

Gopher coach backs Hawk brother

UI's Schwab's
NCAA title blurs
team boundaries

By Bryce Miller
The Press-Citizen

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — No matter what the score, what the situation, what the conflicting dreams, Minnesota assistant coach Mark Schwab could not do anything but root for an Iowa wrestler Saturday night at the Bryce Jordan Center.

No matter that it meant the Hawkeyes would vault past the Gophers and jeopardize Minnesota's chance at an NCAA team title.

Few could blame Schwab, though. When the 141-pound championship was being decided, he was firmly in the corner of his brother, Hawkeye Doug Schwab.

"The guy's my brother. I do want him to win," said Mark Schwab, a four-time state champ at Osage and all-American at Northern Iowa, now in his third season as a full-time Gopher assistant. "I think people would think I'm nuts if I wouldn't want my brother to win."

"Us winning isn't about other people losing anyway. It's about our guys doing what they need to do."

And Doug Schwab didn't lose.

The sophomore completed a take-down with 20 seconds left to beat Oklahoma's Michael Lightner 4-2 for the title.

When the match ended, Schwab celebrated with Iowa's mat-side coaches before jumping into the arms of Mark, who was waiting as discreetly as he could in the wings.

"It's not weird, because we're real close," Doug said of the Minnesota-Iowa connection between he and his brother. "He's going to support me 100 percent, no matter what. I think they (Minnesota) understand, though. Brothers — that's family. You've got



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Iowa's Ben Uker, Eric Juergens and Doug Schwab (from left) look over the team trophy after it was awarded to the Hawkeyes Saturday night at the NCAA wrestling championships in State College, Pa. Iowa edged Minnesota by two points.

to respect that."

In another ironic twist, the only class Minnesota did not qualify a wrestler in was 141. So coach Schwab never was put in the position of watching his brother compete against one of the Gopher entrants.

That opened the door to watching the wrestling Schwab on the mat,

without any potential guilt.

"I have a hard time squashing that down and not getting a little bit of emotion going," Mark Schwab said.

During the season, Mark Schwab said he and his brother never talked about Iowa or Minnesota.

Conversations centered around Doug's progress or topics such as

music, a common interest the two share.

"It's a friendship, it isn't just about wrestling," Mark Schwab said. "We connect on a lot of other levels, too."

Saturday night, Mark saw his brother reach college wrestling's ultimate pinnacle.

And for the Minnesota coach, that

was more than OK.

"It's kind of hard to believe," he said. "You grow up and you read about these guys (national champs) and they're your heroes. Now, to have a younger brother in the NCAA finals as a sophomore.

"I'm damn proud of him."