

sports

Huskers hope to defy history at NCAA gym meet

By Paul Martin

In its 37 years of existence, the NCAA Gymnastics Championship has never been captured by the host team.

But when this year's championships begin April 3 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, Francis Allen's defending national champion Nebraska Cornhuskers are prepared to defy history.

While Allen is confident his Husker squad is capable of turning the trick, he foresees three potential challengers among the remaining nine teams.

"We have it narrowed down to Nebraska, Iowa State, Southern Connecticut, and Oregon," Allen said. "We feel on any given day these teams could beat each other," he said. "Hopefully it will be our day next week."

Allen said he feels that UCLA, with standout all-arounder Peter Vidmar, could also be strong.

Best meet

"This should be the best meet ever," Allen said. "There could be a national scoring record. We've bumped into Iowa State five times and won three. Southern Connecticut has beaten us. Oregon and UCLA will be tough, too," he said.

In the past the NCAA has limited the number of qualifiers from each region to two, but that was altered this year.

The NCAA Gymnastics Committee, selected one team from each of the four regions with the six remaining teams being chosen at large.

The rules change allowed three teams

from the Big Eight conference to be selected, which should add to the intensity of the competition.

Iowa State, one of the top teams last year, didn't make it out of regional competition which aided the Huskers, according to Allen.

"We were glad when they (ISU) didn't

make it out of our regional last year," Allen said. "It was just one less team breathing down our necks. They could have put as much pressure on us as Oklahoma."

Other teams

Besides the Big Eight contingent, other schools pursuing the team title include

Illinois-Chicago Circle, Penn State, Louisiana State and Arizona State.

The individual all-around title should be hotly contested between five gymnasts, according to Allen.

"We see about five guys that could do it," Allen said. "(Jim) Hartung is ahead of the pack and then comes Vidmar, (Phil) Cahoy, McCutcheon (Mario of SCU), and Galimore (Ron of ISU).

In previous competition Vidmar has beaten Cahoy and McCutcheon has topped Hartung. McCutcheon won against Hartung "for the first and last time," according to Allen.

"If he (Hartung) loses this time, it's his fault because he's the one that said that," Allen joked.

Husker Mark Williams, battling with illness and injury, should be able to compete, Allen said.

"He's got a little back spasm and a little bit of a low grade infection but it's not mono," Allen said. "They put him on medication Friday and he was in the gym today (Wednesday). He should be ready."

Competition in the three day meet begins at 7 p.m. Thursday when the compulsories for the all arounders only are performed. At the same time Friday night, optionals for the all arounders, the 10 teams, and the top six qualifiers in each individual event, will take place.

On Saturday, the top three teams will vie for the national title at 1 p.m. with the top eight individuals competing for the all around crown when the championships culminate at 7 p.m.

