

Huskers skip individual events to bolster relays

By Mike McCarthy

Although the track team qualified for the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships in eight events, it will only run in four.

The championships are at Cobo Arena in Detroit (today) and Saturday with preliminaries to run in the afternoon, and the finals at night.

However, three Huskers who qualified in individual events will be pulled off to help the relay teams, assistant coach Dan Morran said.

Freshman Scott Poehling qualified in the 600- and 880-yard runs, but will skip them to bolster the Huskers' chances in the two-mile relay. Junior Paul McClain also qualified for nationals in the 880-yard run and he will run a leg in the two-mile relay.

The same goes for Husker senior Matt Reckmeyer. He qualified in the 1,000-yard run, but will be used to run the two-mile relay. The fourth Husker leg on the relay is sophomore Ron Fisher.

UNL sophomore Jeff Lee is the only Husker who will compete individually. Lee qualified in the 60-yard high hurdles with a 7.1 second clocking.

"You have to describe Jeff Lee in superlatives,"

Morran said. "He is about as explosive as they come for his size. He may beat everyone to the hurdles in Detroit. If he can run seven seconds, he'll have a good shot at winning."

Morran said UNL is stacking the relays to get more points.

"We feel we have a better chance of placing our relay teams," he added. "We could have placed individuals in events, but that would be a tough road to hold underclassmen to."

"We're hoping the other relay teams will regress in quality when they pull their good runners off to run individual races."

But the Huskers, who are using just the opposite formula to garner points, will try to place the distance medley and mile relay squads.

Huskers Jeff Thurman, Tom Dovel, Keith Whitaker and Harold Stelzer will handle the distance medley. And Ray Mahoney, Ron Hoagland, Dovel and Pat McKenzie will run the mile relay.

"The distance medley has beat some quality teams here (at the UNL Sports Complex)," Morran said, "but to say we could win the race is saying a lot."

"We'll be in the race from front to back," Morran said of the Husker relay that placed last year at nationals.

In the mile relay, Morran said only eight teams across the nation have qualified. Points at nationals are given for the first six teams.

"Teams have won the title with 18 points," Morran added. "If the points are spread out, we'll place high. We'll have to place all three relay teams, and Lee."

"Anytime a team places in the top 10, it's in the very respectable category," he said.

The University of Texas at El Paso, Okla., and Kansas Universities will be the teams to contend with, Morran added.

The Huskers' workouts since the Big 8 meet two weeks ago have "changed to more quality and rest," Morran said. Cobo's track has four-lanes with sharp curves.

"We've been telling our runners to stay out of trouble and stay out of the pack," he said. "We told Reckmeyer, our first runner, to get off to a good jump in the two-mile relay to avoid traffic."

"If anything goes well Saturday night, we'll be very happy," Morran said.

Crew raises money, collects railroad ties

By Kevin Schnepf

If there were a contest for the most original fund-raising idea, the UNL crew club would probably grab first prize.

The crew team this weekend will pick up old railroad ties and sell them to contractors, according to assistant coach Mark Stormberg.

Stormberg said the club members also will sell "Go Big Red" license plates and crew bumper stickers at the state high school basketball tournament this weekend.

In previous years, the crew team has collected S and H green stamps. The team also sponsored a fund-raising drive, Stormberg said.

"We put on a raffle drive called the Cornhusker Sweepstakes," Stormberg said. "It was the biggest fund raiser on the university and we were able to buy a new racing shell."

Stormberg said club members plan to schedule a car wash this spring.

Stormberg acted as the interim head coach for the team until two weeks ago when Frank Sands was named the new head coach.

Sands, a 22-year-old Pennsylvanian native, has eight years of rowing experience and four years of rigging experience.

The Huskers' first meet will be March 26 at Branched Oak Lake against Kansas State University.

Stormberg said the team is in better condition than last year, but said it is behind on technique.

"We're hoping to get some water time," he said, "but we've been involved in building a new 14-station rowing tank. This tank will allow us to practice in the winter and on nasty days."

