

sports

UNL gymnastics squads hoping for third victory

By Sara Martens

The UNL men's and women's gymnastic teams will try to prove this weekend that history does not repeat itself.

Last year, the UNL men's team lost duals to Oklahoma, Iowa State, and Southern Illinois.

This year, the team has defeated Oklahoma and Iowa State and will have a chance at Southern Illinois at a dual meet at 1 p.m. in the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Last year, a week after edging out Colorado for the Big Eight title, the women's team met CU again and lost.

This year, a week after winning the Big Eight over Colorado again, the women will host the Buffaloes Saturday also at 1 p.m.

"This will be a grudge match for them without a doubt," said Judy Schalk, the women's coach. "But there is not much of a chance that Colorado can win."

Schalk said Colorado is an excellent team but that the Huskers are hitting consistently enough to win. The home advantage and crowd support are also a plus for the Huskers, she said.

Colorado's strong point is Debbie Wilcox, a former Olympian and the team's number one all-arounder, she said.

"It will play hard on our girls to beat her. She will have to miss for one of our girls to win the all-around title," Schalk said.

The Husker's team depth should place them in the number two, three and four all-around spots and give them the win, she said.

Most of the women on the team are suf-

fering from some sort of late season chronic injury, Schalk said, "but it's nothing they haven't been working with and living with."

Injuries could play a role in the men's meet as Southern Illinois' number one and two all-arounder may see only limited action.

Assistant Husker Coach Jim Howard said Nebraska does not know if Kirk Adams, a member of the U.S. National team, or Kevin Muenz will be able to compete.

"They are competitive without those two but it will be a really competitive meet with them," Howard said.

Nebraska will be without specialist Richard Brindisi, who injured a foot in the Oklahoma meet, and Steve Elliott, who will be diving for the UNL swimming team.

Howard said there has been a tendency to relax this week following the Oklahoma meet, but that the team will be ready to perform on Saturday.

"I'm not sure we can reach 222 like last week, but we are definitely looking for a good meet," he said.

Howard said Southern Illinois, 11th-ranked in the nation, consistently scores around 217.

Coach Francis Allen said Jim Hartung will be ready to perform Saturday despite his busy weekend schedule.

Hartung will compete in the Mardi Gras Invitational in Baton Rouge, La. tonight and will return Saturday morning for the Husker dual.

The invitational is a very prestigious meet, featuring the top male and female gymnasts in the country, Howard said.

