

Women's basketball improving

A successful future for a well established women's basketball team is in store at UNL according to Jan Callahan, first-year basketball coach. Player skill is on the increase, and with the addition of women's basketball at the high school level in Nebraska this year, women will have more adequate training opportunities before coming to college, she said.

Team starting spots have not been permanently determined, according to Callahan. "It's still early in the season, our skills are still fluctuating and an exact starting line-up has not been decided."

Six experienced returners add poise and make the season outlook good for the team. Returning seniors are Nancy Hansen and Denise Daub. Underclassmen returning are: juniors, Sue Hansen and Jan Zink and sophomores Kathy Hawkins and Jean Vrbka. Freshman challenging for starting positions are Sherry Brydle, Rhonda Rhoades and Christy Oswald. Rhoades started for UNL in their opening win against Kearney State Nov. 25.

Fast team

Callahan pointed out that the team this year is extremely fast. "They use the fast break well," she said. "We also have some good shooters, although it hasn't shown up in the percentages yet."

Defensive improvement is the point Callahan is stressing. "We need to shift our defensive set up during a game," she said. "We are presently working on moving from a player-player defense to a zone and back again. We also are trying to improve our offensive shooting percentage."

Currently the team record is 2-1. Wins were against Kearney State and JFK junior varsity. Their loss came at the hands of UNO.

Leading scorer thus far in the season is sophomore Kathy Hawkins. Last year's leading scorer was Sue Hansen.

Major competitors for the team will be Wayne State and Midland colleges. Last season UNL ended up third in the state behind these two teams.

Enthusiasm good

The women are on a tight practice schedule. They work out every afternoon Monday through Friday for about two and one-half hours.

Enthusiasm is good at this point in the season, Callahan said. "They are starting to get to know one another and things are beginning to pick up." She said that the JV team backs the varsity in their competitions.

Positive changes have occurred in the women's athletic program at UNL according to Callahan. "We are still behind a lot of major colleges. But we are ahead of some too," she said.

The team needs new uniforms and some new equipment, she said. One set of uniforms are used for all sports.

Callahan received her masters degree in physical education from UNL.



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Wrestlers plagued by injuries

Injuries appear to be the biggest problem as coach Orval Borgianni's youthful Husker wrestlers prepare for their Friday bout with Ft. Hayes State in the Coliseum.

Four of the ten men who started in the Huskers' first meet this season were absent during the 31-6 defeat by conference powerhouse Iowa State University (ISU) last Friday.

Among those missing were Tim Rimpley and Doug Hassig who wrestle the 118 and 150 lb. weight classes respectively. Hassig appears to have the more serious injury, Borgianni said. He will be sidelined indefinitely with an injured rib cage.

Two other Huskers hampered by injuries loss to their ISU opponents.

Bill Hoffmann, recovering from a sprained ankle, lost 7-2 to Cyclone 177-pounder Willie Gadson, who was a national junior college champion before transferring to ISU this year.

Bob Johnson, an 190 pounder who suffered a shoulder injury, lost 7-4 to defending NCAA champ Al Nacin of ISU. Only the week before, Johnson upset Nacin 6-4 in the finals of the Iowa State Invitational at Ames, Iowa.

"Bob was convinced he could ride anybody," Borgianni said. "He learned Friday that he can't ride Nacin and that was his biggest mistake. After that, he had to scramble only to make still more mistakes."

Posting the Huskers' only two wins against Iowa State were heavyweight Bruce Conger and Tony Jennings at 140 lbs.

Conger's 3-0 win over Robin Whisman boosted his season record to 12-1, while Jennings raised his mark to 10-2 beating Joe Zuspa in 13-10.

Jennings, a junior from Corning, Iowa, said he really wanted to beat a home-state opponent. He did, and it marked the second time since last year he's done so.

Jennings, who was almost pinned in the first period of the match, came back to capture two near falls against his opponent in the second period.

"Jennings hasn't received the publicity this year he deserves," Borgianni said. "He's starting to prove he can compete with the best of them. Already this year he has defeated the NCAA division I champion in his weight class."

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