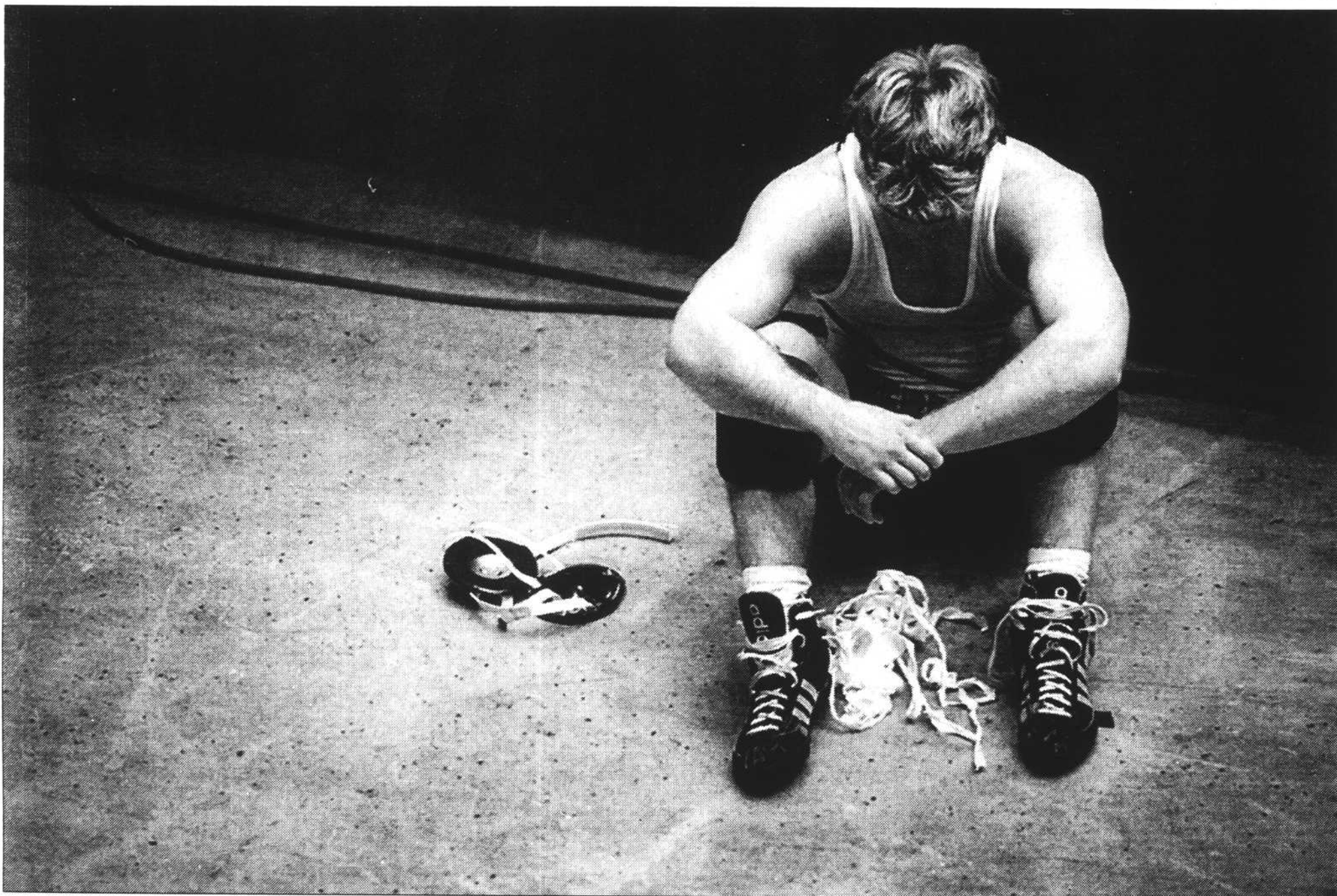
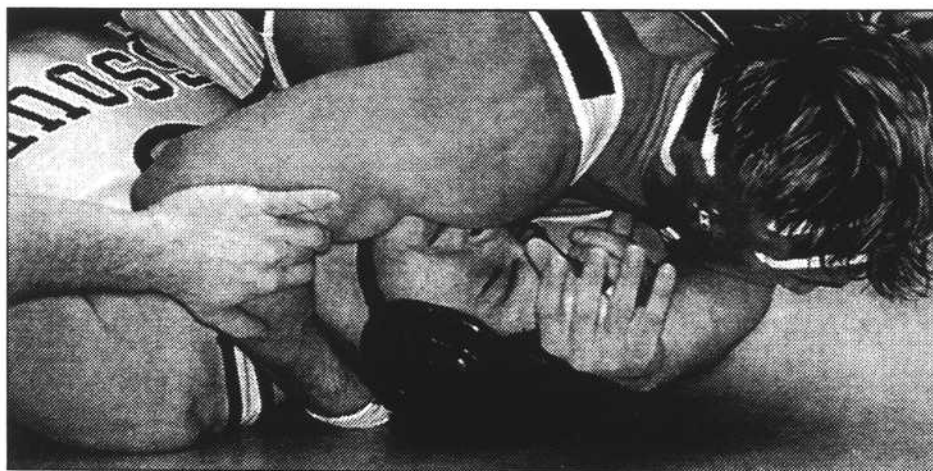


Championship Weekend

WRESTLING WITH ADVERSITY



Snyder upsets foes for conference title

By LISA VONNAHME
Staff writer

AMES, Iowa - Bryan Snyder did it again.

