

DIVISION I NCAA

Oklahoma State Lays Claim to 32nd Title

Photos by G. Wyatt Schultz

Oklahoma State ended the suspense early, rolling to a 41 1/2 point lead before the championship round and then joining nine other schools in claiming individual crowns at the Division I Wrestling Championships March 18-20 in St. Louis. Chris Pendleton claimed the Cowboys' only individual title with his victory at 174 pounds, but Oklahoma State also claimed points from two runners-up, two consolation-bracket winners, and a fifth and seventh-place finish to roll-up 123 1/2 points and finish comfortably ahead of second-place Iowa's 82 points.

The team title is the Cowboys' second straight and 32nd overall - the most by any team in any NCAA sport.

Oklahoma State grabbed the lead early, stretching that margin from six points after the quarterfinals to 36 1/2 points after the main-bracket semifinals.

Two defending individual champions - two-time titlist Johnny Thompson at 133 pounds and Jake Rosholt at 184, fell short in bids to repeat but extended the Cowboys' team lead further by winning the consolation brackets in their weights.

The Cowboys placed three wrestlers in main-bracket championship matches, but top-seeded Tyrone Lewis lost a 5-2 match in the 165-pound class to Lehigh's Troy Utters, a runner-up at last year's tournament. Earlier, Oklahoma State's Zack Esposito lost a 9-3 decision at 149 pounds to Jesse Jantzen, who claimed Harvard's first individual title at the championships since 1938 and earned honors as the tournament's most outstanding wrestler.

Only one champion from last year's tournament successfully defended his crown, when Minnesota's Damien Hahn repeated at 197 pounds with a victory over Ryan Fulsaa, one of two

2004 NCAA Division I Team Scores

123.5	Oklahoma State
82.0	Iowa
77.5	Lehigh
77.5	Ohio State
74.0	Nebraska
70.0	Iowa State
69.5	Illinois
65.5	Minnesota
62.5	Oklahoma
60.5	Michigan
51.5	Cornell
46.5	Penn State
43.0	Missouri
34.0	Pennsylvania
33.5	Central Mich