

nebraskan sports

husker galaxy | Two gymnasts end careers while two start blossoming

By Scott Jones

For two Husker gymnasts, last week's NCAA meet was the culmination of a successful career. For two others, it was just the beginning.

The four—Gene and Kurt Mackie, Steve Dickey and Larry Gerard—have been selected Husker athletes of the week.

At Philadelphia, seniors Dickey and Gene Mackie probably competed in their last meet after years of practice. UNL placed fourth in that meet.

"It was a lot of hard work," Dickey said. "but after I got off the award stand, it was worth it."

Dickey and Gerard, a Lincoln sophomore, earned All-American honors by finishing in the top six in an event. Dickey, a Lincoln Northeast graduate, was fifth in his

pommel horse speciality, while Gerard of Lincoln Southeast finished third on horizontal bar, fifth in still rings and fifth in the all-around.

Coach Francis Allen said specialists Dickey and junior Kurt Mackie on rings had career-best performances at the NCAA meet.

"It's probably the best I could have done," Dickey said. "As far as consistency this has probably been my best year. I haven't missed a set, (made a major mistake) this year and that's hard to do."

Most competitive ever

Dickey and Gene Mackie, team captain, said the meet was the most competitive ever.

Mackie, for example, finished fourth in the all-around last year. In Philadelphia he scored 1.1 points lower than the previous year but fell to eighth. Teammate Gerard placed fifth with 107.1 all-around points but was only a point below the winner, Peter Kormann of Southern Connecticut University.

"This is the best NCAA meet I've seen, and I've seen the last five," Mackie said. "The program in the U.S. is really getting better and I think it's got a lot to do with coaches like Francis."

Mackie said UNL's program also is on the rise.

Mackie, an Omaha Creighton Prep High School graduate who sat out one year after breaking his leg, once had Olympic aspirations, but that has changed. He is getting married and entering University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha this summer.

Psychic for Olympics

The Olympic hopes have passed to sophomore Gerard, whose gymnastics career, like that of Gene's brother Kurt, appears ready to blossom.

Gerard will face his first Olympic qualifying test May 20 at the Olympic semi-Trials. The top 12 advance to the Olympic Trials June 20 at Pennsylvania State University, where the top eight gymnasts will make the team.

Gerard labeled his NCAA performance "OK" but says he's "psyched" for the Olympic trials.

"It all depends if I do a good job," he said. "I'm pretty sure of myself though."

The younger Mackie had been expected to replace Pete Studenski, who as a senior last year won the Big 8 Conference still rings title, but he injured his shoulder in October.

Could have placed second

A cortisone shot two weeks before the Big 8 meet helped heal the injury, but it came too late.

Lacking endurance, Mackie finished fourth at the Big 8 meet. However, after the compulsory and optional rounds at the NCAA meet, he was third with an average score of 9.35.

But because he was fourth at the Big 8, Mackie wasn't eligible to try for that good set in the individual finals. Only the top three at the conference meet qualified.

Penn State clearly was the best team at the NCAA meet, Mackie said, but he and many of the Huskers said they thought UNL could have been at least second.

"But we had a good year, winning the Big 8," he said. "If you look at it according to what we could have done, it is depressing. But we really had our best year yet."

Other athlete-of-the-week nominees were tennis player Jeff Schmah, sophomore from Grand Island, baseball player Norm Glismann, senior from Omaha, and trackster Peggy Liddick, freshman from Lincoln.

Huskers, KSU each score win

By Jim Hunt

UNL's baseball team scored three runs in the bottom of the sixth inning to break a 2-2 tie and give the Huskers a 5-2 victory in the first half of Tuesday's doubleheader with the Kansas State University Wildcats (KSU).

However, the Wildcats fired back in the second game behind the pitching of Dave Tuttle to earn a 6-2 win and a split in the doubleheader.

The Huskers jumped to an early lead when lead-off junior hitter Bobby Thomas opened the game with a double and was driven home on senior right fielder Norm Glismann's single.

