

Outdoor track opener big challenge

Nebraska will test powerful Sun Devils

by STEVE SINCLAIR
Assistant Sports Editor
Nebraska track coach Frank Sevigne won't have to look past the first outdoor meet to find tough competition for his squad.

Husker netters better

Sooners best in conference

by RANDY YORK
Nebraskan Sports Editor

Although Nebraska expects to field a better tennis team this year, it can hardly expect to challenge Big Eight Conference power Oklahoma.

The Sooners, barring unforeseen trouble, should annex their fifth straight league championship in May. With three defending champions and a talented crop of freshmen, OU appears to be the first Big 8 team to string together five consecutive titles.

OKLAHOMA CAPTURED all five singles titles and both doubles titles in sweeping to last year's championship.

Returning from that team will be senior Glen Mullins, No. 1 singles and doubles finalist; sophomore Scott Martin, who last week started for OU's NIT basketball team and who was the No. 2 singles standout and doubles winner; and senior Jack Theimer, No. 5 singles finalist.

Nebraska seems well fixed to bid for an upper division Big 8 berth after finishing fifth in last year's meet.

Glendale, Calif., Junior College transfer Jack Rathburn bolsters the Cornhusker hopes for improving their 9-9, 1969 dual record.

"He's more experienced than the rest of our squad," NU coach Ed Higginbotham notes.

But four returning lettermen establish the Huskers as experienced contenders.

RATHBURN IS the top-ranking Nebraska performer while Omaha junior Bill Brunell and Omaha Tom Wiese rank 2-3. Senior John Hendry from Omaha and sophomore Jim Rathe from Beatrice are the other monogram winners.

Junior Bob Duffek and freshman Vince Sutton, both from Lincoln, are included on the Husker roster.

Schedule — Mar: 26, Luther College; 30, at Wichita State; 31, at East (Okla.) Central State; Apr: 1, at Oklahoma Baptist U.; 2, at Tulsa against Missouri; 3, at Oklahoma State; 4, at Oklahoma; 10, Washburn; 14, Creighton; 18, Kansas; 22, University of Nebraska at Omaha; 24, at Air Force Academy; 25, at Colorado; 28, Drake; May: 1, at Creighton; 2, Kearney St.; 5, Iowa State; 7, at UNO; 9, at Kansas State; 12-14, Big 8 at Lawrence, Kan.

"We're going to find out in a hurry where we stand, Sevigne said. The Huskers open the season March 31 with a triangular against Arizona State and Wyoming at Tempe, Ariz.

ARIZONA STATE doesn't have any weak spots, according to Sevigne. The Sun Devils have the world's top ranking javelin thrower, Mark Murro, who has a 293 foot toss to his credit. They also have a 3:58 miler, a 9.3 sprinter a sub-nine minute two-miler, a 7-1 high jumper, a 175-foot discus thrower, a 16-foot pole vaulter, and a 58-foot shot putter.

Arizona State has already competed in five outdoor meets against national powers UCLA, Southern Cal and Occidental, Sevigne added.

"We haven't been outdoors enough to really know where we stand," he said. "We will have three good workouts down south before the meet."

NU will also compete in the Texas Relays at Austin April 3-4. The Husker entrants will be chosen after the Arizona State meet and the remainder of the squad will return home.

"WE HAVE the potential for some good relay teams,"

Sevigne said. "We could be strong in about any relay we want to, if the guys come through."

March 31 — Arizona State, Wyoming at Tempe, Ariz.; April 3, 4 — Texas Relays at Austin; April 11 — Minnesota at Minneapolis; April 17, 18 — Kansas Relays at Lawrence; April 24, 25 — Drake Relays at Des Moines; May 1 — Colorado; May 9 — Missouri at Columbia; May 15, 16 — Big Eight meet at Lawrence; May 23 — California Relays at Modesto; June 18, 19, 20 — NCAA championships at Des Moines.



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