



Photo by Mary Anne Golon

Senior All American Larry Gerard executes a split during his floor exercise routine in practice at the Sports Center.

# Top gymnastic teams meet in Ames

Three of the best gymnastics teams in the nation will clash Saturday in Ames, Ia. when top-ranked Nebraska takes on second-ranked Oklahoma and fourth-ranked Iowa State in a triangular meet.

Husker gymnastic Coach Francis Allen, who is in his ninth year at NU said, the triangular proves to be the biggest meet of the year.

"The meet isn't too important for the teams' rankings," Allen said. "But whoever wins the meet will have a psychological advantage over the other teams."

"The way the boys perform is also very important because the top dog is always favored in later meets," he said.

Allen said the national championship will come down to Nebraska and Oklahoma.

"It depends on which team avoids any injuries that may occur in the meets," he said.

Oklahoma's top performers this year are Bart Conner and Mike Wilson, Allen said, while Iowa State's depth is its biggest asset.

The Cyclones Coach Ed Gagnier has more quantity than quality, Allen said.

The Huskers are led by freshman Jim Hartung who is considered to be one of the best all-arounders in the country. All-American Larry Gerard, Mark Williams, and Chuck Chmelka also are Husker all-arounders.

Williams, a junior from LaGrange Park, Ill., is a very important man on the team, according to Allen.

"Mark sets the pace of the meet for Hartung and Gerard, our top two performers," he said.

Williams said he has a different job than the other team members.

Williams, who finished sixth in the nation on the horizontal bar last year, said the Iowa State meet will be com-

parable to the regional meet in March.

"We feel it will be some kind of indication of what will happen later," Williams said.

The NU gymnasts performed during halftime of Wednesday night's basketball game and were complimented with a standing ovation by the crowd of more than 10,000 persons.

Allen said the Huskers are hoping for a large crowd at their first home meet on Feb. 10 against Kansas.

"This is the first year we have been rated number one and we also have some publicity which may help attendance," Allen said.

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# Track team runs into opening meet

By Kirk Wolgamott

Backed by two teams which have already qualified for the NCAA national meet, Nebraska opens its 1979 indoor track season against Southern Illinois Saturday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The Husker Thinclads, under Head Coach Frank Sevigne, are seeing their first team action this season. Earlier this year, Sevigne took his one-and two-mile relay teams to the Eastern Tennessee Invitational in Johnson City, Tenn.

The Huskers sped to a new school record in the mile relay with a clocking of 3:11.66, a time which is under the Big Eight indoor mark. This qualified Scott Poehling, Ray Mahoney, Pat McKenzie and Everton DaCosta for the NCAA national meet to be held in March in Detroit.

The two-mile relay also qualified for the NCAA meet with a time of 7:33.5 in winning the championship at Johnson City. The relay team consisted of Poehling, Mark Fluitt, Brian Dunnigan and Tim McCashland.

### Missed by inches

"I was real pleased to take two teams down early and do so well," Sevigne said. "We won one and missed winning the other by inches, while beating such good teams as Villinova and Tennessee."

The two relay teams were sparked by the running of Poehling. A junior from Fremont, he has been the mainstay for the Husker's middle distance team. Last season, Poehling won the Big Eight title in the outdoor 800 meter with a clocking of 1:48.28 and anchored the mile relay team to the indoor title and a Big Eight record time of 3:12.76.1. Poehling also went on to place second in the indoor 600 yard run with a time of 1:10.28.

"Scott has been working hard this season. I am pleased with the way his workouts are going," Sevigne said.

Poehling's roommate, Lee Kunz, will make his debut Saturday on the Husker indoor team. Kunz, last year's Big Eight champion in the discus, an outdoor event, will participate in the high jump. Kunz was a Colorado state high school champion in the high jump at 6'7"

Other newcomers for the 1979 Husker team includes freshman middle distance runners Paul Downes, McCashland and Bryan Ness. Pole vaulter Todd Hinkle, a former Nebraska state champion from Lincoln East also will join the ranks.

### Jumpers add depth

Jumpers Todd Brown of Holdrege and Steve Chapman of Lincoln also come from successful high school careers that add depth to the Husker's squad.

Another new face with the Huskers this year is field event coach Dick Railsback. Railsback, from Pasadena, Cal., has spent the last three years coaching the Saudi Arabian team. He coached the Olympic team from Saudi Arabia at the Montreal games in 1976.

"He's a great athlete who has outstanding credentials as a field event coach. We feel that Dick is an outstanding coach who can really assist in our growing program," Sevigne said.

"The SIU meet should be a good challenge for the Huskers. Traditionally they are fairly good," Sevigne said. "They look real good on paper."

Last week SIU had a meet with Big Eight powerhouse Kansas. Sevigne said KU prevailed in a close, hard fought meet.

While the men compete against SIU, two other duals will be running simultaneously. The other two meets feature the UNL Lady Huskers against Iowa State and Doane against Nebraska Wesleyan.

Starting time of the meet is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. with the field events first and the first running events starting at 3 p.m.

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