

## Big 12 Notebook

The groundbreaking for Texas Tech's \$47 million United Spirit Arena, which was delayed last fall pending final student approval, will happen Wednesday afternoon in Lubbock, Texas.

The new arena, which will seat 12,600 fans for men's and women's basketball games and Red Raider volleyball matches, is set to open in January 1999.

"The arena will be the first project as we look into a new era," Texas Tech Chancellor John Montford said. "I look forward to getting it underway."

"I look for it to mean a new era for our intercollegiate athletics and participation in the Big 12. I look forward to it getting underway."

On the baseball diamond, the Red Raiders lead the Big 12 Conference over long-time Big Eight powers Oklahoma and Oklahoma State. Tech is 25-4 overall and 9-3 in the Big 12. The Sooners are 23-9 and 10-5 and the Cowboys are 20-10 and 8-4.

The most notable drop off among Big 12 baseball teams from last season has been Missouri. After finishing 39-19 and 20-8 a year ago, the Tigers are staggering at 15-15 and 6-6 in 1997 — sixth in the Big 12. Iowa State and Nebraska are the only two teams in the league below .500. The Cyclones are 11-15 overall and 3-9 in the league and the Cornhuskers are 16-18 and 2-7.

Two former Big 12 football players had standout performances in World League of America Football scrimmages last week.

Former Kansas State quarterback Chad May completed five of nine passes for 56 yards and one touchdown for the Frankfurt Galaxy in a matchup against the Barcelona Dragons.

Robert Hall, a former Red Raider, snared a 51-yard touchdown pass in Amsterdam's scrimmage against the Rheine Fire. WLAFF rosters were reduced from 48 to 42 players last week.

Texas Tech catcher Josh Bard was named the Big 12's baseball player of the week. Bard, a freshman from Denver, went 11 for 21 during the week as the Red Raiders moved into sole possession of the conference lead. In a three-game series against Oklahoma State, Bard was 8 for 12 with 10 RBIs, three homers and two doubles and handled 60 chances without an error.

Iowa State right-hander Ryan Seifert was the Big 12's pitcher of the week. Seifert, a junior from Chaska, Minn., pitched seven strong innings in a 3-2 win over Baylor. Seifert struck out 10, walked two and allowed four hits and only one run, which was unearned. He lowered his earned-run average to 2.50 on the year.

Big 12 Notebook was compiled by staff reporter Vince D'Adamo.

# Swim teams end in style

By JAY SAUNDERS  
Staff Reporter

Nebraska Swimming and Diving Coach Cal Bentz has many reasons to be pleased with his swimming program after its performance in the past 10 days.

Both the NU men's and women's teams finished successful seasons with numerous fine performances at their NCAA Championship meets.

"We felt on both sides we prepared well and focused well," Bentz said. "We feel now as a program we are in the Top 10 in the country."

The women's team made history by placing a school-best eighth with 174.5 points. The previous best finish for a women's Husker team was ninth place

in both 1985 and 1995. Southern Cal won the women's title with 406 points.

The men's team came off of a second-place finish in the Big 12 Conference meet and finished tied for 12th (109) with Minnesota at the NCAA meet. It was the highest finish for a Nebraska men's team since 1990 and the third-best in school history. Auburn ran away with the men's title with a team score of 496.5 points.

For the women, All-American Julia Russell led the way.

Russell finished her career at Nebraska with a bang, finishing second in the 200-yard breaststroke with a time of 2:10.32 and fourth in the 100-yard breaststroke. The South African native finished behind Southern Cal's Kristine Quance's pool-record time of 2:09.62 in the 100 breast.

Russell wasn't the only Husker with success in the 200 breaststroke. Freshman Lenka Manhalova finished fifth.

Nebraska's relay teams, who swept the Big 12 meet, finished strong at the NAAs. Both the 400- and 200-yard freestyle relays finished sixth. The 200-yard medley relay team finished ninth.

"We are pleased the women placed eighth," Bentz said. "That is an extremely good showing for us."

The NU men's team finished strong at the NAAs over the weekend.

Adam Pine highlighted the meet for the Huskers, finishing second in the 100-yard butterfly with a time of 46.40 seconds. Pine also finished ninth in the 100-yard freestyle with a time of 43.30 seconds.

The 200-yard freestyle relay team

of Pine, Juan Benavides, Alex Shleifman and Mark Bennett touched the wall in fifth place with a time of 1:19.07. Danny Bergmann finished a very successful season in one-meter diving, with a seventh-place finish.

Now the Huskers will take some time off before picking things up in spring conditioning in a few weeks.

"It is like Newton's Law," Bentz said. "A body in motion tends to stay in motion and a body in rest tends to stay at rest."

The Huskers are hoping that their success this year propels them to a bigger and better campaign next season.

"Now that we are moving in the right direction, we want to keep the momentum going," Bentz said. "We certainly don't want to drop back or have anything slow us down."

## Arizona takes title from UK

Arizona	84
Kentucky	79

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Now there's only one No. 1 left for the Arizona basketball team — themselves.

The Wildcats, the team that was supposed to be a year away, just needed an extra five minutes to win their first NCAA basketball championship.

Led by the backcourt of junior Miles Simon and freshman Mike Bibby, Arizona kept Kentucky from repeating as national champion with an 84-79 overtime victory Monday night at the RCA Dome.

With three juniors, a sophomore and a freshman in the starting lineup, next year was supposed to be the one for Arizona. Instead, the Wildcats (25-9) made their first championship appearance a thrilling one in a game featuring 20 ties and 18 lead changes.

Fourth-seeded Arizona became the first team in tournament history to knock off three No. 1 seeds — Kansas, North Carolina and now Kentucky, the winningest programs in college basketball history.