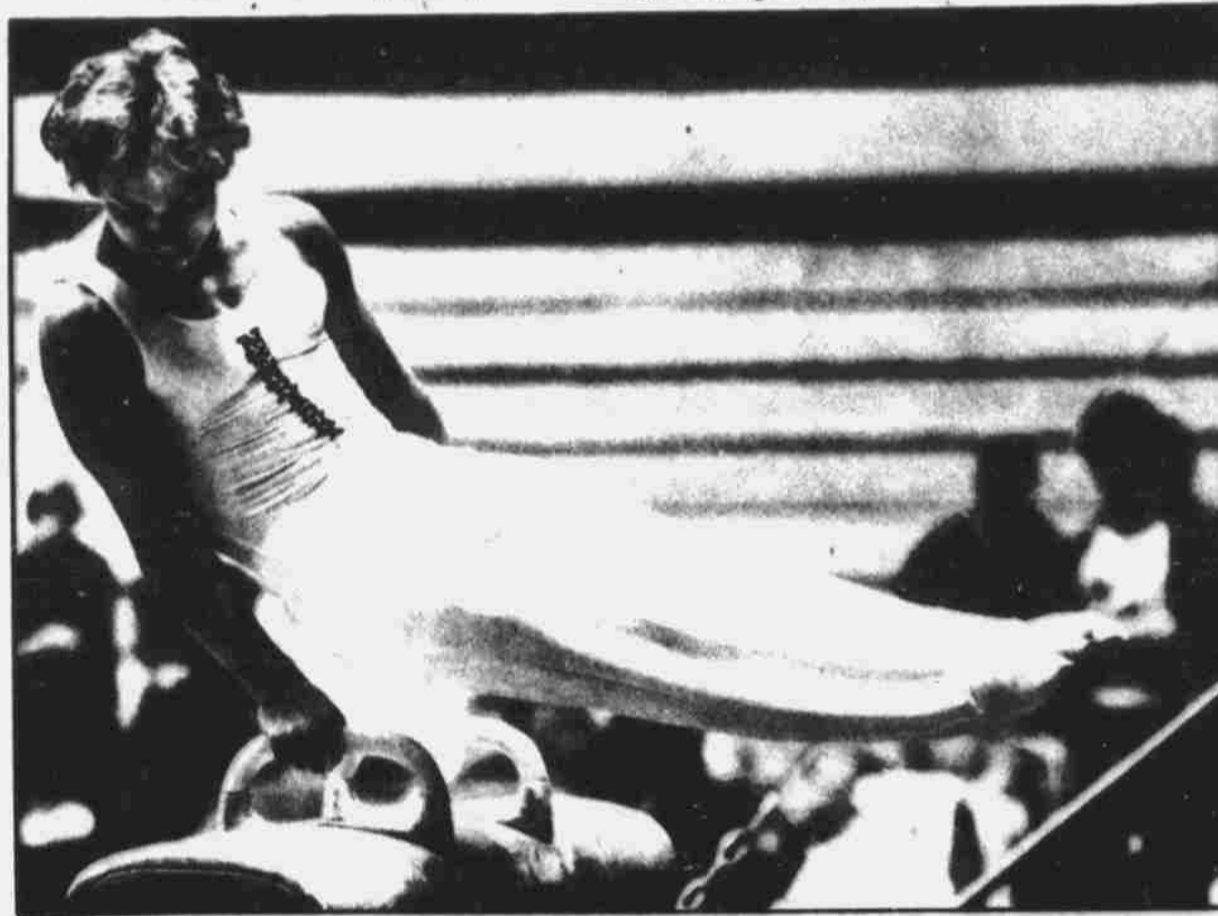


Photo by Tom Gessner

Husker gymnast Jim Hartung performs on the pommel horse. Hartung has a good chance to win the national all-around title at the NCAA Gymnastics Meet scheduled April 3-5 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, said UNL Head Coach Francis Allen.

UNL track team heads south to cactus country

By Tad Stryker

Tempe, Ariz. will be a home away from home for the UNL men's track team during spring break, as the Huskers will be in cactus country to face Arizona State in a dual Saturday and will remain there for the Sun Devil Classic one week later.

"I think everybody's ready to get down there to some good weather," said Dick Railsback, field events and assistant coach. "The competition's going to be super for both meets."

Arizona State, always strong in track and field, is expected to be as good as ever this season, Railsback said. In the Sun Devil invitational, teams from across the country will compete, as well as independent athletes like Mac Wilkins, the 1976 Olympic discus champion, and shotputters Al Fuerbach and Brian Oldfield.

Benefit from weather

The two meets and the week of practice in between will be vital for the Huskers, Railsback said.

"Everyone will benefit from the good conditions, especially our javelin and discus throwers, events where technique is really important," he said.

The javelin and discus are two events that will certainly make the Huskers more competitive outside than they were indoors. Junior Ken Drwal is expected to be a significant factor in the javelin throw, Railsback said. Drwal placed third in the Big Eight outdoor meet last year. Nebraska's hope for medal places in the discus are Lee Kunz and junior Erik Korshoj. Kunz, a linebacker for the Chicago Bears, is taking advantage of his freshman

redshirt year, and is co-captain of the squad along with Scott Poehling.

"It's been good for me to come back here in the off-season," Kunz said. "Discus throwing is kind of a hobby for me now, and I'm really looking forward to the outdoor season."

Catching up to do

Kunz won the Big Eight discus championship as a junior, with a throw of 192-8, but slipped to second place and 175-5 last year. "This year, I'd like to see 200," he said, "but it'll take a lot of time yet. I need more work on technique and footwork."

