

nebraskan sports

husker galaxy

Gymnast Gerard seeks Olympic berth

A star never rests. Sophomore gymnast Larry Gerard helped propel the Huskers to their biggest win of the year Saturday against top ranked Iowa State University (ISU), earning athlete-of-the-week honors. But there's no time to bask.

He must fly to Toronto as a member of the six-man United States Olympic qualifying team which will meet Canada Saturday and Sunday. The American squad must win either that meet or one against Rumania two weeks later to qualify for the Montreal Olympics this summer.

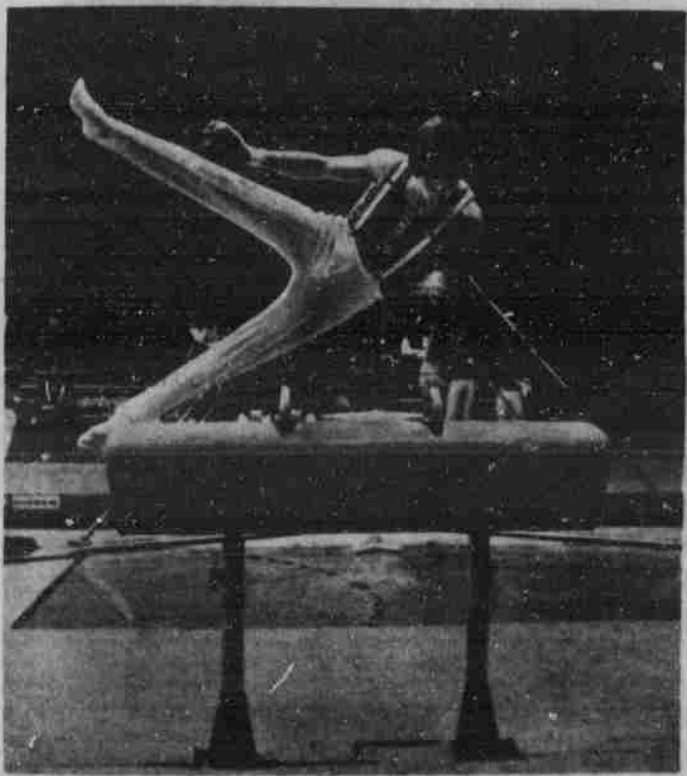


Photo by Ted Kirk

UNL gymnast Larry Gerard

UNL regains tie for Big 8 lead

The Huskers were "Cooked" in the first half, but bounced back for a share of the Big 8 Conference basketball lead with a 57-54 win over Kansas Wednesday night in the Coliseum.

UNL, now 5-1 in the conference, is tied for first with Missouri, which lost to Kansas State, 85-81, in another Wednesday night game. The Huskers are now 14-5 overall, while Kansas dipped to 3-3 in the Big 8 and 10-8 overall.

UNL led most of the first half and jumped ahead, 23-17, for its biggest lead of the period. But the Jayhawks reeled off eight straight points, six by star forward Norm Cook, to take a 25-23 half-time lead. Cook ended up with 13 points and six rebounds the first half.

The momentum carried into the second period as the Jayhawks scored two quick buckets for a 29-23 lead, their biggest of the game.

Kansas then hit a cold shooting spell, and the Huskers took advantage to go ahead for good, 35-33, on a jump shot by guard Jerry Fort with 15:29 left.

The Huskers quickly increased their lead to 45-35 then held on behind clutch free throw shooting.

"I was pleased with our second-half comeback," said Husker coach Joe Cipriano. "And I thought (center Larry) Cox did a good job defensively."

Cox was instrumental in shutting down Paul Mokeski, 7 ft. Jayhawk center, who had scored 19 points in a 69-66 Kansas win over UNL in the Big 8 tournament. Cox held him to six points before fouling out with 1:44 left.

Fort led the Huskers with 21 points, while Cox added 11. Cook paced Kansas with 21 points and a game-high 14 rebounds.

"We're going to have to do a good job to beat them (Canada)," Gerard said. An American win this weekend is crucial to his ultimate goal—a berth on the eight-man Olympic team.

Saturday, Gerard took a step in that direction by beating Iowa State's Scott Evans, 52.6-51.45, in the all-around. He had lost to Evans Oct. 24 in UNL's opening meet, but has not lost in an all-around since, including wins in the Midwest and Rocky Mountain Opens.

Not satisfied

Gerard, an architecture major from Lincoln Southeast High School, also won the rings and parallel bars competition Saturday, but he said he wasn't completely satisfied.

"I still need work in some areas," he said. "I need to be more consistent on the side horse and I've been missing some on the high bar."

"Rings has always been my favorite event, but an all-arounder should like all of them," he said.

The win Saturday was important, he said, and added that the team always aims at the Big 8 Conference meet. Again the main obstacle is ISU, which has won the last seven conference championships.

After that comes the national meet, when Louisiana State, Indiana State and Michigan Universities likely will join ISU as the teams to beat, Gerard said. In the all-around, he said, he expects stiff competition from Indiana State's Kurt Thomas, also on the Olympic qualifying team.

