

Early bird chases prediction worm

At least once each year, sportswriters are met head-on by a temptation to make predictions. I have encountered such a temptation, and have succumbed to it.

In this case, predictions are for the Big 8 basketball race next year. It may seem early, with the postseason tournaments not yet finished, but there are reasons.

For example, if the guesses are particularly poor, nobody should remember a year from now. Likewise, if I do well, I can claim to be the first to have made predictions.

There are several factors which make predicting now dangerous. Teams may add key players to their rosters through spring recruiting. Also, players who would be expected to return might not because of injury, illness, scholastics, or for any number of reasons.

The predicted finish:

1. The University of Kansas (KU)—The strong point of this year's championship Jayhawk team was balance. The team had five players with average game scoring in double figures. What's bad for the rest of the league is that all five players are returning next year. Starters returning are forwards Norm Cook and Roger Morningstar, center Danny Knight and guard Dale Greenlee. The fifth player is Rick Suttle, who led

the Jayhawks in conference scoring but did not start a game.

2. (tie) UNL—The Huskers top KU by returning their six leading scorers, and they probably will be led again by All-Big 8 guard Jerry Fort. Experience gained this season should have been of immeasurable value to the freshman laden team. The younger players should play an even bigger role next season.

dennis onnen press box review

2. (tie) University of Oklahoma—The Sooners always will be near the top as long as they have All-Big 8 player Alvan Adams at center. This season, he led the conference in scoring and finished third in rebounding as a sophomore. His presence should make up for the loss of two starters.

4. Kansas State University—The Wildcats lose four starters, including All-Big 8 player Lon Kruger, so one might expect them to drop completely out of the picture. However, their rich basketball tradition and exceptional returning substitutes should keep them in the first division.

5. Iowa State University (ISU)—The Cyclones return high scoring guard Hercle Ivy and fine frontliners Larry Loots and Craig DeLoss, but they must come up with two other capable starters if they expect to finish any higher in the standings.

6. Oklahoma State University—Scoring leader Kevin Fitzgerald is the only starter leaving, and guards K.C. Kincaide and Ronnie Daniel should be able to pick up the scoring slack. But the overall quality in the team is just not there, making it hard for the Cowboys to record a better finish, no matter how much experience they have.

7. University of Colorado—Three-sport performer David Logan is the only quality player returning.

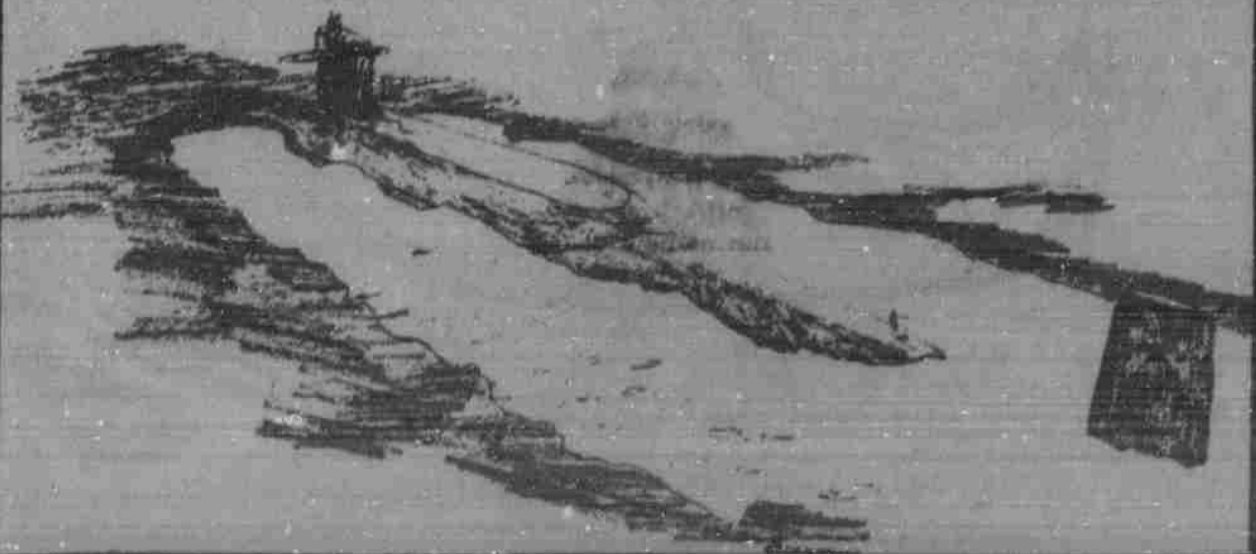
8. University of Missouri—All-Big 8 forward Al Eberhard did just about everything for the Tigers this year except run the scoreboard, but the team finished only seventh after winning the Big 8 tournament. Eberhard is gone next year, which indicates what kind of a year Missouri is in for.

