

NAIA

Lights Leave Foes in the Dark on way to Crown

By Lee Vernoy
Photos Jim Potter

Finally, it can be said: the Montana State University-Northern Lights are kings of the wrestling world, at least in the eyes of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.

The Lights, bolstered by five individual champions, held off Menlo College to win the 47th Annual NAIA National Wrestling Championship as the tournament ended its three-year run on Swarthout Fieldhouse, Great Falls, Montana.

Northern, which held a 28 point advantage following the championship round semifinals, was helped by Menlo's failure to take advantage of having more

wrestlers in the consolation rounds than the Lights. The Oaks, who hail from Atherton, Calif., came out of Saturday morning's semifinals with two wrestlers in the championship finals but had eight wrestling through "the backdoor" of the consolation round, where wrestlers can amass a lot of team points in a very short time.

2004 NAIA Team Standings

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------|------|--------------------|
| 169.5 | MSU-Northern | 39.5 | Mary ND |
| 133.5 | Menlo CA | 38.5 | Dickinson State ND |
| 116 | Missouri Valley | 32.0 | Missouri Baptist |
| 97.5 | Southern Oregon | 30.0 | McKendree IL |
| 96.5 | Lindenwood MO | 27.5 | Waldorf IA |
| 91.5 | Dana NE | 27.0 | Jamestown ND |
| 76.5 | Cumberland KY | 15.5 | Dakota Wesleyan SD |
| 57.5 | Embry-Riddle AZ | 12.5 | Cumberland TN |
| 55.5 | William Penn IA | 11.0 | Briar Cliff IA |
| 47.5 | Simon Fraser BC | 5.0 | Si Tanka-SD |
| 40.5 | Bacone OK | 4.0 | Northwestern IA |

The Lights, however, had six grapplers going for championships and two in the