

sports

Tracksters hope for NCAA qualifiers

By Scott Ahlstrand

The 1980 Husker Invitational this Saturday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center promises to be one of the highlights of the indoor track season. The meet features seven teams, and several NCAA champions.

Southern California, Houston, Illinois, Iowa, Iowa State, Missouri and UNL will compete.

The Huskers are hoping to bounce back from a disappointing loss to Kansas last week. The Jayhawks defeated Nebraska 87-44, but Nebraska Assistant Coach Dick Railsback feels that the score was somewhat misleading.

"We really didn't do that bad," Railsback said. "It's just that Kansas wanted it more than us. They just kept nosing us out for those second and third places."

Although the Husker Invitational is a very competitive meet for individuals, no team scores are kept. The format for the Invitational emphasizes the relay events, and the lack of team competition takes some of the pressure off the runners.

Good chance

Nebraska Coach Frank Sevigne feels that the meet is a good opportunity to qualify some relay teams for the NCAA championships.

"One of the reasons the invitational was started was to qualify the relay teams for the NCAAs," said Sevigne. "The format allows us to concentrate athletes in one or two events, and not run them to death to win a dual."

Another advantage the Huskers hope to derive from the meet, is the valuable exper-

ience they can gain from watching world class athletes. "We really have a young field (events) team this year," said Railsback. "It'll be a great experience for them just to watch some of these great athletes compete; to see how they handle themselves, and the poise they show in the meet."

Although Nebraska is young in the field events, it has some experienced competitors, among them junior pole vaulter Randy Raymond. Raymond, who holds both Nebraska's indoor and outdoor records, is expected to finish high in the meet, Sevigne said. After clearing 16'6" against Kansas, Raymond is ready to reach new plateaus, Railsback said.

Good assets

"Randy combines such a good combination of speed, size (6-1, 175 pounds), and

strength, I can't see him doing anything but getting better," said Railsback. "He gives 110 percent every time. He's gained consistency, and I think he's ready to start clearing higher vaults."

Raymond is only one of the Huskers who is expected to do well in the invitational. Nebraska returns three runners from last year's NCAA champion indoor two mile relay team. They are, senior co-captain Scott Poehling, junior Brian Dunnigan, and sophomore Paul Downes.

Among the other favorites in the Invitational, are defending NCAA champions Mark Baughman, a shot putter from Houston; Missouri's high jump champ Nat Page; and Southern California's Billy Mullins, the 400 meter champion, and Joao Olivira the world record holder in the triple jump.

KU gym coach: win impossible in dual

By Paul Martin

In its first competition since knocking off Iowa State and Oklahoma at the Bob Devaney Sports Center Jan. 26, the UNL men's gymnastics team swings back into action Saturday when they travel to Lawrence, Kan. for a dual meet with the Jayhawks.

"We had a couple days of letdown after the big win over Iowa State," Nebraska Head Coach Francis Allen said. "But we're starting to put more pressure on now and we're hoping to score over 275 points against Kansas," he said.

There is every possibility that the Huskers could do just that, according to Kansas Head Coach Ken Snow.

Most talented

"In November they looked a little ragged," Snow said. "But they're a lot tougher now and have the most talented gymnasts in the conference," he said. "So they're certainly capable of it."

Realistically, Snow said, a win against Nebraska will be impossible. But he said the meet should help his team "start getting things together."

"We're not competitive with Nebraska right now and we know that," he said. "They'll be coming down here to get a good score but this isn't our goal," he said.

"We going to try to upgrade our routines a little bit and try to develop the sense that we can compete with teams like Nebraska and Oklahoma," Snow said.

The two week layoff for the Huskers has been beneficial, according to Allen.

"It has been ideal," Allen said. "It has given us a chance to regroup both physically and mentally," he said.

Bad luck

Kansas has been plagued by bad luck since the beginning of the season, Snow said.

"We are pretty well hurting right now," Snow said. "We started the season with a team that was small in number and have lost some kids who have become ineligible," he said. "We've also lost some kids through injuries."

"Right now we have one of our all-arounders, Marshall Kelly, in the hospital," Snow said. "We've got some other aches and pains and may not have five routines in some events," he added.

Snow said the Jayhawks would do the best they could with what they have.

"Since we're not really competitive anyway, we just want to work on putting together as many quality routines as we can," Snow said.

Snow said a few years ago you could get by in the Big Eight without any top notch performers, but added that is not the case anymore.

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Women cagers lose 65-64 to Missouri

The Nebraska women's basketball team lost to Missouri 65-64 in Columbia Wednesday night.

The Huskers, now 17-13, were led by freshman Kathy Hagerstrom's 15 points and senior Diane DelVigna's 14 points.

Missouri's Jenny Skimbo converted a three-point play with 1:16 remaining to give the Tigers a 65-63 lead. DelVigna was fouled, but hit only one of her two free throws with :58 seconds left in the game.

The Huskers face Central Missouri State next Friday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Cagers hope to break pattern

By Ron Powell

Although Iowa State is at the bottom of the Big Eight standings, the UNL men's basketball team isn't about to look past the Cyclones.

The past two seasons the Huskers have beaten the Cyclones in Ames (62-56 in 1978 and 72-68 in 1979) only to lose in Lincoln (65-59 in 1978 and 48-46 in 1979).

The Huskers won the teams' first contest this season 58-50 in Ames and are hoping to break the pattern when the Cyclones come to town Saturday night.

Husker Assistant Coach Tom Baack said the players won't need to be reminded of the past two years.

