

# Women track stars sign Husker letters of intent

By Rob Barney

Four instate female athletes have signed letters of intent to attend UNL, the Women's Athletic Dept. announced Monday.

Nancy Kindig, Robin Hruby, Cindy Tatum and Donna Fox have all returned signed letters of intent to attend UNL on track scholarships.

Kindig, from Hastings St. Cecilia, has let the Blue Hawks to two straight Class C state titles in track.

During her high school career Kindig has gained the all-class gold medal in the 80-yard hurdles twice, plus she has been a member of the gold medal winning 440-yard relay team for two years.

She also anchored the gold medal winning 880-yard relay team in 1975.

Kindig, who also played volleyball and basketball for St. Cecilia, has won the Class C long jump two years and also won the 220-yard dash last year.

She gained national attention in 1975

winning the pentathlon in the USA-USSR 18 and under track meet in Lincoln. She finished third in the meet held in Russia last year.

Kindig also was recruited by Big 8 Conference member Iowa State University.

"I liked Iowa State and they've got a lot going for them, but I just finally decided to stay in Nebraska," she said.

"Cindy Tatum is going to Nebraska and Sondra Obermeier is already there. I know them and went all through school with them and we just thought it would be neat to be on the same team," Kindig said.

Tatum is a sprinter from North Platte. She gained the all-class gold medals in both the 100- and 220-yard dashes her sophomore and junior years. She holds the state record in the 100-yard dash, 10.9, and in the 220, with the 24.9 timing.

Tatum anchored her team's 880-yard relay team to the class A gold in 1975 and the all-class gold in 1976.

Robin Hruby, from Lincoln High

School, has the state record in the discus.

Her 1976 state meet gold medal toss of 144 ft. broke the record previously held by UNL track team member Pam Koontz.

Hruby said she chose UNL because of coach Carol Frost. Frost was an Olympic competitor in 1968.

Hruby also plans to try out for the basketball team, while Tatum said she is going to try out for the volleyball team.

Donna Fox of Bassett is the other signer. She won the all-class 880-yard run and the mile-run, last year with a time of 5:15.5.

Gymnastics coach Judy Schalk said she is confident on landing Beth Brown of Omaha Northwest. Brown was the all-around champion in this year's state meet.

Schalk said she plans to attend the Wisconsin State University women's gym-

nastics meet this weekend to look at Nancy Waalkes. Waalkes was a teammate of present Husker gymnast Crissy Robertson at Brookfield High School.

Basketball and softball coach George Nicodemus said he has committed one of his two present basketball scholarships, but he would not reveal the name.

"I have to talk to some of the girls yet. But it's possible there might be some girls not coming out for the team next year. We'll just have to wait and see," he said.

Nicodemus sent out five scholarships for softball and one has been returned, he said. Again, he did not disclose the name.

Swimming and diving coach Ray Huppert said he has had no response yet from the three letters he sent out. However, Huppert said he is confident of landing at least two of the three he is seeking.

## Inexperience no handicap

By Mike McCarthy

Junior Jeff Schmahl is a late comer into tennis, but the Grand Island native has shaken the inexperience to become the Huskers' number two player.

"I tried out for the high school team when I was a sophomore and made the team," Schmahl said. "Up to that time, I had never picked up a racquet."

"I wasn't big enough to play football and cross-country was too much work, so my friend and I tried out."

Schmahl added that tennis at his high school never was a major sport.

"Grand Island had a terrible, rotten team," he added. "My sophomore year we were 1-9 and went 4-5 my junior year."

The 4-5 record was the best in 10 years at Grand Island.

But the program turned around Schmahl's senior year, when the school finished second at the state tournaments, and Schmahl made it to the semi-finals.

Late start

Schmahl added his late start wasn't unusual.

"It's not like in California where you start playing at 10, and always have someone there to correct your mistakes. We taught ourselves out of tennis magazines," he said.

Once out of high school, Schmahl said

the Husker coaches invited him to try out for the team. They said if he could be one of the top six players, scholarship money would be available, he added.

His freshman year, Schmahl was the Huskers' fifth man, and was rated third last year.

The Huskers' number one player this year is Phil Woog, a Los Angeles native.

"I never put it out of my mind that I can't be number one," Schmahl said, "and I don't think I could ever be number one."

"It is easy to tell who's better over the long run. Sure you might challenge someone for their spot and win, but the coaches know who's really better."

Schmahl said this year's Husker squad is the best since he has been here.

