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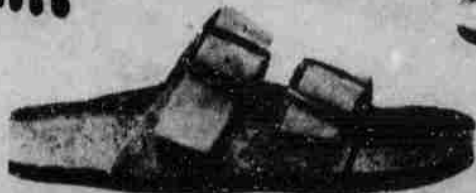
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**UN-L women's sports director
notes 'strong, growing support'**

By Vince Boucher

There's a new face in the UN-L locker room.

Aleen Swofford, 25, was appointed assistant athletic director for women's sports at the July 21 Regents meeting.

As head of women's intercollegiate sports, she will report to UN-L Athletic Director Bob Devaney.

"The Big-8 conference is growing tremendously, with increased money, personnel and programs. Nebraska has seen the need to expand but we're all in a growing stage," Swofford said.

Strong support

"As I see it, we have support as strong, and hopefully stronger than other schools in the conference."

Swofford said Nebraska has a head start on other schools by already giving women's athletic scholarships, by her own appointment, and by the new position of coordinator of public relations for women's athletics.

"That step is really pace-setting because it is acknowledging that we need to relate well with many publics—to make people more aware of what women's programs are all about," she said.

Women's intercollegiate sports at UN-L include competition in volleyball, field hockey, swimming, basketball, gymnastics, tennis, golf, track and field and softball.

Women's sports growing

Swofford said she thought women's athletics was moving through a growth period as society's values and attitudes toward women athletics are



Aleen Swofford, newly-appointed assistant athletic director of women's sports.

changing.

"At one time a woman would fear the title of athlete," she said.

"Now we are seeing that all types of women participate. With exposure, like all TV coverage of women, we're seeing that they're just normal people," she added.

Swofford said she would consider herself a feminist, but she said, "I enjoy men and I don't feel threatened by them."

Not intimidated

She said she isn't intimidated by working in the mostly-male athletic department.

"I want to establish a firm base of what the concept of women's athletics is with other coaches in the department. Unless I have the support of the people I'm working with, I'll fall flat on my face," she said.

Her first priority is to establish the nine women's events as equally solid, with adequate funds for competition travel and lodging, she said.

Then she wants to look at the programs, keeping in mind which sports are stressed in Nebraska high schools and which adapt well to the climate and decide which Nebraska could realistically try

to shine in, she said.

"We can excel"

"It would be ridiculous to say we're going to have nine national champions in two years but it is not unreal to say there are areas where we can excel," she said.

Swofford granted that women's athletics is not always understood and that fact has alienated factions on both sides.

"By not getting together, not much progress is going to be made.

"I don't want to force people to the wall or operate in a threatening manner but I'm not going to sit back either," she said.

Swofford said she is pleased with the present fund level of \$132,000 for women's sports, pointing out that a few years ago only \$25 a sport was allotted for women.

"I don't believe in asking, asking, asking, and not working to bring in money ourselves. I don't expect women's sports to be self-supporting. There are a lot of women and men who are looking for a cause, looking for something to get behind.

Swofford had been an assistant professor in the College of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at Texas Women's University since 1973.

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