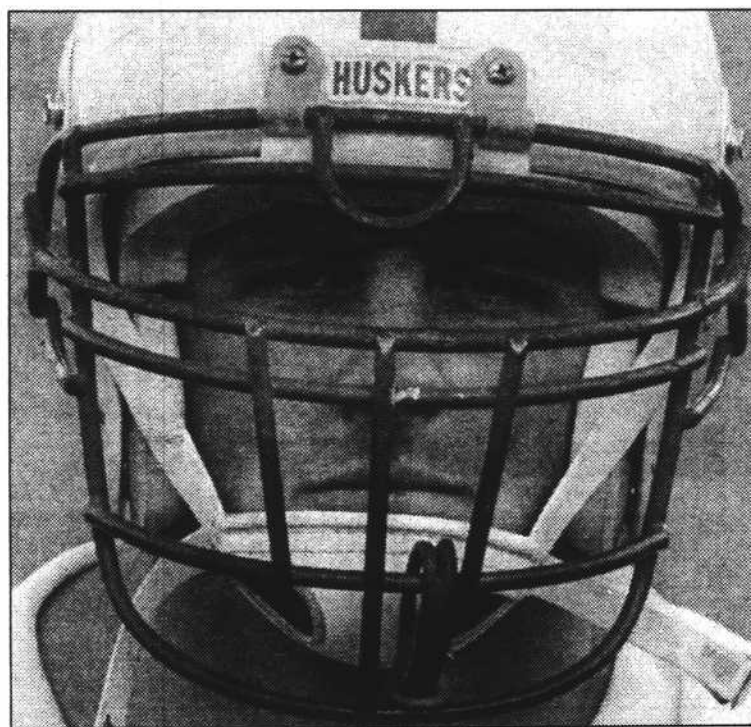
"We just wanted it more than them," said Simon, the game's Most Valuable Player. "Their legs were dragging, they were in foul trouble. We just wanted it more."

Kentucky was trying to become the second repeat champion since UCLA's stretch of seven straight titles ended in 1973. Duke repeated as champion in 1992.

"It's been the most fun I've ever had as a coach," Kentucky's Rick Pitino said. "I walked off the court feeling very proud."

Instead, Arizona won the first overtime championship game since Michigan beat Seton Hall 80-79 in 1989. Arizona reached the Final Four with an overtime win against Providence in the Southeast regional.

"The thing that I'm so pleased about is this is a tough group of Cats," Arizona coach Lute Olson said. "At halftime, we talked about the toughest team mentally and physically would win the basketball game."



MIKE WARREN/DN

GRANT WISTROM, one of three returning starters on the Nebraska defense, hopes to help forge a strong team chemistry this spring.

## Seniors emerge as new leaders

By MITCH SHERMAN  
Senior Reporter

Grant Wistrom stood near the 20-yard line in Memorial Stadium's north end zone Monday, flanked to his right by Jason Peter.

"Did Walker run yet?" Wistrom barked as he and Peter removed their shoulder pads and watched over their team like a pair of hawks, discontent to leave the AstroTurf field until each Nebraska teammate completed every last drill.

Spring football began Monday, the first of 15 workouts in 27 days, and with it began Wistrom and Peter's reign over a defensive unit they hope forms an important piece of another national championship puzzle.

"It's exciting," Peter said, "and it's an honor. You come to one of the best football teams in the country, and for you to be one of the guys your teammates can look up to, that means a lot."

Aaron Taylor, an offensive

guard, Wistrom and Peter — NU's senior-most seniors next fall — have combined to start 73 games in their Nebraska careers. The trio of experienced Cornhuskers said they expect to mold the 1997 team into a winner, a job that began more than a month ago with the start of winter-conditioning drills.

"I feel like I just got here yesterday," said Taylor, a second-team Associated Press All-American as a junior. "But this is my last spring ball. I've got to make some good out of it, but it just doesn't seem real right now."

Peter and Wistrom share the vocal responsibilities held in past years by former teammates Christian Peter and Jared Tomich. But this year carries a new challenge, Wistrom said. The returning first-team All-American rush end said he wants more from his teammates than they gave a year ago.

"At times last year, people got away with some things that are not going to happen this year,"

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## Nee on list to fill post at Rutgers

Five candidates remain for job as the Scarlet Knights' coach.

From Staff Reports

Nebraska Basketball Coach Danny Nee remains one of five finalists for the head-coach position at Rutgers University, the Newark (N.J.) Star-Ledger reported Monday.

Nee, who has compiled a 203-146 record in 11 years at NU and guided the Cornhuskers to eight postseason tournament appearances, interviewed Saturday in Indianapolis with Rutgers Athletic Director Fred Gruninger.

Other finalists include Rider Coach Kevin Bannon, Florida State Coach Pat Kennedy, Iona's Tim Welsh and former UCLA Coach Jim Harrick, each of whom spoke with Gruninger last weekend while attending festivities at the Final Four.

Nee entered the picture after Drexel's Bill Herrion — considered by many to be a lock for the job — rejected an offer from Gruninger on Friday. Texas Coach Tom Penders also turned down the New Brunswick, N.J., school last week.

Rutgers officials fired Coach Bob Wenzel on March 6 after an 11-16 season. In nine seasons, Wenzel led the Scarlet Knights to four postseason tournaments, most recently the National Invitation Tournament in 1992.

The Star-Ledger reported that Gruninger plans to meet with Rutgers President Francis Lawrence and hopes to name a coach by Saturday.

The 51-year-old Nee, from Brooklyn, N.Y., coached four years of high school basketball in New Jersey before becoming an assistant coach at Notre Dame in 1976.

Nebraska lost to Connecticut on March 18 in the NIT quarterfinals, its third straight NIT appearance. Nee, who returned to Lincoln after Saturday's NCAA semifinals was unavailable for comment.



Nee