



By Bo Rader—Evening Sun Staff

**Pat Boyd of Notre Dame gets the upper hand on Maryland's R.C. Papa who lost 8-3 in the 142-pound division.**

# Middie aims to take hold of NCAA prize

**By Doug Brown**  
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COLLEGE PARK — Scott Schleicher is only a few takedowns away from joining the greats of Naval Academy wrestling.

As the 60th annual NCAA championships opened yesterday, Schleicher, seeded third at 158 pounds, sailed by his first two opponents, decisioning Northern Iowa's Jamie Byrne, 13-6, and Penn State's John Yankanich, 5-3.

Schleicher, a senior from Allentown, Pa., is Navy's best bet for an NCAA title since John Reich in the early 1980s. But even Reich, the academy's career leader in wins with 119, didn't take an NCAA crown. The only Middies who did were Pete Blair, who captured the 191 title in 1954 and '55, and Dan Muthler, the 142-pound champ in 1973.

"My chances are pretty good," Schleicher said. "I think I can win. I came prepared to."

Had it not been for a 3-2 loss to Army's Nick Mauldin in the Eastern Championships, Schleicher probably would be seeded No. 1. He was ranked No. 1 all season, but now finds Oklahoma State's Pat Smith and Iowa State's Steve Hamilton seeded ahead of him. Smith, a freshman, is the brother of NCAA and Olympic champion John Smith.

"The loss to Mauldin cost Scott the No. 1 seed, no question," said Navy assistant coach Wayne Hicks. "As for Pat Smith, I think the seeding people were influenced by name association — you know, Pat Smith, John Smith."

Schleicher, who had beaten Mauldin twice previously, dismisses the defeat as simply "a bad match."

"Mauldin stalled on his feet, but the ref never penalized him," said Middies head coach Reg Wicks. "Of course, Scott wasn't shooting for his legs like he should have."

"It was my fault he stalled," Schleicher said. "I wasn't creating action."

Schleicher's record is 30-3-1, the lone defeats administered by Mauldin, Oregon State's Trent Flack (when Schleicher was ill but didn't tell Wicks) and Arizona State's Dan St. John.

St. John, who won at 158 pounds last year, is seeded No. 1 at 167 here. For the Navy-Arizona State dual meet, Schleicher moved up to 167

just to try on St. John for size. He lost, 2-1.

"Scott did it for the challenge," Wicks said. "St. John is the best kid in the U.S. We knew Scott could stay with him. It was probably the best match St. John had all year."

"It let me know what I needed to work on," Schleicher said. "I lost on a stalling call. I found I had to work harder to create more action."

Schleicher has progressed steadily up the NCAA ladder since his plebe season. He was eliminated in the first round as a freshman, then stunned No. 2 seed Vince Silva of Oklahoma State only to bow out in a later round as a sophomore and finished No. 3 last year. He was bumped in the semifinals by Michigan's Joe Tantaleo, who lost to St. John in the final.

Schleicher's specialty is the takedown. In his victory over Byrne, for example, he compiled 12 of his 13 points on takedowns.

"He came to us as a ready-made takedown artist," Wicks said.

"Since I was a little kid, I was good on my feet," Schleicher said. "It came naturally. I'm not much of a pinner. I let a guy up and then take him down, over and over, to build a cushion."

Coming out of high school in Allentown, Schleicher could have gone to Lehigh, Penn State or even Oklahoma State. He chose Navy largely because his brother, Don, a Middie wrestling captain and 1984 graduate, found the academy to his liking. He also liked what he saw of then-head coach Ed Peery and Wicks.

"I love the staff," Schleicher said. "Peery retired after my freshman year, but Coach Wicks took over and we haven't missed a beat."

In today's quarterfinals, Schleicher was to meet No. 6 seed Jim Pearson of Indiana. Schleicher and Morgan State's Chauncy Wynn were the only two locals who got through the first two rounds unscathed.

No. 8 seed Wynn, a senior from Flint, Mich., defeated Oregon State's Steve Lander, 13-3, and Fresno State's Wade Zimmerman, 6-5. He was paired with the top-seeded Smith today.

"I'm the guy in the weight class to be looked out for — the dark horse," Wynn said.

The semifinals are tonight, and the champions will be crowned tomorrow evening.