

sports

UNL gymnasts hope World Games bring U.S. medal

By Mary Ryan

In the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, American gymnast Peter Korman won a bronze medal in the floor exercise. It was the first medal for a United States male gymnast in the Olympics or World Games in 44 years.

Two members of the UNL's men's gymnastics team would like to see that it is not another 44 years before the U.S. wins another medal in those competitions.

Senior Larry Gerard and freshman Jim Hartung participated in the World Games trials in Oklahoma City, where Hartung finished third and Gerard tenth. The competition decided the team that will be sent to France for the World Games Oct. 22-29.

The only difference between the Olympic and World Games is that the World Games are only for gymnastics and the Olympics have other sports, Hartung said.

"The World Games and the Olympics are as high as you can go in gymnastics," he said.

The top six finishers made the team but there was only a one point difference between the fifth and tenth place scores, UNL Coach Francis Allen said, adding that Gerard missed tricks on two events, losing "1.50 points on the horse alone."

"I fell off the sidehorse at the end of the routine," said Gerard, who broke his finger in the mishap. "I had completed the whole routine and then I fell off. My body got going too fast and was ahead of my mind and that's what happens."

Was disappointed

He said he was disappointed in not making the team but felt that he had improved to be able to score 107.6 with two major breaks.

Hartung, who scored 112.35 to better his personal high by exactly two points, said, "I was pretty happy with the compulsory exercises. I've improved on them from the USA championships (in June) by two points.

"I was a little unhappy with the optional exercises. I made a few mistakes that I didn't want to make."

He said he had major breaks on the pommel horse and high bar because he was trying new tricks, but added, "I would rather try them here than in France."

Like Hartung, Gerard's other break was also on the high bar.

"I went a little conservative," he said. "There should not be changes at the last minute. I didn't do what I was supposed to do."

Gerard said he found the failure to qualify for the World Games a disappointment because he had felt he was ready for the competition before it started.

'Hit routines'

"My inclination was to hit all my routines," he said. "I felt ready, maybe I wasn't psychologically. I haven't been in competition in a year (he was redshirted and had an ankle injury) and maybe it was a hidden psychological disadvantage because they had been participating and I hadn't."

"It was a high caliber meet and very important and I took it like that. . . I really wanted to make the team."

To make the Olympic squad, Gerard said he has to work on being consistent.

"It is important to hit all six events in every meet I go to," he said.

Allen said, "One more meet and he will be ready to do well again. He has all the skills; all he needs is to get the tumbling back up."

All Hartung needs to do, Allen said, is to "keep progressing the way he has been."

"He's the gymnast the Olympic program is looking forward to having in the Olympic games," Allend said. "He could be slated for a medal in the World Championships. He is one of the best vaulters and he has proven himself on the horse. He won a gold medal in Moscow last year (in the Moscow News and Riga meet.)"

Hartung wasn't as sure of his chances.

"I don't think I am going to win a medal, but if I had to choose an event, it would be in floor exercise or the pommel horse. As far as that goes, I am not thinking of that, but how to help the team," he said.

The U.S. team has never finished higher than fifth in

the competition, Hartung said.

"Russia and Japan will finish one-two but there will be a battle for third and we have an excellent chance for the third place medal," he said.

Hartung has been thinking about 1980 since he was about 15, he said, when he competed in the Junior Olympics. He won the title two years in a row and people started talking to him about it.

Making the World Games team is a major step on the way to the Olympics and to make the games, Hartung said, he has to keep doing what he is doing.