Stormberg said conditioning has been sped up since the beginning of second semester.

"We've increased our weights and running," he said. "We're still negotiating with the owner of Capitol Beach to see if we can practice there."

Stormberg said the crew team has been practicing on Branched Oak Lake where all meets will be.

Ineligibility disasters can be avoided

By Jim Hunt

When wrestling coach Orval Borgialli lost nine wrestlers because of poor grades and the track team lost one of its most promising triple jumpers it seems that it is time to look at the athlete and education.

Although Borgialli lost from one-third to one-half of his squad, he said one wrestler was ineligible because of a low grade point average (GPA).

That means eight wrestlers were ineligible because they didn't pass at least 12 hours in one semester. This also was

Walsh said most coaches take care of their own athletes.

Walsh handles the academic problems for the football and basketball teams. The freshman athletes on those squads are required to go to Selleck Quadrangle study hall for two hours Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

Borgialli said he has not required that his freshman go to study hall, but after this year's disaster he is going to start requiring them to attend the study sessions.

Travel

Another factor involved in athletes and education is travel.

Walsh said the Athletic Dept. rarely loses the football players and one of the reasons is football players travel less than other athletes.

During the basketball season Joe Cipriano's Huskers often find themselves missing three days of class in a week. This situation is similar in other sports such as wrestling, gymnastics and golf.

Athletes aren't the only students with problems as far as having time to study. True, college athletics do take a lot of time, but there are few students who can make it through the school year without working at least a part-time job.

However, this year might just be a freak year as far as players being ineligible.

Walsh said UNL leads the Big 8 in the number of football players that graduate. Ninety-one per cent of all Husker football players graduate, Walsh said.

Most football players are put on a five-year program when they come to Lincoln, she said. Since many football players are red-shirted, a five-year program allows them to take 12 or 13 hours a semester instead of 15 or 16, Walsh said.

There are some football players that graduate in four years, like Rik Bonness and Tom Ruud but most take an extra semester.

Basketball graduates

Walsh said the graduation rate among Husker basketball players is even higher.

Basketball players are scheduled on a four-year program when they enter UNL, but Walsh encourages them to take at least one summer session.

This year all three basketball seniors, Bob Siegel, Rickey Harris and Allen Holder, will graduate.

Although Borgialli didn't have figures he said the graduation rate among wrestlers was close to 100 per cent before this year. Borgialli said wrestlers work on a four-year academic program.

"I don't try to exploit the kids," Borgialli said. "I try to get them a degree and get them out of here."

It appears to this writer that there is a breakdown of communication between some coaches and Walsh.

She is here to help and willing to help and I think the coaches should use their ability to get the players their degrees.

"My job is not keeping the athletes eligible, but getting them an education," Walsh said.

"Maybe if the coaches let Walsh do her job we can avoid the disaster that took place this year."

rebounds

the case with the Huskers' fine triple jumper. An athlete also must pass at least 24 credit hours in one school year.

In addition, the athlete must maintain a 1.8 GPA, a requirement Ursula Walsh, Athletic Dept. Counselor, said she thinks is realistic.

Most ineligible

Walsh said in her five years at UNL, this year scored among the highest in numbers of ineligible athletes. Any student can have a bad semester, she said.

This writer agrees that any student can have a bad semester. However, one semester would not hurt an athlete if he was not in the Big 8 Conference.

By NCAA rules, if an athlete is eligible at the start of the school year, he is eligible the entire year. This is not the case in the Big 8 where an athlete's eligibility is determined on a semester basis.

