

Hi-Line Coaches Profile: Tyson Thivierge

Thivierge making proud progress in MSU-N's wrestling program

George Ferguson

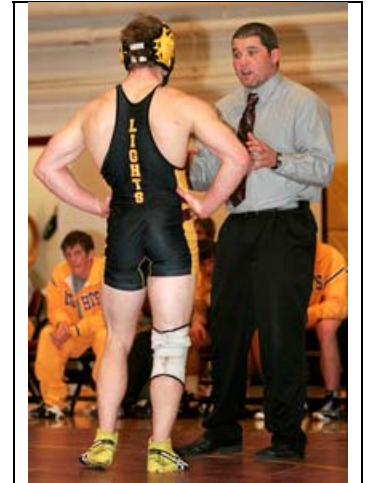
Wednesday, February 8th, 2012

Tyson Thivierge knows what it takes to build a successful wrestling program. After all, Thivierge was a four-time NAIA All-American and a national champion during his days a Lights' wrestler.

And he came back to Havre almost five years ago hoping to build the Lights back into that same type of program – a program that flourished when he dominating on the mat under then head coach David Ray. But Thivierge also admits, he wanted the process to go faster when he first returned to Havre as head coach four seasons ago. Now he says, he understands how the process works, how it takes time to play itself and just how much work goes into returning the Lights to the national championship stage.

And while he says it's taken some time, he also feels his Lights are getting there. Through recruiting, through a great fan base and through performance on the mat, Thivierge has the Lights going in the exact direction he envisioned when he took the job.

Here's five questions with Northern's head wrestling coach as his team prepares for a highly-anticipated reach with the UGF Argos tonight.



MSU-Northern head coach Tyson Thivierge (right) gives instructions during a recent NAIA wrestling dual in Havre. Thivierge is in his fourth season at Northern, where he once was a four-time all-American and a national champion.

HDN: I know it's been a trying season. How have you felt it's gone to this point?

Thivierge: "We've had injuries, we've had ups and downs, but you're always going to have those. I think those injuries and things this year have made us stronger. This team really knows how to persevere, and all those highs and lows have really helped to unify us. This is a strong team, both mentally and physically right now."

HDN: The national tournament is getting close. Are the Lights a contender?

Thivierge: "I've never wavered on that. I thought at the beginning of year and still do thing we can contend for a national title. We have 11 really solid wrestlers going to the national tournament. We are going to need six to eight of them to be all-american and I truly believe they can do it. They just have to focus on the task at hand, which is being ready to wrestle on match at a time for all three days."

HDN: How do you feel the overall progress of the program has been in your time here?"

Thivierge: "It's been testing at times. I came in here and thought I could conquer the world in two years. But I understand reality better now. I understand it's a long process. It takes time to build a program. It takes time to get all the right kids in place. This is a society of instant gratification and I understand that. But believe me, no one has higher expectations for this program than I do, and I think we're getting there. I think we're building something very special here and our future looks really good."

HDN: The rivalry with UGF is something you never experienced as a wrestler. What has it been like?

Thivierge: "It's been great for both programs. I think it brings out the best in all of us. I've always said that about rivalries. It's exciting when we wrestle them (Argos) and I know they feel the same way. It's special and it's something I wish I would have had when I was wrestling here."

HDN: Outside of coaching, how has it been being back in Havre?

Thivierge: "It's been an absolute blast. When my wife and I were students here, we always talked about wanting to be back. To end up here. There's no better place for our kids. They love it here. There are so many things that attracted us to coming back. The community is amazing, the support you get here is second to none. We couldn't be more happy here. We love the community support, we love this program and we love this university."