

# Big Eight meet to be close

By Patty Pryor

This weekend's Big Eight men's gymnastics championships will be one of the most competitive conference meets in years, Nebraska Coach Francis Allen said.

The Huskers take on Oklahoma and Iowa State in Norman, Okla., Friday and Saturday.

The three teams have shared victories this season, with Nebraska winning the Big Eight Invitational here in November, Iowa State winning a Jan. 22 triangular here and Oklahoma winning a Feb. 18 triangular at Iowa State.

Allen attributed the first defeat to reorganization problems. The meet was the first since the departure of injured all-arounder Mike Bowers, which left some holes in the Husker lineup.

The defeat at ISU was due simply to an outstanding performance by the Sooners, Allen said.

The Huskers hold an advantage, however, because both their season average and their average for the three Big Eight meets are higher, Allen said.

The only drawback, he said, is having to compete in Norman.

"We've never competed worth a damn in Okla-

homa," he said. "I don't know if it's the old Nebraska-Oklahoma rivalry or what. I don't think this group of kids will have that problem, though."

All the Huskers look healthy, Allen said, including Chris Riegel, who competed last week with strep throat, and Jim Mikus, who had a badly sprained finger.

"We look in good shape," he said. "I don't see anyone threatening Riegel and Mikus in the all-around."

Allen said the Big Eight winner will most likely represent the region in NCAA competition next month.

"If we win this weekend, we will undoubtedly be the regional leader," he said. "If we can't be the No. 1-ranked team, which we're not, it'd be nice to be the regional leader."

Allen said the Huskers' previous Big Eight losses this season should have a positive effect going into the championships.

"I think it's going to help us. We can't go in there with the haphazard attitude we've had in the past," he said. "We're concentrating on this Big Eight meet more than any other in years. We've got more to prove and less to lose."



# Alcorn State coach is not looking past the Jayhawks

By Bob Asmussen

North Carolina State's victory in last season's NCAA basketball tournament has changed the outlook of the so-called tournament underdogs.

The Wolfpack won the title despite a low seeding in the tournament and despite the fact that they had to defeat Houston, Virginia and UNLV along the way. Coaches of the lower seeded teams in the 1984 tournament are looking to duplicate NC State's incredible feat.

David Whitney of Alcorn State is one such coach. The Braves are the 12th-seeded team in the Midwest regional and will meet Kansas tonight at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"We're just glad the game's over with," Whitney said. "It was real a defensive struggle but we were able to pull together in the second half and win the ball game."

Alcorn State is no stranger to the NCAA tournament. The Lorman, Miss. school has been the Southwestern Athletic Conference tourney representative four times in Whitney's 15 years at the school.

"This is a different breed of team we have this season," Whitney said. "Unlike some of the past teams we've had, this team lacks the killer instinct."

Whitney said this team has as much talent or more than the best teams he's had but that their inconsistency makes it impossible for him to label them his best.

"We've been sort of a Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde team," Whitney said. "We don't know which team's going to show up each game."

Whitney said he isn't too familiar

with the Jayhawks' style of play under new Coach Larry Brown. Alcorn played Kansas two seasons ago but Whitney said the coaching change and roster additions at Kansas have made the Jayhawks an entirely new type of team.

"We haven't seen them play at all," Whitney said. "I do know that they're big and they'll run if you let them."

Kansas will have a significant height advantage over Alcorn. The Braves tallest starter is 6-8 while the Jayhawks start 7-0 center Greg Dreiling.

"We can't match up to their size and height," Whitney said. "We're just going to have to keep them away from the offensive boards."

The fact that Kansas is familiar with the Bob Devaney Sports Center could work in either team's favor, Whitney said.

"I'm sure they're more familiar with the floor," Whitney said. "We think the crowd may support us because there's no love lost between Nebraska and Kansas."

Whitney said his team playing in the preliminary round is a disadvantage. He said he feels all conferences should be treated equally.

"The 64-team field next year will rectify the situation," Whitney said. "I don't like it the way it is now."

"I don't think the tournament is getting too big. America is built on competition and the fact that the little guy has a chance to knock off the big guy."

Whitney said his 1984 Braves would fit the "little guy" image. He said he's not thinking past Kansas.

"We're already in trouble (with Kansas)," Whitney said. "But with Wake Forrest, we'd be in even deeper trouble."

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