

Last event sews up pressure-packed competition

By Kim Hachiya

In a word, the 1981 NCAA Gymnastics Championships could be described as pressure-packed.

Although it seemed like the Huskers breezed along the way to winning their third straight NCAA crown by 2.65 points over runner-up Oklahoma, the outcome of the meet wasn't sewn up until the last event Saturday afternoon.

"I wasn't totally confident (that we'd won the meet) until they handed me that trophy," head coach Francis Allen jokingly told reporters. "We were really solid after the first three events and I guess I knew we had it then."

Allen said the turning point in the meet probably was the near perfect 9.9 performance by Steve Elliott on the floor exercise. Elliott's routine brought the crowd of 8,500 to its feet.

Allen said he deliberately placed Elliott third in the line-up knowing he would hit well and give the team momentum.

"If you've got a guy who's a stud and will do what you ask him to do all the time, it helps set up the rest of the team too," Allen said.

Elliott said he didn't think he was the biggest motivating factor, however.

"With the kind of team I have behind me, it's not too hard," he said. "Plus the crowd was great. I don't know if we could have done it without the crowd."

"They get you going and keep you up. Now I know how the football players do it a big crowd is really something."

Phil Cahoy said a costly slip-up on the parallel bars Saturday afternoon was depressing, but he knew he had to come back and hit in his next event, the high bar, to ice the meet.

Cahoy hit a 9.85 on the high bar, put-

ting the championship out of reach of Oklahoma and UCLA.

UCLA Coach Art Shurlock said Saturday was a great day for UCLA gymnastics. UCLA was hampered by the loss of all-arounder Tim Daggett, who dislocated his ankle in Friday's floor exercise and was out for Saturday's competition.

UCLA and Oklahoma traded the second-place position all afternoon, until a low parallel bars score for UCLA sent them to third place.

Shurlock predicted UCLA would be back even stronger next year because they will be returning every gymnast on their team.

Oklahoma Coach Paul Ziert said he was proud of his team's performances in light of the length of the meet.

"We are not a team that doesn't make mistakes, we do make them," Ziert said. "Our younger guys had more trouble trying to gage their energy through such a long grueling meet."

Friday night's team optionals competition featured the continuing battle royal for all-around competitor between OU's Bart Conner and Jim Hartung of Nebraska. Hartung set a new NCAA record of 115.90 edging Conner by .05 of a point.

Saturday night's competition determined individual champions in each event, with the top six competitors winning medals and achieving all-American status.

James Yuhashi of Oregon brought the crowd to its feet with a spectacular 9.9 floor exercise routine that won him the floor exercise crown.

Hartung placed second in the floor exercise individual competition with a 9.8 and third in the pommel horse with a 9.8.

Frank Hibbitts of Nebraska placed sixth in the pommel horse with a 9.3.

Hartung won the rings crown for the



Photo by Mitch Hrdlicka

The 1981 NCAA National Gymnastics champions, the UNL Cornhuskers, salute a record crowd Saturday afternoon. From left: Jim Mikus, Jim Hartung, Chuck Chmelka, Phil Cahoy, Scott Johnson, Steve Elliott and Brandon Hull.

second year in a row with a 9.9. Scott Johnson placed second with a 9.75.

Iowa State's Ron Galimore won the vault with a perfect 10, edging Peter Shields of Cortland State, who had a 9.9. No Nebraskans were medal winners in the vault, although Hartung and Jim Mikus qualified for the competition.

Cahoy, Hartung and UCLA's Peter

Vidmar shared the parallel bars title with 9.7s.

Cahoy won the horizontal bar for the second year in a row with a 9.9. Hartung tied for second with Conner and Southern Illinois' Brian Babcock with 9.8s. Johnson placed sixth in the competition with a 9.7.

Uranium find raises legal and safety questions

By Reid Warren

Editor's Note: This is the first in a three-part series of stories on proposed uranium mining in northwestern Nebraska.

After world-class uranium deposits were uncovered in northwestern Nebraska in January, another fact was also quickly uncovered—that Nebraska had no real applicable mining laws to deal with the uranium find.