Arizona State had its first outdoor meet more than a month ago, and the Huskers will have a lot of catching up to do in a hurry if they are going to stay with the Sun Devils, Railsback said. The Huskers have been able to run outdoors, but haven't had the track conditions that favor fast times.

"Everybody's time should really improve down there," said Paul Downes, sophomore and member of last year's NCAA champion two-mile relay team. "I don't know what Arizona State has for middle-distance runners, but there will be a bunch of good ones at the next meet."

Challenge Kansas

The Huskers' pole vaulters have been improving lately, according to junior Mark Newton. Newton, a junior college transfer from Grossmont Junior College in California, cleared 17 feet in practice earlier this week—a personal best.

"I had a real good week in practice," he said. "Randy (Raymond) and I didn't do real good in the national indoor meet, but we're coming along now."

that ankle stronger," Quinn said. "I think I am almost completely healed. The surgery should help me a lot this year since I had to play with the injury all last season."

With spring vacation coming next week and spring practice following, Quinn said he has one priority next week—to rest.

"I am going home to rest and relax," said the Ord native. "I haven't been home for a long time. It should be a good time to prepare for spring ball."

Quinn, who started the last part of the 1979 season and passed for 624 yards, will enter spring practice as the number one quarterback, but he said there are no guarantees he will stay there.

"I am going to have to keep working hard and proving myself to stay where I am," Quinn said. "I haven't earned the number one spot yet. Everyone who is here has the potential to do the job. I know my job isn't secure and that it's going to be a dogfight just like the other years."

Continued on Page 11

The Huskers placed fourth in last year's Big Eight outdoor meet and should improve on that finish in Manhattan this May, but will they be able to challenge Kansas for first?

"I think so," Railsback said. "Kansas has got a lot of great athletes—fine sprinters and jumpers. But I think our middle distance runners and discus and javelin throwers will help offset their advantage."

Kunz looks very good this year, Kunz said, but not unbeatable.

"If everyone really puts it together, we could challenge them," he said.

Husker baseball team 2-1 in Cal tournament

The Husker baseball team beat Eastern Michigan 6-1 Wednesday, but lost to Brigham Young University 19-6 in the second game of the Cal-Riverside-Baseball Tournament in Riverside, Calif.

The Huskers, now 2-1, are tied for first with BYU in their tournament division. Finals are scheduled Saturday afternoon.

Pitcher Steve Goehke pitched the winning game for the Huskers against Eastern Michigan. In the second game, Nebraska went through five pitchers before dropping to BYU, ranked fifth in the nation.

Husker first baseman Steve Stanicek hit two home runs and Jeff Hunter hit one in the BYU game, but six Husker errors during the game gave BYU the deciding edge.

Husker center fielder Joe Scherger injured his shoulder early in the week. Tim Sinovich and Steve Oakley injured shoulders in Wednesday's games.

The Huskers played Cal-Riverside Thursday afternoon.

Sprint freestylers eliminated at meet

Nebraska swimmers failed to qualify for the finals in the 50-yard freestyle at the NCAA swimming and diving championships in Boston, Mass., Thursday.

Tim Boyd swam 21.26 for 53rd place, Jim Korff swam 21.41 and Mike Hayhurst swam 21.44 to place 55th and 56th respectively. There were 57 entries.

Friday is the biggest day of the championships for the Huskers with Anders Rutqvist swimming in the preliminaries of the 200-yard freestyle, and diver Scott Hinrichs beginning his finals attempt in the three-meter diving. The Huskers' 800-yard freestyle relay team also will swim in preliminaries Friday morning.

Quinn, team feeling spring fever

By Ron Powell

Husker quarterback Jeff Quinn and the rest of the Nebraska football team have spring fever.

According to Quinn, none of the Huskers are sad to say goodbye to the winter conditioning program which has been going on since the middle of January. The Huskers begin their spring workouts on April 7.

"Everybody is glad winter ball is over," Quinn said. "Winter conditioning is probably the toughest part of football. It's just constant running and lifting weights. It's the best part of the year when you consider the shape it gets you in, but it gets awfully long."

Quinn didn't start his winter conditioning until the middle of February because of surgery to remove bone chips from his ankle shortly after the Cotton Bowl.

"I've been working pretty hard on the weights getting