Positive attitude

Gerard credits his success to what he called a positive attitude.

"You've got to be pretty positive all the time," he said. "You've got to feel strong, like you want to attack the event."

He also has been bolstered at the Huskers' two home meets by a cheering section of Alpha Tau Omega brothers.

"I'm really pleased to have those guys come over to the meets," he said. "They're hooked on gymnastics now."

Other athlete-of-the-week nominees were basketball forward Bob Siegel, junior from Fairbury; trackster Harold Stelzer, sophomore from Scituate, Mass.; swimmer Pat DiBiase, junior from Omaha; wrestler Bob Johnson, senior from Gordon; swimmer Ruth Spencer, senior from Omaha; gymnast Peggy Newport, sophomore from Lincoln; and basketball forward Sherry Brink, sophomore from Lincoln.

Capan recalls spirit of Olympics

By Scott Jones

Jesse Owens better hope Roger Capan decides to stay at UNL a long time. If not, Owens may lose his job.

Capan, instructor of physical education and women's track coach at UNL, was a speed skater in the 1968 Winter Olympics. His remembrances of that experience might cause the Olympic Committee to wonder whether former Olympic champion Owens is really the best spokesman for the games.

"It was the greatest time in my life," Capan said. "We (athletes) were all the same. We all gave that universal respect you just don't see in everyday life."

Capan said he is concerned the tight security for the current games will strain the feeling of brotherhood among athletes.

"It was a harmonious type of feeling. All the athletes trusted each other and had a good time," he said. "It didn't matter what country you were from."

Restrictive security "completely destroys, in my mind, what the Olympics is about," Capan said.

Variety of experiences

Capan said he has had a variety of athletic experiences. His father, a hockey player, started Capan skating at age 8, and he won several state (Illinois) and national speed skating championships beginning at age 11.

He was an all-state discus thrower at Champaign High School in Champaign, Ill., and later held the discus record at the University of New York at Buffalo where he obtained his undergraduate degree in 1973.

In football, he was a high school all-conference tackle as a 6 ft. 3 in. 215-pounder (he's up to 250 now). He had tryouts as a punter and kicker with the National Football League's Detroit Lions and Buffalo Bills and played semi-pro football in Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Capan, 30, also coached a service track team at the Panama Canal while in the Air Force. Later he was the women's track coach at Illinois University where he received his masters degree in 1974 in biomechanics or film analysis of sports skills.

Hard work

But it is the "unique spirit" of the Olympics that Capan remembers best and tries to communicate to his students and women athletes.

Because of the "months and months and months of hard work" required to make the Olympics, Capan said, "I know how to work and I know what work is."

"I can tell other athletes what work is. Usually if they don't have the desire within them, they'll never get to the top national spot."

Capan talks about the training methods speed skaters used in Norway where he spent a year training.

"The first time I went out in Norway I asked, 'how far are we going to run?'" he said. "Three and one-half hours later we came out of the woods. I was completely

drained."

That dedication which "comes from the heart" is what the Olympics is about, Capan said.

Sounding more like Jesse Owens all the time, he told how an American speed skater refused to quit during a distance race in Norway although he was laps behind.

"They (the Norwegian fans) treated him like the King of Norway because they saw that heart," he said. "And that leaves a little tear in your eye, at least it does with me."



Photo by Ted Kirk

Roger Capan, now a UNL physical education instructor and women's track coach, participated in the 1968 Winter Olympics as a speed skater.

Twelve sign Big 8 letters

Twelve Nebraskans and ten out-of-state high school seniors have signed Big 8 Conference letters of intent to attend UNL next fall on football scholarships.

The Big 8 letter of intent merely binds the prospects to playing at Nebraska, should they choose to compete in the Big 8.

Prospects still can decide to enroll at schools outside the Big 8. However, they are committed to the school to which they sign a national letter of intent.

The signing date for national letters is Feb. 18.

Player	In-State		Hometown
	Ht.	Wt.	
Joe Adams	6-4	220	Bellevue
Kim Baker	6-3	190	York
Mike Bruce	6-6	210	Omaha
John Fischer	6-3	185	Columbus
Brian Hedrick	6-2	190	York
Brad Humphrey	6-2	190	Bellevue
Tom Matthies	6-7	250	Oxford
Dave O'Doherty	6-3	225	Omaha
Dan Pensick	6-5	212	Columbus
Jeff Quinn	6-3	190	Ord
Frank Taylor	6-0	170	Omaha
Kerry Weinmaster	6-0	190	North Platte

Player	Out-State		Hometown
	Ht.	Wt.	
Steve Davies	6-3	215	Murray, Utah
Gary England	6-4	225	Salt Lake City
Randy Schlesiener	6-5	210	Rapid City, S.D.
Mike Polk	6-4	230	Lawrence, Kan.
Brian Grace	6-2	215	Des Moines
Chris Juehring	6-3	205	Devenport, Iowa
Lee Atkins	6-1	195	San Angelo, Tex.
Glenn Lewis	6-1	194	Edina, Minn.
Ron Washington	6-1	175	Tempe, Ariz.
Thor Jacobs	6-2	215	Cincinnati