But, KSU retaliated with two runs in the second to make the score 2-1. The Huskers tied the game in the fourth inning when junior left fielder Steve McManaman singled and was driven home when center fielder Paul Haas singled.

Haas, a junior from Lincoln, put the game out of reach with a three-run homer in the sixth and finished the game with two hits in three times at bat and four runs batted in.

Boyd Batenhorst, a senior from Tilden, was the winning pitcher for the Huskers. Batenhorst pitched seven innings giving up seven hits while pushing his record to 3-0 for the season.

In the second game, KSU's Tuttle struck out 13 batters in route to collecting his fifth victory against no losses this season.

Sophomore Steve Nagel took the loss for the Huskers. Nagel was relieved by freshman Jeff Costello after yielding a three-run homer to Steve Anson in the third inning. The Huskers were plagued with six errors in the second game.

Now 8-13 on the season, the Huskers will face Wayne State today in a doubleheader at the UNL diamond starting at 2 p.m.

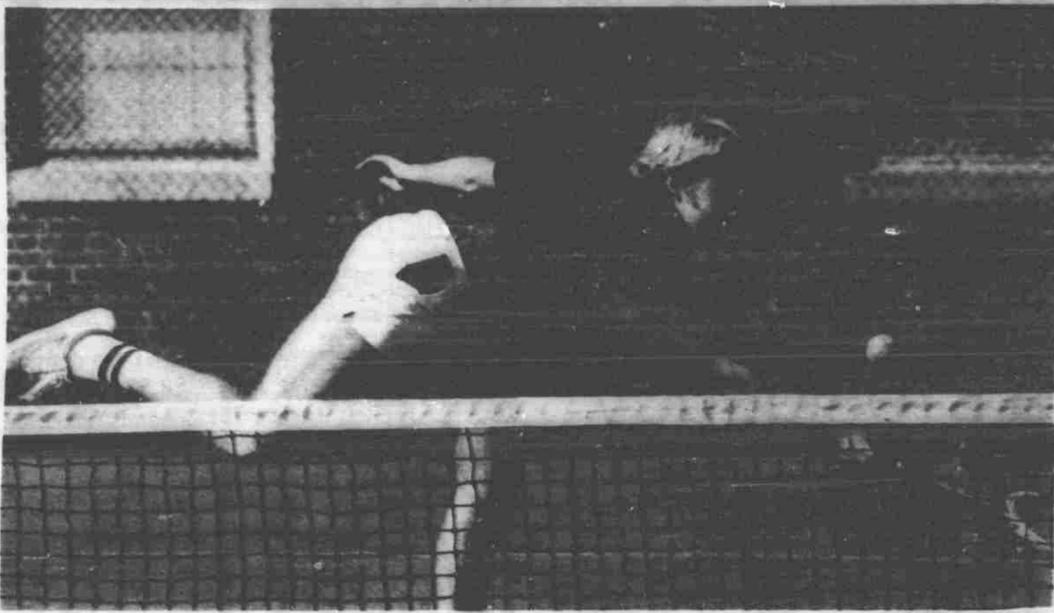


Photo by Todd Kirk

Don Weaver, Lincoln sophomore, won his singles and doubles matches as the UNL tennis team blanked Washburn University 9-0 Monday to raise its record to 7-5. The team next hosts the University of Nebraska at Omaha Thursday at 2 p.m. on the courts east of the Coliseum.

one at a time | Baseball prediction sees Cincinnati's 'crown' intact

By Jim Zalewski

With the professional baseball season expected to open Thursday as scheduled, another set of predictions is due. I hope these are more accurate than my basketball forecasts. With caution thrown to the wind and my copy of *Street and Smith's Baseball Yearbook* in hand, I see the pennant winners as follows.

The Cincinnati Reds are defending champs, and I see no one taking their National League (NL) Western Division crown. The Los Angeles Dodgers lost Andy Messersmith and may have been taken in the Jimmy Wynn trade. Atlanta, with a virtually new outfield of Wynn and Ken Henderson, figures to finish third. With effective frontline pitching, the Braves could be a darkhorse.