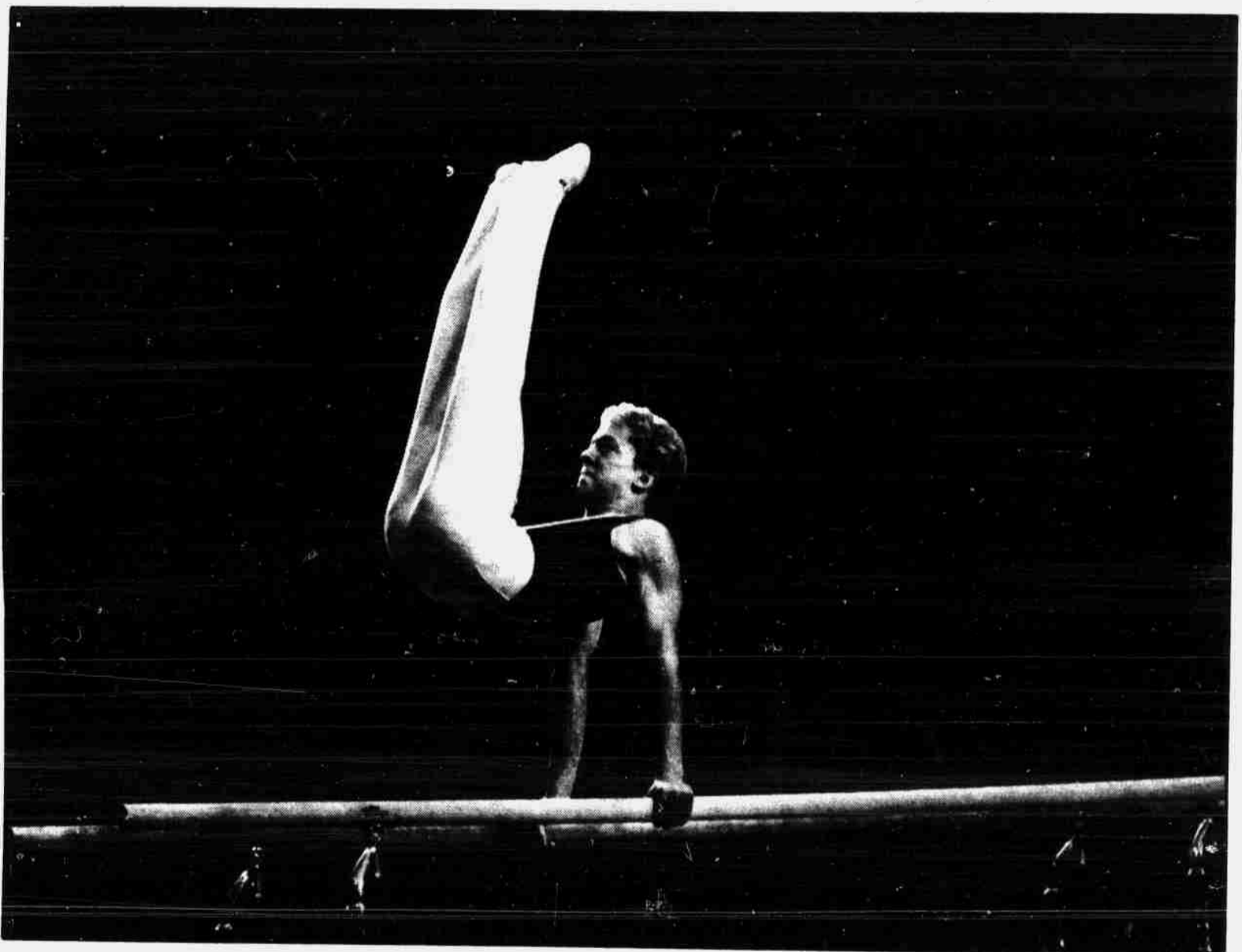
"If I just keep improving at the rate I am," he said. "I don't have to change anything and I could work on my routines a bit more."

Gerard said he first thought of the Olympics when he qualified for the semi-finals in 1975 and he was rated fifth in the nation in the all-around.

"I did well that year in college competition," he said.

With a career high score of 109.55, Gerard is confident he can make the team after just missing in 1976.

"I haven't seen me at my best yet," he said.



UNL gymnast Jim Hartung qualified for the World Games in France by finishing third in the trials at Oklahoma City. Photo by Mark Williams

Disciplined soccer club kicking through rough schedule

By Brad Horky

With 60 percent of its squad new, the UNL Soccer Club has started the season with a 1-1-1 record and hopes of improving.