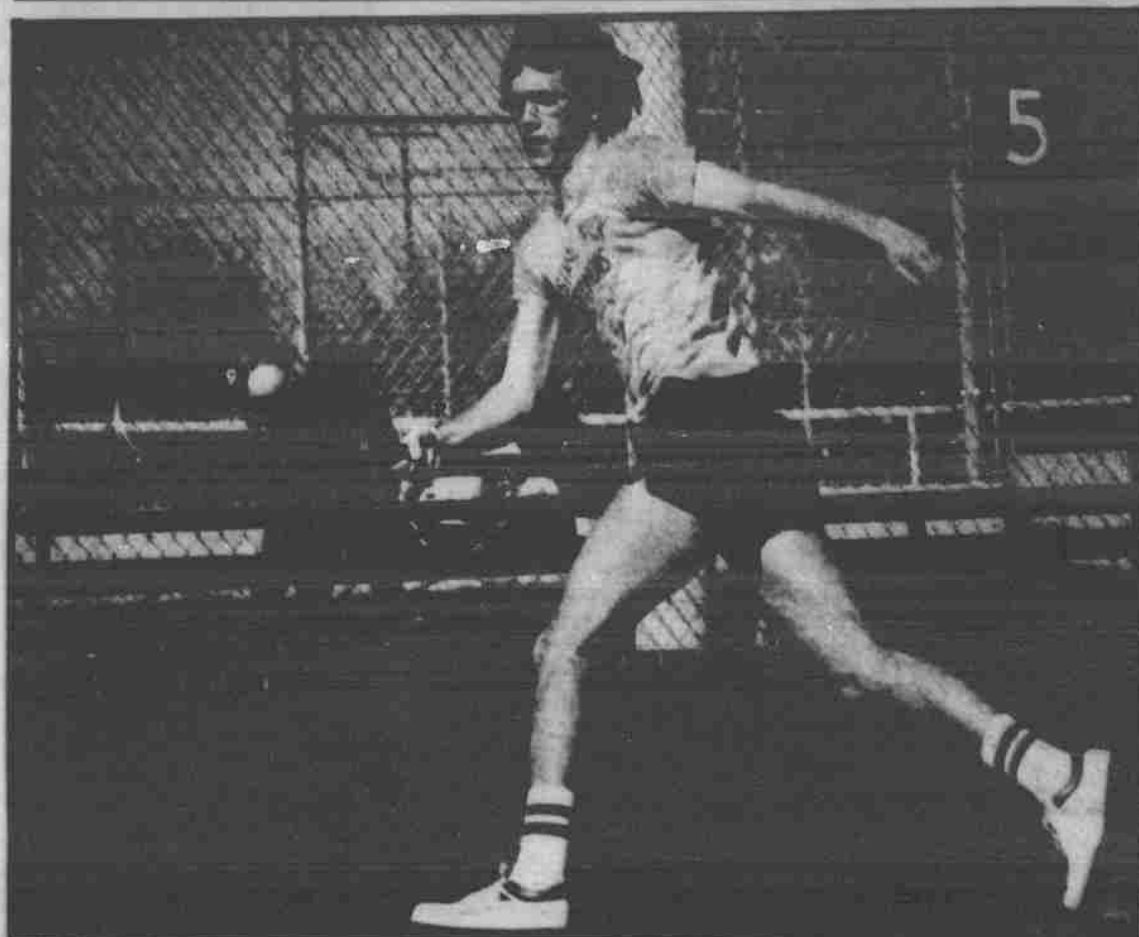
Schmahl said the three freshmen on last year's six-man squad have matured and are playing well this year.

"We'll surprise people," Schmahl added. "If the individuals put it together, we'll be tough."

Schmahl said he wants to place high among the Big 8 second-ranked players.

"I know I can compete at any level," he added. "No one is going to blow me off the court."

Schmahl and the other Huskers start their outdoor season after Spring break.



Jeff Schmahl, the number-two-ranked Husker tennis player, practices on the courts at Woods Park.

## Big 8 gymnastics titles on the line for UNL, Gerard

By Jim Kay

When the UNL gymnastics team travels to Lawrence, Kan., Thursday, junior Larry Gerard will have a little more at stake than the average gymnast.

The Huskers will be on the University of Kansas campus to defend their Big 8 Conference championship while Gerard will be there to defend the all-around title he won at last year's meet.

The pressures of defending the all-around title from

challengers like the University of Oklahoma's Bart Connor are there, Gerard said.

"Connor will be tough but I feel I can beat him," Gerard said. "Who ever hits all 12 sets (events) and is consistent will win."

Gerard said the pressure of carrying the Huskers scoring load also was evident this season.

"I felt the pressure a lot of times," he said. "When

my turn came to do a routine in an event where I can't miss, the guys would come up and say 'come on Gerard, come on Gerard' one after another. It's nice to have team support but that can either psych you up or psych you out."

Team is improving

The gymnasts as a team are improving consistently in intrasquad meets, he said.

"We're the team to beat. We really haven't had a good meet yet, but everyone is hitting well in practice. We're not out to beat any one team but to score well. It will be a total team effort."

Gerard won the high bar event enroute to the all-around victory at last year's championship. He also placed third in the still rings, fifth in the vault and sixth on the parallel bars. His winning all-around total of 105.45 points was almost two full points ahead of second place finisher Gene Mackie of UNL.

Gerard said the season as a whole has not been a disappointment to him, but added that he did have some disappointing moments.

"It hasn't been a disappointment because my training and workouts have been the best in my life," Gerard said. "I'm doing much harder tricks this year."

