

Iowa wrestles to NCAA national championship

Minnesota places 2nd for highest finish ever ★

CLEVELAND (AP) — Joe Williams captured his third title and teammates Mark Ironside and Jeff McGinness each took their second as Iowa captured its fourth straight team title at the NCAA Division I wrestling championships Saturday.

The title was Iowa's 18th since 1975, including seven of the last eight. But it was the first under acting head coach Jim Zalesky, who took over when the legendary Dan Gable took a one-year leave after hip replacement surgery.

"This proved that Iowa wrestling isn't just Dan Gable," Ironside said. "It's an attitude."

Iowa totaled 115 points, with Minnesota posting its highest finish ever with 102 points in second. Oklahoma State was third with 99 1/2 points and Penn State fourth with 70 1/2.

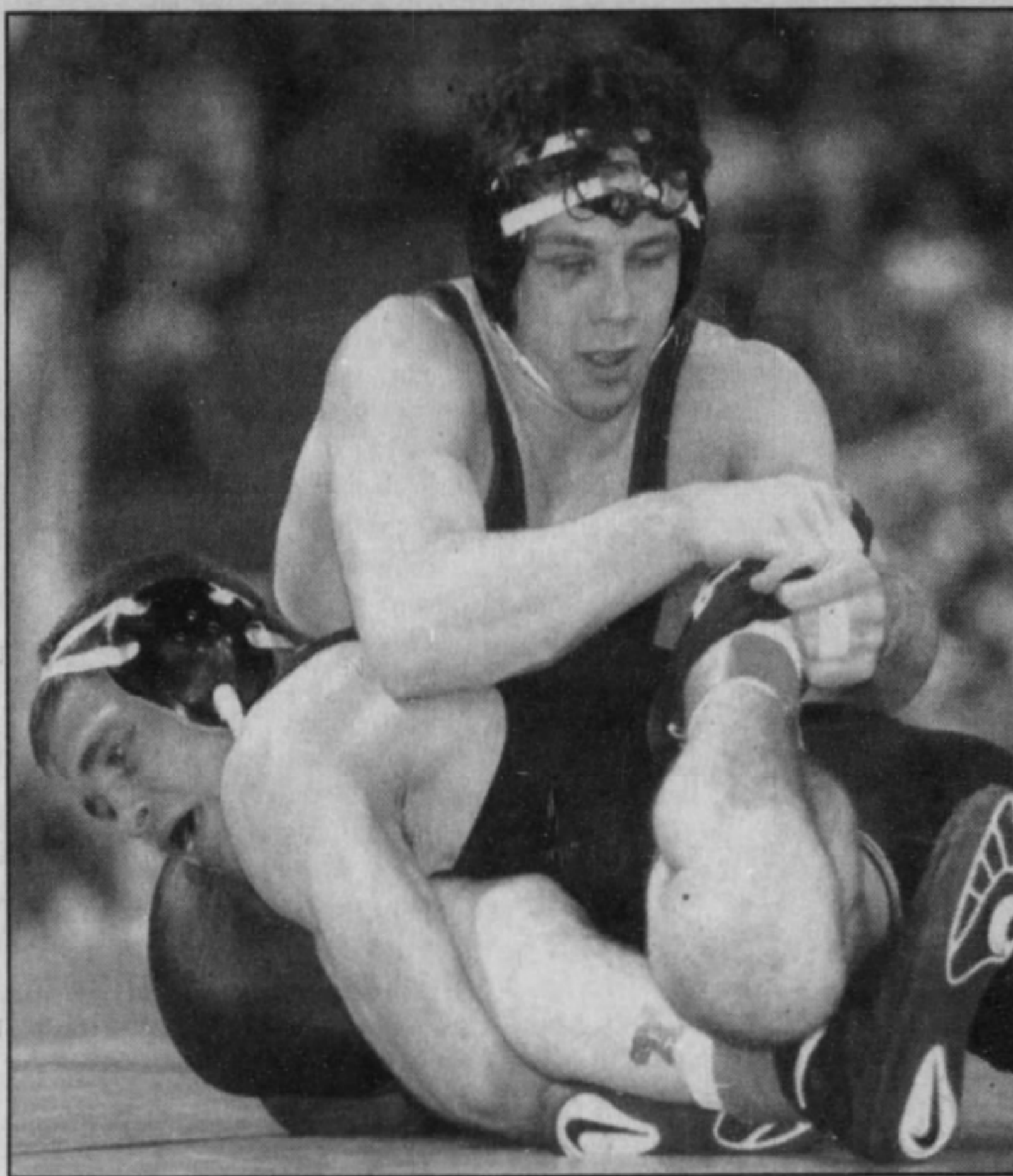
"This takes the pressure off Jimmy," said Williams, selected as the meet's outstanding wrestler. "He's just like coach Gable. He's always there — even sometimes when you don't want him to be."