Head coach Ron Joyce thinks the newcomers eventually will adapt to a different style of play.

"Most of our new players have come out of the Omaha school system where they have a good soccer program," Joyce said. "But playing on a college level is much different than high school."

"We've started the season with a loss to UNO, a tie with Creighton, and a win over York College," Joyce said. "As the new players adapt and start playing up to their potential, we'll be very competitive the rest of the season."

Organization is one of the reasons that Joyce feels this team can become a good outfit.

More discipline

"At the beginning of the year I started requiring more discipline from the players. We now have physical drills, and have specific squads play together most of the time so they get used to playing with each other."

"Last year the players would just come out here and get a ball and start playing."

According to Joyce, the soccer team has a rugged schedule this year and plays about 30 games.

"On Oct. 21, we travel to Boulder, Colo., to take on Colorado University's Soccer Club. They're real good, they're the defending Big 8 champs," he said.

"I feel we can give them a real good game if the players play up to their potential."

Cross-state rival UNO is always a big contest for the Huskers. In the first meeting this year, UNO won 2-0.

Grass an advantage

"UNO is a big game for us every time we play them," Joyce said. "They took us 2-0 the first time but we play them here later this month. And like I said, if the players play up to their potential we can beat them."

"One thing that will help us is when they play down here it will be on grass. At UNO we played on their AstroTurf and they are a quick, running team. Grass is different."

Sixth-year player Dave Egr can also

see the team improving.

"The last game we played (York) we played much better," Egr said. "We have a lot of good players out of Omaha and they'll improve with experience. When we played UNO it was on the AstroTurf and under the lights. We're used to always playing during the day."

"The schedule gets much tougher as we go," Egr said. "Colorado is probably our toughest opponent since they're defending Big 8 champs. Soccer has two seasons, fall and spring. The spring season is even tougher."

Soccer funds

Like many of the university club sports, soccer is self-supporting. They cover most of their uniform costs and travel expenses

with the dues each player pays at the beginning of the season. Joyce said it would still be awhile before soccer is a varsity sport.

"When I spoke to Mr. Devaney (athletic director) the thought that soccer would be a varsity sport within three or four years," Joyce said. "Scholarships are the main problem. If you are going to compete on a varsity level, you have to be able to pass out scholarships."

Money is also important, he said. "Two years ago we beat Colorado, but since then their university has been helping them with funds. Now they are a real good team," Egr said. "It could be their new coach or the money, but it (money) helps."

Huskers joined by 146 flag football teams

By Brad Horky

The Cornhuskers won't be the only football team on campus this fall. They are joined by 146 men's intramural flag football teams.

The flag football program started Monday with fraternities, residence halls and independent teams competing.

"We'll have about a five-week regular season and then run about a two-week playoff," said Intramural Coordinator Gale Wiedow. "We hope to be done a week prior to Thanksgiving vacation."

The all-university playoffs will include 16 teams at the end of the season. The 16 teams will consist of the top two teams in

the fraternity A, B, and C divisions; the top two teams in the Residence Hall A, B, and C divisions; and the top two clubs in the Independent A and B divisions.

"The biggest problem we have is supplying enough refs," Wiedow said. "As of right now we have some people that are going to be working long hours."

There have been considerably fewer injuries in the last three years of play in the intramural program, Wiedow said. He added he would like to think the flag football rules are the main reason for the lack of injuries. There have been some recent changes in the rules.

Rubber-cleated shoes are now allowed and this season the major penalties have

been changed from 15 to 10 yards because of the small playing area.

Wiedow said he feels the teams that have the most experience together usually enjoy the most success.

"The teams that have played together adapt to the rule modifications better," Wiedow said. "The last two years an independent has won the all-university title and the year before that it was a frat team. It goes in cycles."

The intramural games are being played on the fields between 17th and 19th streets on Vine Street. Anyone who is interested in officiating the games should contact the University Department of Recreation at 17th and Vine Streets.