

# Big Ten prepares for monumental task: Beating Iowa

Editor's note: This is the first of two parts previewing the Big Ten wrestling championships.

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Collegian Sports Writers

With eight of the top 13 teams in the nation, the Big Ten is the premiere wrestling conference in the nation.

On March 9 and 10, it will be decided which team rules the conference when the Big Ten Championships are held in East Lansing, Mich.

Last year, as in the past 22 years, the Iowa Hawkeyes took the Big Ten crown, and the consensus belief is that coach Dan Gable's squad will once again reign supreme.

"It should be pretty good competition for all of the other teams," said Indiana coach Duane Goldman. "I think all of the other teams are looking for some good individual performances."

Each of the 11 conference teams has a home in the Amateur Wrestling News Top 25. Now, a look at each of the competitors.



**Dan Gable**  
legendary Hawkeye coach

■ **No. 1 Iowa Hawkeyes** — With three top-ranked and two second-ranked wrestlers, the Hawkeyes are far and away the deepest, most talented team in the nation, none the less the Big Ten. Mike Mena (118), Jeffrey McGinness (126), and Mark Ironside (134) are all set to

defend their Big Ten titles, and Bill Zadick (142) and Joe Williams (158) also are top contenders.

■ **No. 4 Michigan State Spartans** — Michigan State (15-5) finished the Big Ten season at 8-3, and will have one last warm-up match against Oklahoma on March 2. The Spartans possess five top 10 wrestlers in David Morgan (118), Phil Judge (142), Joel Morissette (167), Erich Harvey (177) and Brian Picklo (190).

■ **No. 8 Minnesota Golden Gophers** — Minnesota broke a six-month losing streak with a 23-10 decision over Ohio State to finish 10-8-1 on the year, and 2-5 in the Big Ten. The Gophers are led by top-ranked Billy Pierce (Hwt), as well as No. 6 Jason Davids (142), No. 7 Gerald Carr (167) and No. 9 Chad Kraft (150).

"I think we can do pretty good," said coach J Robinson, whose team finished third at Big Tens last year. "We're pretty young, but I think that everyone is in the same boat."

■ **No. 9 Indiana Hoosiers** — The Hoosiers capped off a solid season, which saw them go 16-2, with a Feb. 25 win at Michigan State. Their only Big Ten loss came earli-

er in the day versus Michigan.

They feature 1995 All-American Roger Chandler (142), currently ranked behind Penn State's John Hughes and Iowa's Zadick, as well as fifth-ranked Andy Trevino (150).

"We have a couple of holes, but we have some individuals who have had good years," Goldman said.

■ **No. 10 Illinois Fighting Illini** — The Illini's strength is in their higher weights, as they have ranked wrestlers in every weight from 158 to heavyweight. No. 5 Ernest Benion (158), No. 8 Eric Siebert (150) and Seth Brady (Hwt) represent Illinois' best chances for a title. Illinois finished the year 11-6 overall and 5-5 in the Big Ten.

■ **No. 11 Wisconsin Badgers** — The Badgers back into the tournament following three straight Big Ten losses to close out the season. Overall, the team wrestled to a 10-5 record but had trouble in the conference, finishing at 3-5.

The Badgers feature the wrestling exploits of No. 4 Eric Jetton (126), No. 6 Kevin Wilmot (167) and No. 6 Jeff Walter (Hwt).

■ **No. 13 Michigan Wolverines** — The Wolverines finished out the year on a roll, winning six straight



**Erich Harvey**  
favorite at 177 pounds

duals, including wins over Indiana and Minnesota.

Leading the way for Michigan are No. 3 Jeff Catrabone (158) and No. 10 Bill Lacure (150). Harrisburg's Jesse Rawls, Jr. is ranked No. 5 at 177. Heavyweight Airon Richardson is No. 7.

"I'm happy the season is over so we can concentrate on Big Tens," coach Dale Bahr said.

■ **No. 18 Northwestern Wildcats** — The 8-5-1 Wildcats are led by No. 9 Scott Schatzman (126), No. 7 Tony Pariano (134), No. 6 Mark Bybee (158) and No. 4 Rohan Gardner (177). Northwestern has a few big conference wins over Minnesota, Wisconsin and Penn State.

■ **No. 19 Ohio State Buckeyes** — Buckeyes coach Russ Hellickson believes that his wrestlers have been underachievers at times, adding that the talent is there, but the effort has not been.

One consistent performer has been No. 4 Eric Smith (158), who finished fourth last year at Big Tens. Other top wrestlers include No. 6 Charlie Becks (150) and No. 13 Shawn Conyers (118).

■ **No. 24 Purdue Boilermakers** — The Boilermakers finished at the bottom of the Big Ten with a 0-7-1 record. But their national ranking is a testament to the power of the conference. Purdue has three wrestlers in the top 10 at their respective weights — Tim Dornier (118), Frank Laccone (134) and Tony Vaughn (Hwt).

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### Services

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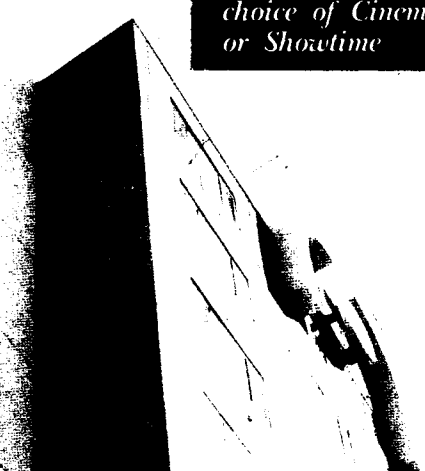
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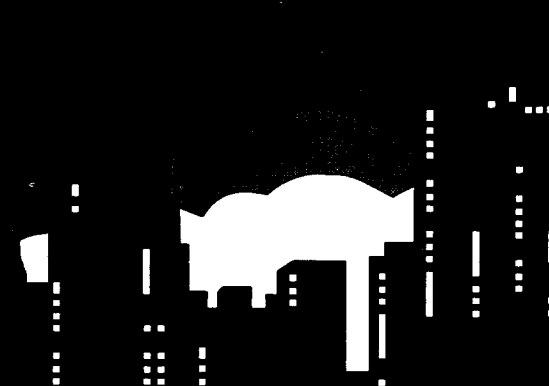
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