Fort heads my picks for the All-Big 8 team next year. Joining him at the guard position is ISU's Ivy. My pick at center is Adams, with KU's Knight and Suttle at the forward positions. Both Jayhawks have played center this year, but are just too good to leave off the team.



Wherever
you're
headed,
we'll
be there!
Have a good vacation

Sophomores: The Navy needs officers trained in nuclear power to run her submarines and nuclear surface ships. We have a program that offers you full tuition, books, and \$100.00 per month during your junior and senior years plus nuclear power training and high pay after you graduate. If you are the least bit interested, even as a look, and you have taken or plan to take calculus and physics, call or visit Lt. Ron Godwin at the Navy Department on campus as soon as possible. 972-2475



Gymnasts anticipate 2nd place title fight

By Larry Stunkel

During most of this season, the only thing that UNL gymnastics Coach Francis Allen talked about was his underclassmen. But Allen had special praise this week for his seniors, who close their careers today and Saturday at the Big 8 gymnastics tournament in Norman, Okla.

"I've been real pleased with the seniors we've got," said Allen. "Barry Cross, Bob Bowden, Hal Traver and Alan Everett have supplied a lot of leadership for the team."

"The younger guys were better at the first of the year," he added, "but they (the seniors) just kept working. They're really dedicated, and I'm proud to have them."

Defending NCAA and conference champion Iowa State University will again dominate the Big 8 meet as they have the past five years, Allen said. The Cyclones boast two of the nation's top all-around performers in senior Doug Fitzjarrell and junior Mark Graham. The team leads the conference rankings in all but one event.

It's that kind of depth, with four of the top eight men in the conference in each event, that promoted Allen to label the Cyclones probably the best team he's seen in collegiate gymnastics.

The Huskers and the University of Oklahoma are expected to battle for second place in the tournament. Earlier in the season, the Sooners won a 161.85 to 157.8 dual meet over UNL in Norman, in which Allen criticized the officiating.

Allen thinks that situation may reverse itself at the tournament.

"At the conference meet, each school brings one judge, and they get two at large who have been voted on by the coaches, so there is no partiality," he said.

Individuals on whom the Husker hopes rest are freshman Duane West, who is rated second in the conference on high bar; sophomore Pete Studenski, ranked second on rings; Steve Dickey, number three on pommel horse; Jim Unger and Everett, who are rated sixth and seventh respectively in the floor exercise.

Other Huskers with an opportunity to place are Traver on the pommel horse, Cross on the parallel bars and freshman Gary Jeurink in vaulting, Allen said.

"We should have a lot of men in the finals," he said.

"In fact, I wish the meet had been Monday. We've really been ready and have worked real hard."

sports shorts

The Husker baseball team continues its swing through Texas with a doubleheader against Hardin-Simmons College today and another against Abilene Christian College Saturday.

In a game with Southern Methodist University Wednesday, the Huskers carried a 9-8 lead into the bottom of the seventh inning before a 2-run home run by Rusty Bocquein gave SMU the

win. The 10-8 loss dropped UNL's record to 0-3.

The UNL tennis team will be looking for its first victory when the Huskers travel to Crete for a match with South Dakota State University today. In last weekend's opening match, the Huskers dropped a 9-0 decision to Northwest Missouri State University. UNL also meets Doane in Crete Saturday.