"There was a meet early in the year that I lost by three-tenths of a point. And I wanted to defend my title at the Midwest Chicago meet which I didn't. Those were disappointments."

Disappointments forgotten

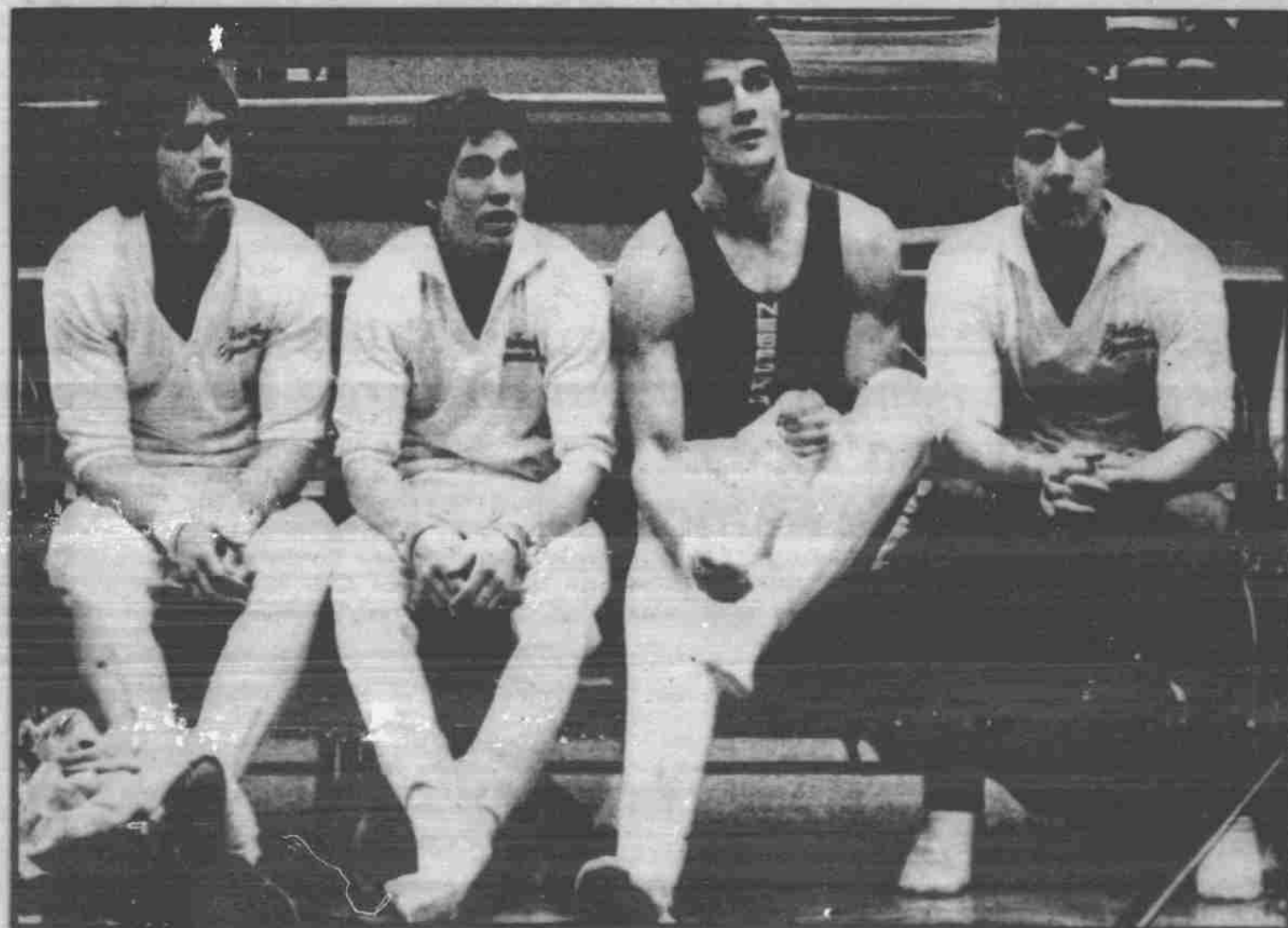
Gerard said he has forgotten those early disappointments and now is concentrating on winning the Big 8 and national all-around titles.

"I want to win Big 8 and nationals," Gerard said, "and I'll try to do my best. If I hit top five at nationals I'll be happy because then I'll be able to compete in the University Games."

Gerard, who has competed on the international level in China, said the University Games are an optional only competition in Sofia, Yugoslavia, this summer.

"I miss competing on the international level. It's different than competing for your school but I do my best possible in both. It's more of a team thing at school but it's for the whole country with the U.S.A. on your chest."

The United States Collegiate Sports Council will choose the five gymnasts to compete in the University Games based on seasonal and national meet performances.



Husker gymnast Larry Gerard (second from left) has felt the pressure from teammates of being an All-American. This weekend Gerard will defend his Big 8 Conference all-around title.

Photo by Kevin Higley

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