This is mostly because Nebraska has had little mining in its history, but now officials from all affected parties, including state and local governments, oil and gas companies and environmental groups, are ready to stake claims in the mining situation to control uranium's future in Nebraska.

All parties agree Nebraska needs laws to control the situation, but the question is how to go about it.

There are many legal aspects which need to be cleared up before the actual mining, if there is any, begins.

Questions arise on who will control the mining operation, to what degree and what the impact of local, state and federal laws will be on Nebraska.

Will the mining be allowed to take place on state land as well as on private land, and most important, what kind of mining will be allowed and what protective measures will be taken?

Protect drinking water

Hemingford Sen. Sam Cullan, whose district includes the site of the heaviest drilling, near Crawford and the surrounding area, has introduced a bill that would establish a state mining code and would impose a severance tax on uranium.

Besides the tax, the bill would include a system of permits and fees that administered by the Nebraska Oil and Gas Commission, based at Sidney, and would contain provisions to protect underground water.

"The main objective is to protect drinking water sources," Cullan said.

The water situation is critical because the Crawford area relies almost entirely on surface water for its drinking supply, and pure underground water is a scarce commodity there.

The method most likely to be used to extract uranium would be "in-situ" mining, in which water and chemical elements are funneled into the ground through injection wells to dissolve the uranium, and then pumps the uranium up through production wells.

But a Westinghouse subsidiary, Wyoming Minerals Co., has had contamination problems using the "in-situ" method in mining near Buffalo, Wyo.

The company used ammonium bicarbonate and then sodium bicarbonate to dissolve the uranium, but apparently some of the chemicals have spread beyond the mining site.

The mining operation was temporarily shut down, but later allowed to continue on a limited basis after the problem was corrected and the underground water was cleaned.

Well-drilling control

Both Cullan and the State Department of Environmental Control are confident that regulations will be in effect before any actual mining takes place, but some conservationists feel that Gov. Charles Thone will have to alter his stance before the laws are adopted.

Thone said last fall he would not approve any expansion of environmental rules until seeing how the Reagan administration deals with cutting back environmental control.

It will be at least two or three years before there is any actual mining, but there

already have been nearly 1,500 exploratory wells commissioned for private land.

The biggest concern is adequate control of exploratory drillings according to Haberman Clark, DEC chief of program plans.

"We have to know where we are now so we can appreciate what happens in the future," Clark said.

Both Clark and Cullan said it is important to pass regulations as soon as possible, but that there was no immediate danger of contamination.

"I think we're controlling the situation," Cullan said. "I don't see any problems."

"The state will have laws before there will be any actual mining," Cullan said.

Clark also said the situation was under control.

But both men conceded that the most pressing problem was to make sure that any test-drilling wells were properly plugged and supervised.

Cullan has said that both the Game and Parks Commission and the Crawford City Council have told him that some test wells have been left open, raising concerns about water contamination.

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Series explores mining

On Jan. 9, 1981, Wyoming Fuel Co., a wholly owned subsidiary of Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Co. of Hastings, announced its discovery of a world-class uranium deposit near the town of Crawford, about 50 miles west of Chadron, Neb. Wyoming Fuel has been conducting drilling tests for uranium on private land leased from area farmers for about three years.

Following the announcement, several other mining companies rushed to the area and began leasing mineral rights from landowners, conducting drilling tests and, in the case of Amoco Minerals Co. and Dalco of Colorado, even staked claims on the 22,000 acres at Fort Robinson State Park.

In mid-February, the state attorney general's office ordered that the stakes could be legally removed. Park workers pulled them out. Meanwhile, questions

were being raised as to whether drilling could contaminate or seriously deplete local water supplies. Questions also were raised on the effects of commercial mining, admitted by all companies to be several years in the future, to the economy of the area.

Since then, Amoco has withdrawn claims at Fort Robinson, reportedly because of public opposition to the move. The state has said it may file a lawsuit against Dalco.

State Sen. Sam Cullan of Hemingford has proposed mining laws during this legislative session to prevent the federal government from stepping in to regulate Nebraska mining—a situation some Nebraskans, including Gov. Charles Thone, oppose.

This series is about the feelings of ordinary citizens, as well as state and company officials, about Nebraska's uranium find.

inside monday

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