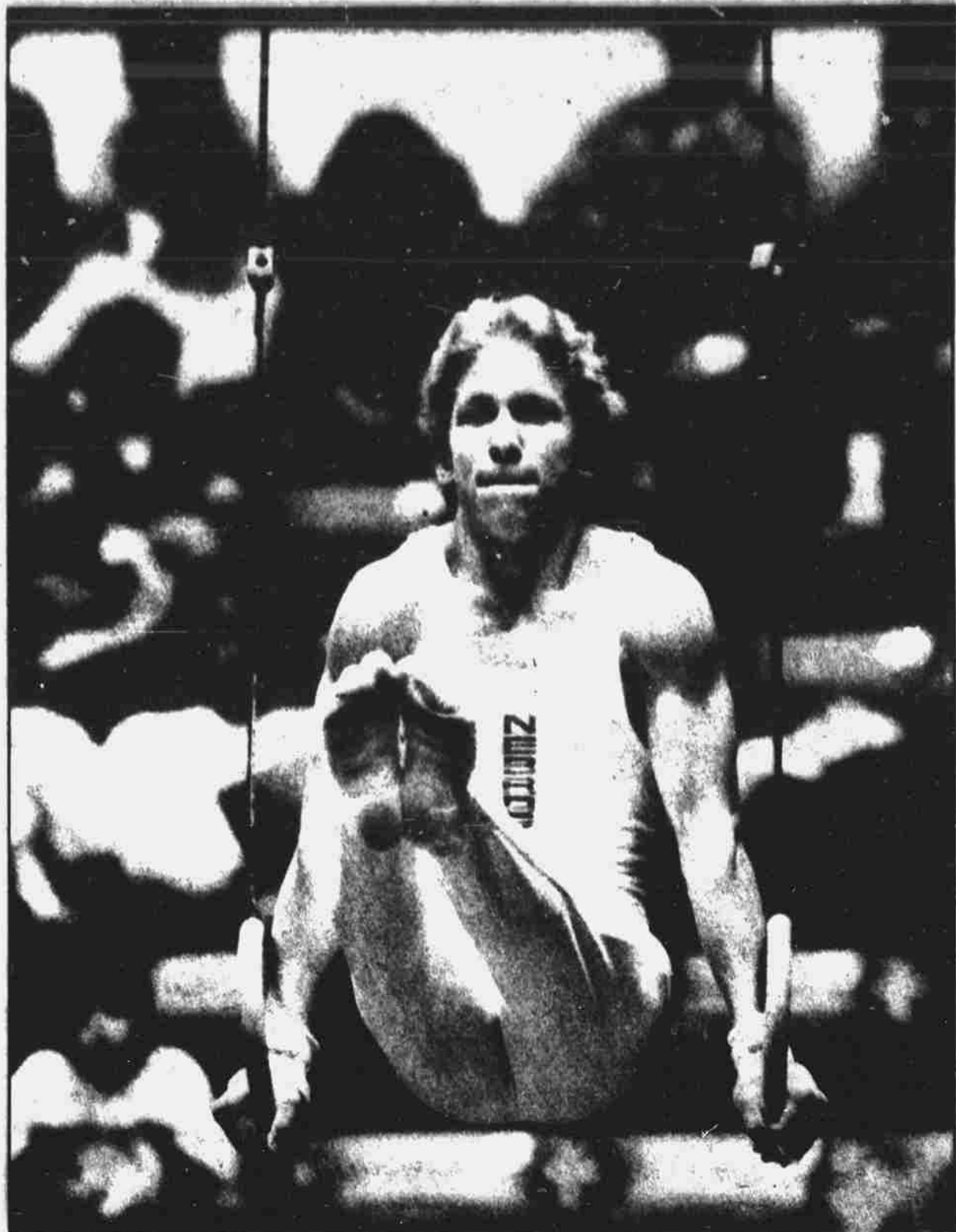


Photo by Ted Kirk

Jim Hartung, the nation's top-ranked gymnast

Big Eight track title winner tough to predict—MU coach

By Rick Huls
Sports Editor

Nebraska's track team, unbeaten in indoor competition this year, is a favorite for the Big Eight Indoor Track and Field Championships this weekend in Oklahoma City.

NU Coach Frank Sevigne has not said his team should be the favorite to win the championship. But, he said he believes they are one of the favorites.

Perennial power Kansas, which has won three of the last four titles, and Missouri, winner of six previous Big Eight championships are considered the top contenders, Sevigne said.

Just how balanced is the league this year?

Balanced enough that Missouri Coach Bob Teel isn't going to figure the totals before the meet.

"I used to sit down and figure it out but the totals never come out right," Teel said.

This year's showdown could be the most difficult meet for anyone to predict, he said.

Six top teams

"At least six teams have said all along that they could win the Big Eight," he said. "I just hope we're among them."

Besides Missouri, Teel also believes Nebraska ("they have the best balance right now") and Kansas ("they've run on that track a couple of times this season") could have an edge.

But he concedes Oklahoma, Iowa State and Kansas State should have a say in the final outcome.

"There's going to be so much cutting up of strengths by other teams that it might be a case of who gets hurt the least," he added.

Nebraska will be one of the teams trying to juggle people because of its strength in the middle distances.

Scott Poehling leads the conference and the nation's charts in the 600 (1:09.6) and the 880 (1:48.97). Mark Fluitt has conference-leading times in the 1,000 (2:10.07) and the mile run (4:05.56) and Brian Dunningan ranks second in the mile and two

mile and fourth in the 1,000 on the conference charts.