"There's a tendency to think when you beat a team on the road, all you have to do is show up at home to win, but it doesn't work that way in this league," Baack said. "Hopefully, our players will recognize that."

Lost three straight

The Cyclones, 8-13 overall and 2-7 in the conference, have dropped three straight games since their Head Coach Lynn Nance was relieved of his duties. To make matters worse, the Cyclones' Bob Fowler, a starter for most of the year, quit after Nance's dismissal.

Despite the hardships, Baack said beating ISU won't be an easy task.

"They're a big, strong team and if we don't hustle and don't come ready to play, we're going to have problems," Baack said.

One of those "big, strong" players is center Dean Uthoff. A 6-11 senior, Uthoff is the Big Eight's all-time leading rebounder and is the current league leader averaging 9.5 rebounds a game. He also is averaging 10.7 points a game.

Another concern for the Huskers is Cyclone senior forward Chuck Harmison. The 6-9 Harmison is the conference's ninth leading rebounder, averaging 6.4 a game and also is the Cyclone's leading scorer, averaging 12.5 points a contest.

Not that big

"Anytime we have a guy 6-9 or 6-10, we're going to have problems because we're not that big," Baack said. "He (Harmison) scored 23 points against us the first time we played them and hurt us inside."

The other forward is 6-6 sophomore Robert Estes. Estes is averaging 11.6 points a game and has been playing well lately, scoring 38 points in ISU's past two games.

According to Cyclone Co-Head Coach Rick Samuels, ISU will start junior Jon Ness and freshman Guy Minnifield at guard instead of regulars Charles Harris and Lefty Moore. Both Harris and Moore were given one game suspensions against Missouri for discipline reasons, but will be available Saturday.

"Minnifield had the best game ever for us against Missouri," said Samuels, who share the ISU head coaching job with former assistant Reggie Warford. "He had 16 points and had three clean steals from Larry Drew (Tiger guard)."

Samuels said he has been pleased with the Cyclones' effort, but adds that the team has not played "smart."

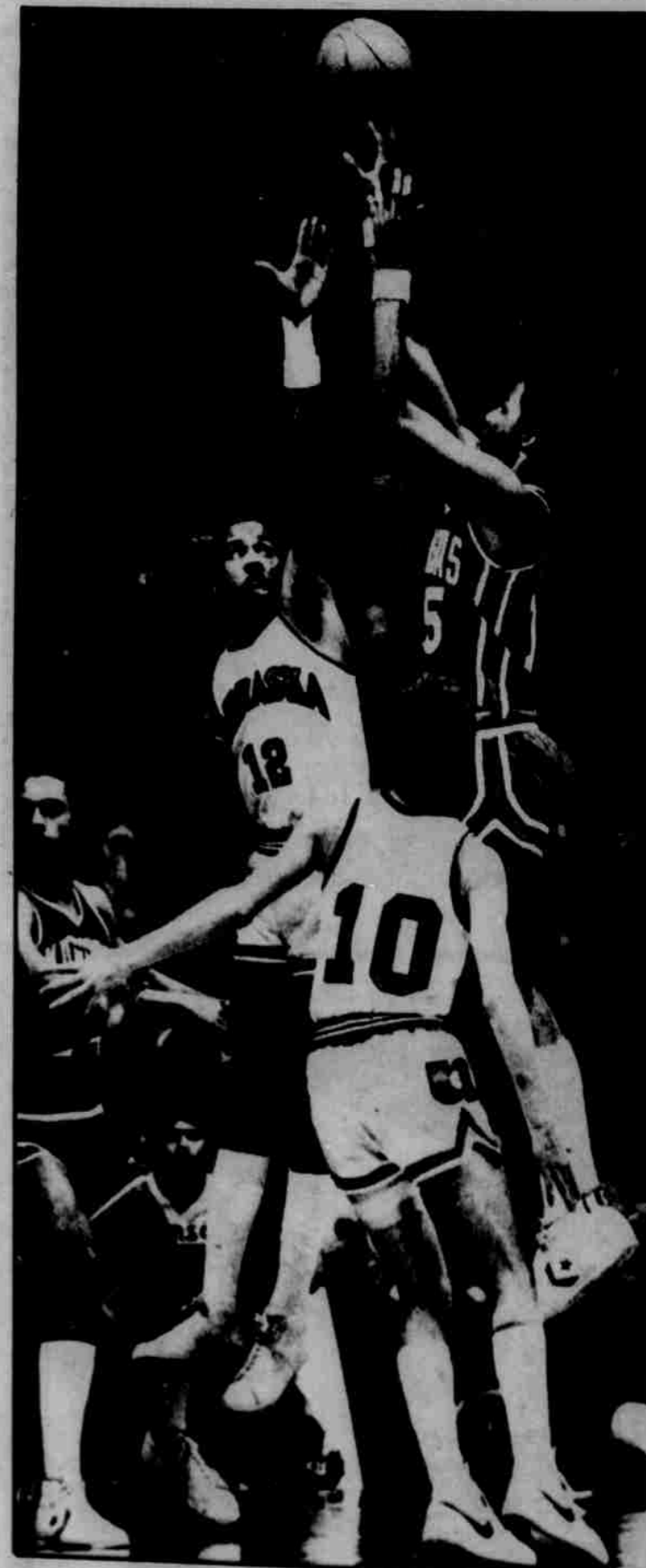


Photo by Mitch Hrdlicka

Nebraska's Greg Downing (22) reaches for the ball—and so does Kansas' John Crawford. Nebraska beat KU in Lawrence 61-56 Tuesday night. The Iowa State Cyclones come to Lincoln Saturday to face the Cornhuskers at 7:35 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.