Zalesky said, "Boy, this is a tough job. I might even consider retiring."

It was also a banner night for Ohio.

Dwight Gardner upset Oklahoma State's Hardell Moore at 158 to become Ohio University's first champion in 20 years and Ohio State's Mitch Clark, a former walk-on, won at 177 with a dominating 17-0 technical fall in one period.

Iowa went into the finals with a narrow 103-98 lead over Minnesota. But with three former champs in the finals, the Hawkeyes had the



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LEG WORK — Ohio's Shawn Enright, top, gets a leg up on Iowa's Mark Ironside in the 134-pound NCAA Division I wrestling championship Saturday in Cleveland. Ironside won the match 9-3, helping the Hawkeyes to their fourth straight NCAA wrestling title.

experience to pull away.

Back-to-back narrow decisions by Ironside at 134 — his 67th straight victory — and McGinness at 142 sealed the outcome. Williams added the icing with a decision at 167 for his 39th victory in a row.

Over the years, Iowa has done what was needed in the finals. The 68th tournament was no different than many of the others over the last two decades.

With both Minnesota and Oklahoma State both within striking distance in team points, Ironside captured his second straight 134 title. He never trailed after a takedown 2 minutes into the match. The

9-3 victory ended his college career on a 67-match winning streak.

The very next match, McGinness's takedown against Central Michigan's Casey Cunningham with 10 seconds left was the difference in a 3-1 victory. McGinness had won the 126 title three years ago, qualified but did not place in 1996 and redshirted last season.

Williams led all the way after a takedown 30 seconds into his match with Penn's Brandon Slay and finished with a 7-4 decision. The four-time All-American ended his senior season with a 34-0 mark.

Gardner's upset of the top-seed-

ed Moore was the first national championship ever for an Ohio University wrestler.

Clark ran his record to 77-6 the last two years and made up for a second-place last year in overpowering West Virginia's Vertus Jones.

Top-ranked Oklahoma State started the finals by winning the first two weight classes with upsets of the top seeds.

Teague Moore posted a rare defensive fall to hand David Morgan of Michigan State his first loss of the season after 44 wins. The pin in 4:50 came with no points called and with neither in control in the neutral position — but Morgan still ended up with his shoulders on the mat.

"To tell you the truth, I heard the whistle and the slap of the mat, but I didn't know for a second if they were just calling a stalemate and were going to bring us back up," Moore said. "But then the ref said it's over and I figured out what that meant."

Teammate Eric Guerrero came right back to stun Eric Jetton of Wisconsin, 5-4, for his second straight title at 126.

Other champions included Illinois' Eric Siebert, who ran his record to 36-0 with a 7-3 decision over Minnesota's Chad Kraft at 150; Minnesota's Tim Hartung with a stunning upset of unbeaten and top-seeded Jason Robison of Edinboro with a takedown at 1:18 of overtime; and Cal State-Bakersfield's Stephen Neal, who capped a 36-0 season with 20-5 major decision over 11th-seeded longshot Trent Hynek of Iowa State.

At about the same time as Guerrero was winning, the NCAA deducted two team points from the Cowboys for unsportsmanlike conduct. After a disputed consolation match loss, 167-pounder Mark Smith made gestures to the crowd and coach John Smith confronted a referee.