He put on his costume and acted older and more experienced than most 19-year-old college freshmen.

Playing the role of a senior, the native of Easton, Pa., carried the Nebraska wrestling team on his back Saturday after being crowned NU's lone Big 12 Conference champion at Iowa State's Hilton Coliseum.

And as Snyder's medal was hung around his neck, his smile showed it would be a day he would remember for the rest of his life.

Not only because he clenched his first league crown, but because the freshman earned his 157-pound title with the respect of a fifth-year competitor.

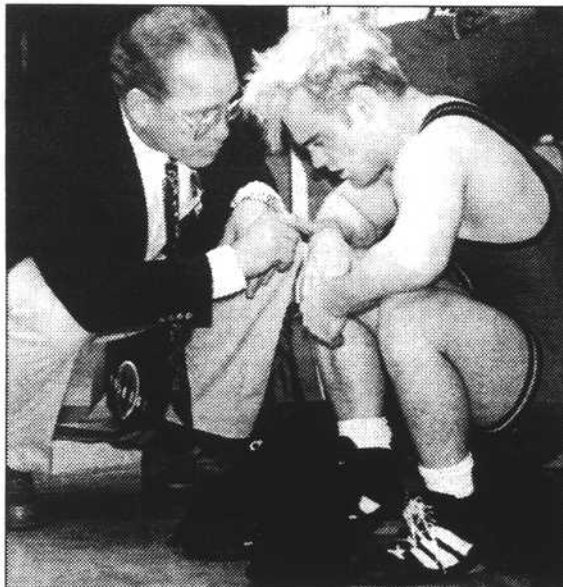
Wrestling against three of the top 157-pounders in the country - fifth-year seniors David Maldonado of ISU, Jimmy Arias of Oklahoma State and Oklahoma's highly recruited David

Kjeldgaard - Snyder made his way into the tournament finals competing with separated cartilage in his ribs, an injury he suffered during practice last week.

"A freshman won a Big 12 Championship - that's awesome," NU Coach Tim Neumann said. "He won the championship with superstars at his weight class. Snyder wrestled great, and he wasn't even 100 percent."

Apparently, he wasn't the only one. Fifth-ranked OU surprised the conference Saturday when the Sooners defeated top-ranked and heavily-favored OSU 82.5-76 for Oklahoma's first league crown since 1986. Iowa State finished third with 64, while Nebraska scored a disappointing 57.5 for fourth. Missouri was fifth with six points.

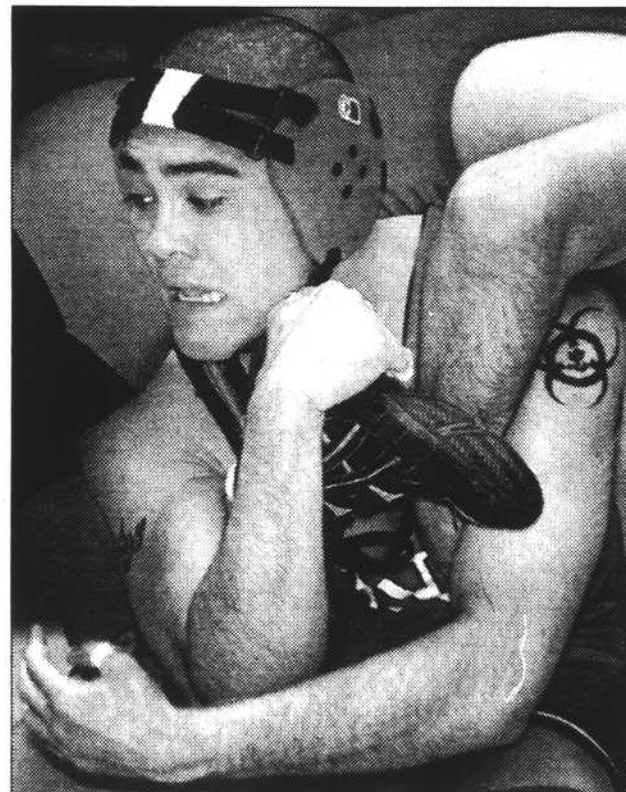
For Snyder, the day was bitter-sweet. Capturing his individual title gave him an automatic spot and probable No. 5 seed at the NCAA Championships in State College, Pa., on March 18-20.



RYAN SODERLIN/DN
ABOVE: NU COACH TIM Neumann encourages and instructs freshman Joe Henson during the Big 12 Wrestling Championship held in Ames, Iowa, on Saturday. Henson finished the day in fourth place.

CENTER: NU JUNIOR PAUL Gomez mentally prepares before competing in the first round of consolations at the Big 12 Wrestling Championship at Ames, Iowa.

TOP RIGHT: NU SOPHOMORE SCOTT Munson goes for the pin against Missouri's Kevin Herron. Munson beat Herron 13-4 and finished the day in third place.



RYAN SODERLIN/DN
NU JUNIOR PAUL Gomez takes down ISU's Jesse West. Gomez beat West 6-2 and finished third in the tournament.

Please see SNYDER on 16