

Coach predicts No. 2 national gym ranking

By Dave McBride

Bolstered by the best crop of freshmen in Nebraska gymnastics history and a strong finish last year, the Husker gymnasts should be the second best team in the nation this season, according to Coach Francis Allen.

One of the reasons for his optimism is that junior Gene Mackie, one of the state's top prep gymnasts three years ago at Creighton Prep, is back at full strength after sitting out his first two campaigns because of injuries.

"I look for him to be the darkhorse in the Big 8 all-around, and that would give him a chance to compete in the nationals and the World Games," Allen said.

Also back is junior Jim Unger, who placed in three events in last year's conference meet, along with five seniors, two juniors and six sophomores.

Recruiting netted "undoubtedly the best freshmen we've ever had at Nebraska," Allen said. "They're coming in and scoring now better than

some of the guys we've had."

One of the freshmen is floor exercise standout Duane West, who already scored the highest mark in school history in the event during intrasquad competition.

Allen said he thinks West can win floor exercise in the Huskers' opening meet Nov. 10.

The opener is the Big 8 Invitational, the first of four invitational or open meets the Huskers will participate in before their dual season begins in January.

The Huskers will host the Nov. 10 meet in the Coliseum. It will include all six conference schools with gymnastics teams, Oklahoma State and Missouri do not compete in the sport.

According to Allen, the invitational will be a preview of this year's conference race, with the Huskers battling defending Big 8 and national champion Iowa State and Oklahoma for top honors.

"Oklahoma has a lot of potential," he said. "We did beat them last year (the Huskers finished second in the Big 8 behind Iowa State, with the Sooners



Junior Gene Mackie practices on the still rings in preparation for the Big 8 Invitational gymnastics meet in Lincoln Nov. 10.

third), but they have a new coach, and they should be tough.

"Iowa State plans on winning the nationals again, but this meet will just be a start for them this season, while we've been working all year for it," he said.

"We're really counting on our freshmen to carry us through this meet, and you can never tell how

they're going to do in their first meet in college. But they'll get some good experience, and by the end of the year when the conference meet comes around, our freshmen should be really tough."

"If we can't win the Big 8, we should at least come awfully close to qualifying for the nationals. This should be a good team," Allen said.

Yell squad blames fans for no cheers

Recently much attention has been focused on fan participation at football games. Many people suffer from the delusion that Yell Squad members possess some mystical power allowing them complete control over fan emotions.

"No matter how hard we attempt to instill active fan involvement at games, if fans refuse to cheer, there's little we can do," Yell King Ernie Thurber said.

The squad, consisting of three men and eight women, is relatively small compared with other Big 8 schools, he said.

"It was designed in this manner so more attention could be attracted on fewer subjects. Our system is much more effective, we feel, as it is certainly less confusing to the spectator," he said.

"Increasing the number of yell members is no solution to increasing fan participation. The problem does not lie with the structure or individuals comprising the squad, but rather with the fans themselves," said John Scott, Yell Squad member.

Former Yell King Steve Bartlett said he believes "good old college spirit is dead, a relic of the past," Nebraska fans,

bob hill over the hill

although loyal to their team, simply do not take part in yells, he said.

"It's unfortunate that the crowd will seldom respond to any cheers that are in good taste," he added. He said the policy of the Nebraska squad always has been to avoid derogatory comments about opponents, since they incite the crowd.

"People get down on us cheerleaders for not getting fans actively involved in our cheers. They simply fail to realize there is little we can do if the fans refuse to cooperate," Scott said.

The Yell Squad may not appear as effective today as in years past because the fans' nature has changed. But even though the days of the exuberant and vocal fan are gone, the need for the Yell Squad hasn't disappeared. Few people actually would welcome the demise of Nebraska's squad. They are as much a fixture at college games as team mascots and angry coaches.

sports shorts

The Nebraska freshman football team defeated the Oklahoma freshmen 13-3 at Norman, Okla., Monday night. The Husker freshmen now are 2-1. Their next game is Nov. 2 in Lincoln against Colorado.

Nebraska Swim Coach John Reta needs two students for varsity swim team managers. Previous experience would be helpful. Interested students should contact Reta in Coliseum 206 or call him at 472-2271.

Entry deadlines for varsity co-rec badminton and table tennis is Thursday, according to Nancy Sonner, Recreation and Intramurals Director.

With home victories over Kansas State and the Omaha Hawks Sunday, the UNL women's team raised its record to 2-2-1. Both wins came by 2-1 scores.

The win against Kansas State avenged an earlier 5-0 Nebraska loss in Manhattan.

Ruberto Martin and Trygve Fekjer scored against Kansas State, while Victor Bishop and Othman Ozbay were the scorers against the Huskers, a junior amateur team.

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