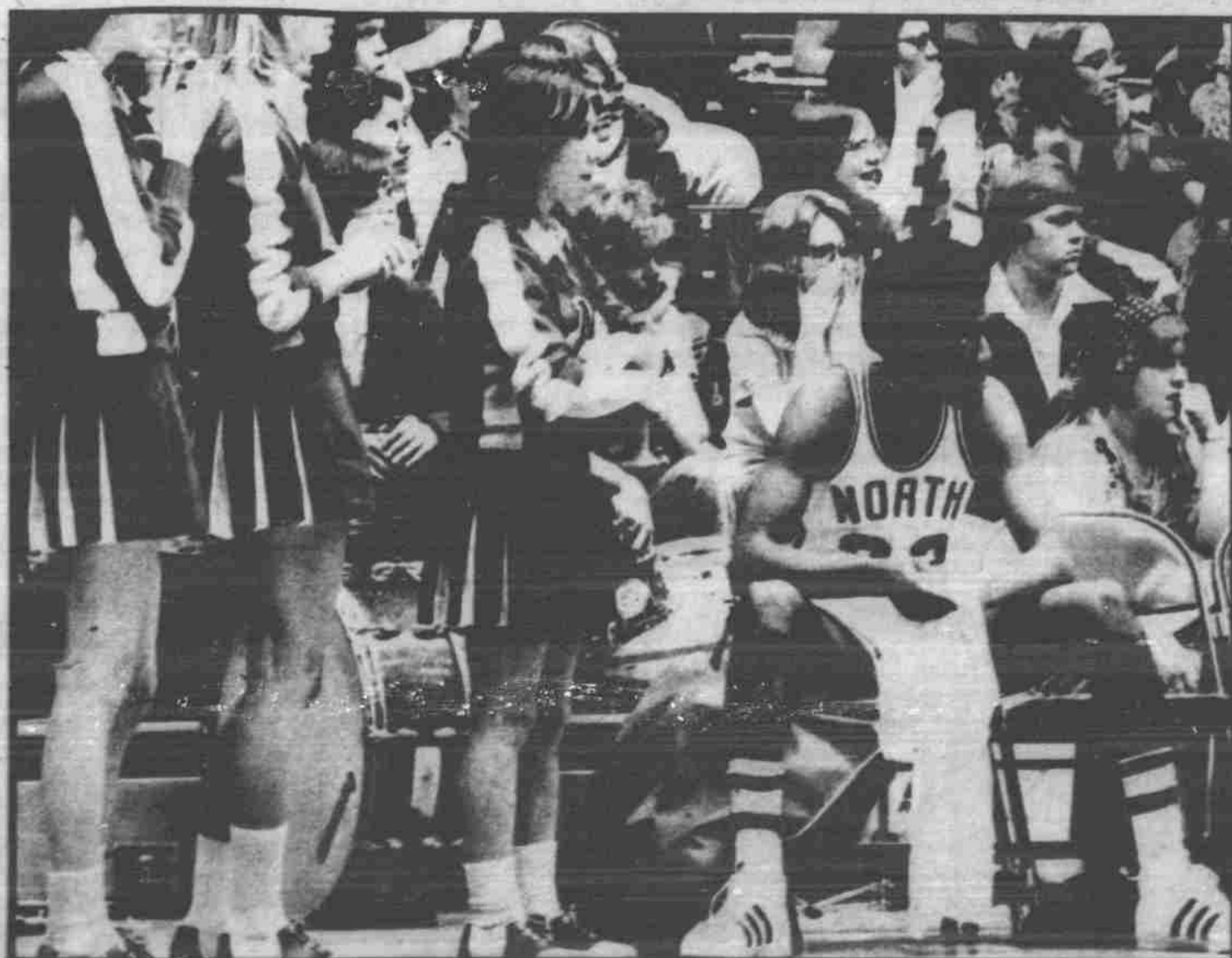


Photo by Ted Kirk

Mike McGee of Omaha North High School, the most prolific scorer in state high school basketball history, watches from the bench as his team is defeated by Omaha Burke. McGee who fouled out with 4:53 left in the last quarter, scored 27 points, bringing his total point output for his career to 1,595, and erasing the old mark of 1,588 points, was set by former Omaha Tech and NU star Fred Hare from 1960-63.



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