

Goal now in sight for UNL tankers

By Paul Martin

The ultimate goal—the Big Eight championship—is in sight and this weekend the UNL women's swimming team will make the final turn in the road leading to their opportunity to achieve it.

In their final competitive action prior to hosting the Big Eight Championships Feb. 21-23, they will make a brief southern swing to face Texas Christian and Oklahoma in successive duals Friday and Saturday nights.

Although the meets are not totally unimportant, the team has its sights zeroed in on the Big Eight meet, according to junior co-captain JoDea Eckstrom.

"You always want to win," Eckstrom said, "but our main goal is the Big Eight."

Coach Ray Huppert agreed by saying that the team is preparing to go into a "tapering off" period before the conference championships.

"We're already lost more duals than in the four years I've been here combined," he said. "But you've got to keep your priorities in perspective."

Good Experience

While TCU's women's program is still in its early stages of development and may not be overly difficult to defeat, Oklahoma is not an easy place to win and should be good experience, according to Huppert.

"It's very tough to win in Norman," Huppert said. "They are awfully strong in their own pool."

"It seems to be darker down there," Huppert said. "But I think that is something good competitors have to overcome," he added.

The darkness, Huppert said, makes it difficult for swimmers to anticipate their turns.

The swimmers are coming off of a 70-61 dual win against Iowa State last Saturday.

Team ready

Huppert said the team is ready for the Big Eight Championships and they have done what they've needed to do throughout the year in order to have a shot at the conference title.

"They're working harder than any team I've ever had at Nebraska," Huppert said. "And they're going to be ready to go."

In the meet with Texas Christian, Huppert said, "we're getting our feet wet" with Southwestern Conference swimming. In years to come they hope to compete against stronger SWC teams scheduled from this conference such as Texas or Houston, he said.

Rugged Competition

Huppert said the team has seen plenty of rugged competition this year against teams such as Michigan and Wisconsin and added that he wouldn't have it any other way.

"I'd still swim these same schools if I had it do over again," Huppert said. "The top competition has helped us toward achieving our main goal of winning the Big Eight."

After the dual meets this weekend, the entire team will begin its "tapering off" period, according to Eckstrom.

"Basically tapering off is going down in yardage and getting plenty of rest," Eckstrom said.

"Swimming is a lot of mind," she said. "You've got to have confidence in the taper."

Although every swimmer will do her best this weekend, Eckstrom said, at this point each one wants to save her best time for the Big Eight meet.

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