The San Francisco Giants have the best young mound staff in the majors, but the rest of the team is a couple of years away. Last year's trade for Bobby Murcer looks better every day.

The Houston Astros have made some notoriously bad deals but still have two of the game's better hitters in Cesar Cedeno and Bob Watson.

In the NL East, sentiment leads me to tab the St. Louis Cardinals, but instead I'll go on record as picking the Philadelphia Phillies. They landed two frontline pitchers in Jim Kaat and Ron Reed and did not lose any starters

in the process. Any attack featuring Greg Luzinski, Mike Schmidt and Richie Allen has to be murder on a left-handed pitcher.

I see the Redbirds as the runner-up, but if Pete Falcone, obtained from the Giants, can win 17 to 20 games, watch out. The Cards added Don Kessinger, and minor league player of the year Hector Cruz will have a lot of pressure at third base.

The Pittsburgh Pirates added Doc Medich, but I don't think the Bucs' bats will be enough this year. The New York Mets have the best starting pitchers in baseball, but not much else. The Chicago Cubs, featuring Jack Brickhouse on Sunday afternoon telecasts, again figure to edge the Montreal Expos in their annual battle for fifth place.

It will be a good three-team race in the American League (AL) East. The Orioles pulled a major coup in landing Reggie Jackson and Ken Holtzman. If Jackson signs, I'll take Baltimore. If not, I like the New York Yankees. They have traded wisely and still have the game's best pitcher, Catfish Hunter. Boston has my favorite player in Fred Lynn, and they've added Ferguson Jenkins as a hurler, but I think the magic has left Luis Tiant's dancing act on the mound.

I figure the Milwaukee Brewers to finish fourth. They have some good young arms and may trouble contenders. Cleveland lacks pitching but retains a good nucleus of young ballplayers. It remains to be seen whether they can make up for the loss of Oscar Gamble's hair. And yes, Bob LaPorta, the aging and "speedy" Detroit Tigers will finish in the cellar.

The AL West has been called baseball's weakest division, and I won't argue. Unless Paul Mitchell, obtained from Baltimore in the Jackson trade, turns out to be the next Cy Young, I think the Oakland A's finally will succumb to the Kansas City Royals.

The rapid development of third baseman George Brett and the revitalization of John Mayberry have vaulted hopes in Kansas City. The Chicago White Sox, racy uniforms and all, figure to finish third.

Featuring Jeff Burroughs and Mike Hargrove, the Texas Rangers should end up fourth because of a vacancy in the bullpen. The California Angels have added Bobby Bonds and Bill Melton, and if Nolan Ryan has a consistent year, they could threaten. The most nameless, faceless team in baseball, the Minnesota Twins, should wind up sixth.

So there you have it. It's tough to forecast the outcome of a 162-game season, but at least I stabbed at it. I hope the Cardinals win it all, but I won't predict the World Series champ. Seeing how it is the nation's Bicentennial, and I picked Philadelphia in the NL East, would you believe. . . Now, that would be too much.

sports shorts

UNL's crew won one of four 2,000-meter races Sunday at the University of Nebraska Invitational Regatta at Omaha's Carter Lake. UNL finished ahead of Kansas State University to win the women's varsity eight in 8:22.2, while Yale University rowed to victory in the other three races.

Yale's winning time in the women's novice eight was 8:15.5 UNL was third in 8:29.9.

Yale also won the freshman men's eight in 7:38.8, while UNL's "A" team was second in 7:52.8.

Yale won the feature event, the varsity men's eight, in 7:01.4. The Huskers were second in 7:16.2.

The UNL women's softball team, now 3-1, has away games against Concordia Teachers College at Seward today and against Wayne State College Thursday. The Huskers return home for a doubleheader against Northwest Missouri State College Saturday. The home games at the Women's Physical Education Bldg. field start at 1 and 2:30 p.m.