

SMSU WRESTLING

One more time

Looking to close out their careers in style, SMSU's Cortez Arredondo and Griffin Osing will be doing so on the grandest stage by competing in the National Championships



Independent file photos

Left: SMSU's Griffin Osing sizes up his Minot State University opponent during their Feb. 3, 2018 dual.
Right: SMSU's Cortez Arredondo fights for control with his Northern State University opponent during their Jan. 19, 2018 match.

By Sam Thiel
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MARSHALL — Last year, Cortez Arredondo was the lone representative for the Southwest Minnesota State University wrestling team at the NCAA Division II National Championships. While his teammates and family members went to cheer him on, Arredondo knew he wanted to return to that national stage with possibly more of his Mustang

brothers in his final go-around. This weekend, he won't be the only one there. Arredondo's teammate and fellow senior Griffin Osing will also look to close out his career on a high note, as the two Mustang wrestlers will be representing SMSU on the national stage by competing in this year's championships in Cleveland, Ohio. Arredondo said it's a special feeling to be able to close out their careers at the national tournament

and is excited to have Osing competing alongside him. "It's really special, not many people get to obviously participate in this national tournament. In this sport, nothing is given and everything's earned, so that's something that's near and dear to my heart," Arredondo said. "I feel just going down there and wrestling with Griffin, it'll be exciting; last year I was wrestling by myself, but I had a ton of teammates and family out there. Now traveling to

Cleveland with another teammate and more family, it's just going to be awesome." Osing added it's an honor to be able to represent SMSU at one of the biggest tournaments in the nation and show that they can compete amongst the best. "It's awesome. Little D-II school in Southwest part of Minnesota, we get overlooked a lot,"

SMSU WR PAGE 3B

SMSU SOFTBALL

SMSU ready for spring break games in Florida

MARSHALL — The Southwest Minnesota State prepares for a spring break trip to Florida for four non-conference double headers. •SMSU's competition includes Rollings (FL) on Sunday at 6 p.m., Florida Tech on Monday at 2 p.m., Tampa (FL), on Tuesday at 3 p.m., and finishing with Eckerd (FL) on March 13 at 5 p.m. •All games are to be played at the opposing teams home field. •SMSU opened the season going 4-0 at the Dragon/Beaver battle facing four conference opponents for non-conference games. •SMSU will open conference play on Tuesday, March 26 hosting Sioux Falls. •All game times are Central.

Game coverage

•Live stats will be available for fans at smsumus-tangs.com.
•Updates can also be found by following @SMSUSoftball on Twitter.

Previewing the Mustangs

•SMSU continues the 2019 season coming off of a 4-0 start at the West St. Paul Dome on Feb. 12-13 against conference opponents for non-conferences games.
•Senior pitcher Athena Golling and sophomore outfielder Bailey Johnson

SMSU SB PAGE 2B

NBA

Drummond has 31 and 15 as surging Pistons top Wolves

DETROIT (AP) — All too often this season, the Detroit Pistons' offense has devolved into throwing Blake Griffin the ball and watching whatever happens. Griffin was happy to see his teammates doing the heavy lifting Wednesday.

On a night when the star forward scored nine points on 4-of-13 shooting, the Pistons got 70 bench points and 31 more from Andre Drummond in a 131-114 win over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Wolves PAGE 2B



AP photo

Detroit Pistons center Andre Drummond looks for room around Minnesota Timberwolves forward Taj Gibson (67) during the first half of an NBA game Wednesday.

BEYOND THE SPORTS DESK

Creating Mustangs for life

MARSHALL — There's a hashtag that's frequently used by fans of the Southwest Minnesota State University athletic programs: #M4L.

It stands for Mustangs for life, and it often symbolizes how folks will still identify as Mustangs long after graduating and leaving the SMSU campus.

Probably no one embodies the M4L mantra as much as men's basketball coach Brad Bigler. After a five-season career as a player on the team (1997-02), Bigler first began his SMSU coaching career as a graduate assistant in the 2003-04 season. After two years as a GA, he became a full-time assistant prior to the 2005-06 season and would be promoted to associate head coach and recruiting coordinator a season later. After former SMSU coach Greg Stemen resigned to take a job outside of coaching, Bigler spent a year as interim head coach before being named the permanent head coach on April 8, 2010.

Stemen said during the NSIC Tournament that Brad

Bigler is the face of SMSU basketball.

"In his time at Southwest and looking at their winning percentage in the men's basketball program — he is the common denominator for that success," Stemen said on Sunday.

The numbers bear that out, as well. When Bigler joined the program in 1997, SMSU men's basketball had an all-time record of 273-516 (.346 winning percentage) in its 30-year history. In the 22 seasons since Bigler first joined the program, the Mustangs have a record of 398-260 (.605).

Bigler is the face of SMSU men's basketball not just for what he's done on the court, but off the court, as well. That was his goal from the outset, as he said in a press release upon being named the permanent coach in 2010.

"I look forward to the challenge of bringing quality people to SMSU and building on the traditions set before us," Bigler said in that 2010 press release. "This program is more than just wins and losses. I want this program to make a positive impact on the Marshall community. These young

M4L PAGE 2B



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SPORTS WRITER



Independent file photo

SMSU's Brad Bigler calls out a play during their game against Winona State University on Dec. 2, 2017.

Lyon County Pheasants Forever

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