Secret schedule

Sevigne has said he is keeping it a secret how he will split up his runners. But he would like to know what Lester Mickens, Kansas' defending 600 champ, and Scott Clark, Missouri defending 880 winner are going to run.

Besides Poehling and Fluitt, Nebraska has four other conference leading times, but one of them won't help the Huskers anyway.

Playoff questions will be answered soon

By Lee Barfknecht

With the Big Eight basketball race scrambled even further after Wednesday night's action, it'll probably take the league office longer to figure the number of playoff possibilities than for the teams to play the games.

However, one fact comes through the confusion loud and clear for Nebraska with just one game left in league play. Even if the Huskers win at home Saturday night against Oklahoma State, they are not assured of the home court advantage for the first round of the post-season tournament.

Nebraska, now tied for fifth place with Iowa State at 6-7 and 13-12 overall, could finish anywhere from third to seventh, depending on Saturday's games. Only the top four teams host home first round playoffs.

Randy Brooks leads the conference times in the low hurdles with a time of 6.75. NU also has the best times in the mile and two-mile relays and distance medley. The distance medley, however, is an NCAA event but is not on the Big Eight card.

The only returning individual champion for Nebraska is high jumper Doug Phelps, who also won the outdoor title last year. Phelps has again cleared 7-foot this year after deciding to return to the team despite medical school studies.

Nebraska finished second to Kansas, 93.6-87.2, in last year's conference meet in Lincoln.

This weekend will be the first time this season that NU hasn't competed in the Bob Devaney Sports Center. The 51st Big Eight meet will be held on the curved boards of the 10-lap-to-the-mile track at The Myriad, Oklahoma City's municipal auditorium.

The track preliminaries and finals in the shot put and long jump are scheduled tonight and the finals are set for Saturday night.

Before any thoughts of a home playoff can be addressed though, the Huskers have to beat Oklahoma State, a 66-57 winner over Nebraska at Stillwater Jan. 31. OSU is 5-8 in league play and 12-13 overall.

Cipriano said his team will need to hit from the outside to beat the Cowboys.

"Oklahoma State runs a zone and they change it according to the offense you run," Cipriano said. "We haven't adjusted to it very well, especially inside, so we'll have to shoot well from the outside."

On offense, 6-3 senior guard Mark Tucker has paced the Cowboys. Tucker leads the Cowboys in scoring with 17.5 points a game, but he missed Wednesday's contest with Colorado with the flu. He is expected to be ready for Saturday's game however.

With Tucker gone Wednesday, junior

forward Don Youman took up the slack by hitting a game-high 18 points, including the winning basket with seven seconds left, to lead Oklahoma State to a 55-53 win over Colorado.

The 6-2 Youman scores at a 15.9 clip besides leading the Cowboys in rebounding with just over 10 a game.

Cipriano said he thought the Huskers did a good job against Youman in Stillwater, but that 6-8 center Jon Moorehead caused Nebraska problems.

An Iowa State win and a Nebraska loss could buy the Huskers as far as seventh place in the conference.

Only Oklahoma at 9-4 and Kansas State at 8-5 are assured first-round home playoff games. Those two teams will meet Saturday in Norman to decide the conference title.

sports shorts

Jim Porter's Nebraska tennis team opens the 1979 season this weekend when it hosts the Nebraska Invitational at the Bob Devaney Sports Center Indoor Track.

The Huskers are entertaining Kansas,

Doane and Northern Iowa in the three day round robin tournament. NU was scheduled to face Doane Thursday and Friday meets Kansas at 1 p.m. and Northern Iowa at 7 p.m. The action concludes Saturday morning.

"This weekend should provide a good start on the season," Porter said. "Kansas is the strongest of the teams we'll face in the meet, but all of the teams have some good players and I'm certain there will be some good competitive matches."