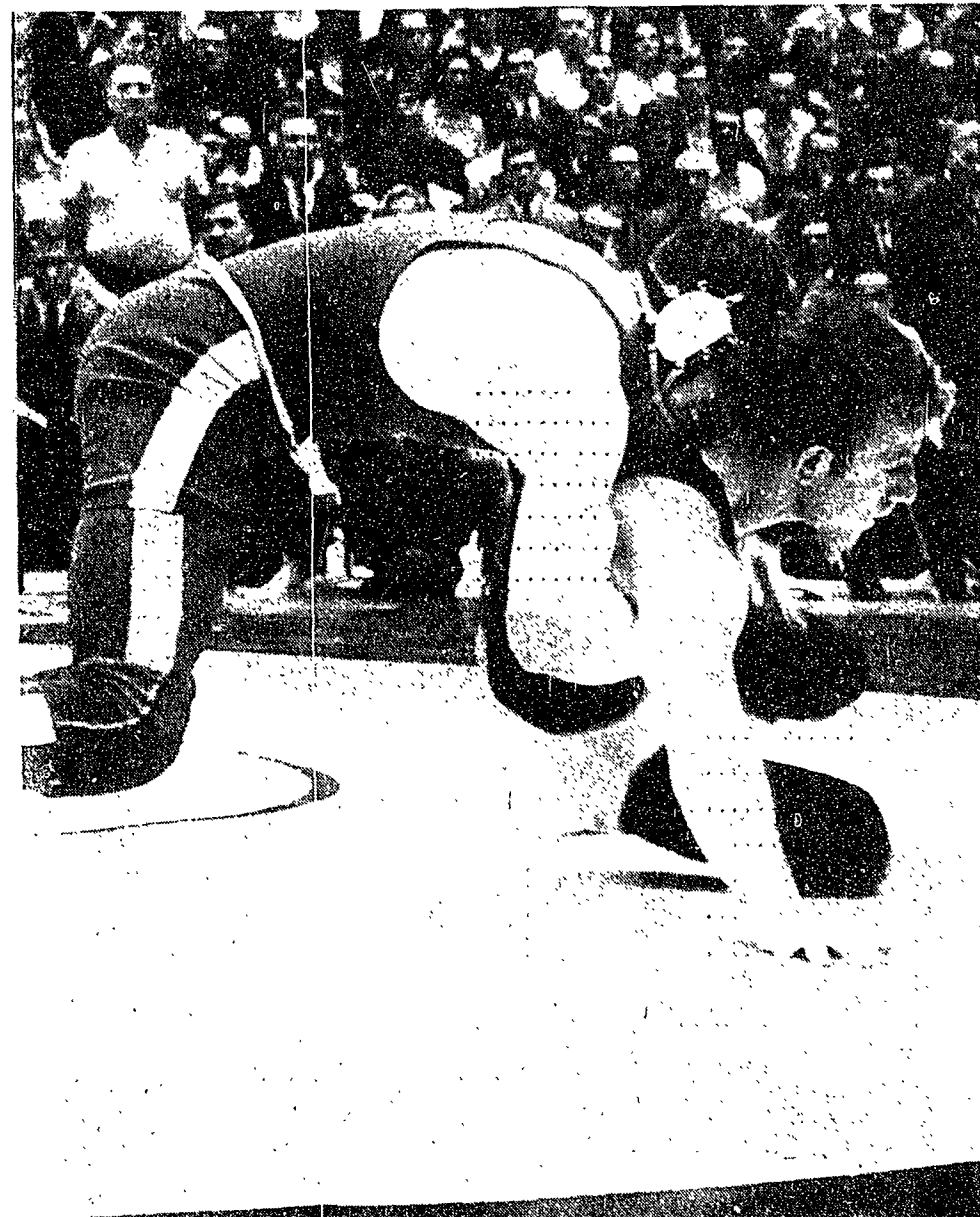


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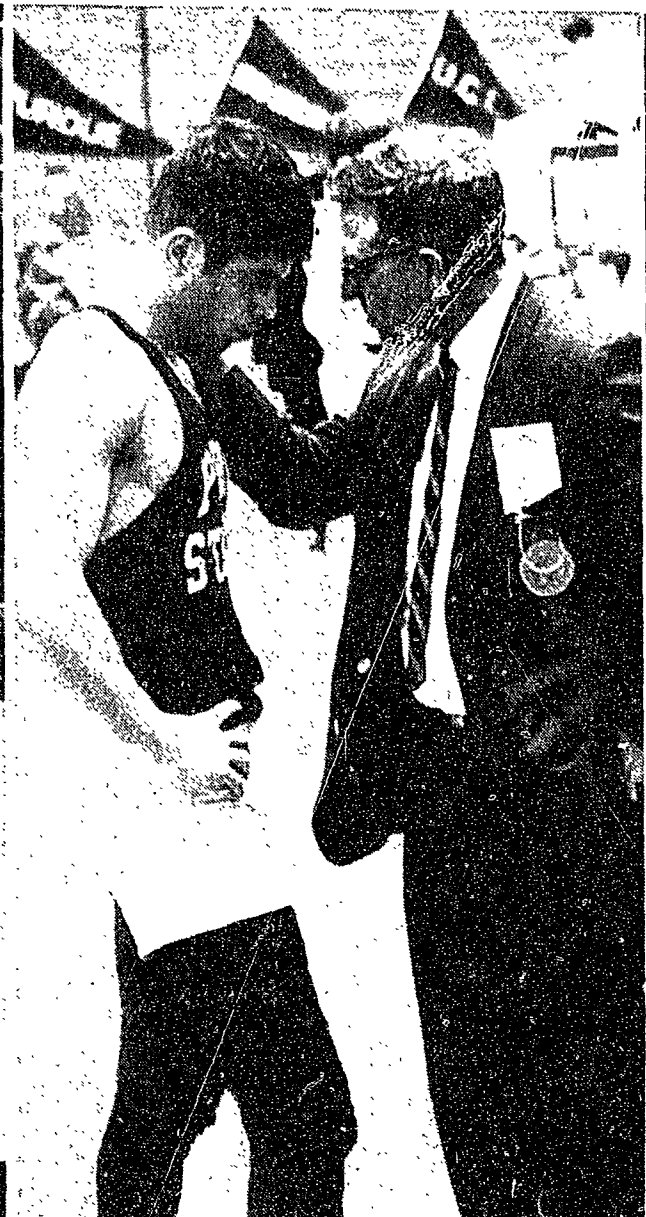
... favors regional competition



JESS HOKE



Iowa State's Reg Wicks Controls State's Matt Kline and Defeats the Lion 160-pounder, 3-2, in the Semi-Finals



'Abe' Gets a Tip from the Coach



The Tourney's Outstanding as Well as Happiest Wrestler Was Oklahoma State Sophomore Dwayne Keller Who Upset Two-Time NCAA Champion Rick Sanders At 123 Pounds