

Brother signs with Iowa State

Husker gymnast Bowers latest Sokol success

By Ward W. Triplett III

When Mike Bowers arrives at the UNL campus in August, the folks who run Sokol Hall in South Omaha will have been responsible for yet another top-notch gymnast wearing a Cornhusker uniform.

Bowers, a 17-year-old senior at Omaha Northwest, was the only recruit for the national champion Huskers. He will follow Jim Hartung, Phil Cahoy and Chuck Chmelka as graduates of Sokol, which is run by Cahoy's father.

"I started seriously in gymnastics down at Sokol," Bowers said. "My sister and my brother were both in gymnastics, and when one of my best friends, Justy Reed, started going there, we just went along with him."

The 'we' Bowers referred to was he and his twin brother Mark. In 1979, the Bowers twins and Reed combined to win five of the six events in state to hand the state championships award to the Huskies.

State champions

In 1980, while Husker fans were still lamenting the Big Red football team's loss to the Oklahoma Sooners earlier in the day, Bowers was winning the floor exercise, rings, and high bar, finishing second on the parallel bars and side horse, and taking third on the vault. Bowers easily won the all-around title, and after a repeat performance on the high bar, from which he fell earlier, was given a standing ovation from the crowd of some 3,000.

"Winning at state was pretty good," Bowers said. "But I'd have to say my biggest thrill in gymnastics was getting a scholarship to Nebraska. They could have chosen a lot of other people, but they chose me."

Bowers said he never really planned on going anywhere else. His exposure at the national high school championships, with the United States Junior National team and the AAU Junior Olympics helped a lot of college coaches see him perform, but most were sure they were fighting a losing battle.

"A lot of coaches figured I would sign with Nebraska, so they didn't compete that hard. I looked at Minnesota, (where Reed is a scholarship athlete) and Iowa State, and I got letters from people like Ohio State, but most of them knew I was coming to UNL," Bowers said.

"I'm going there because I've been on a team with Jim Hartung and Phil Cahoy before, and I really want to be a teammate of theirs again. Plus, I've worked with Francis (Allen) about three years now."

Along with their weekly schedule of practice at Sokol or Northwest, Bowers said the twins practice in Lincoln under Allen's guidance every Sunday.

Mark to Iowa State

Mark signed a letter of intent with Iowa State about the same time Mike signed with Nebraska.

Diver from Colorado joins Nebraska team

Nebraska diving Coach Jeff Huber has announced the signing of Wendy Lucero of Denver, Colo., to a national letter of intent to compete on the Nebraska women's swimming and diving team in 1981-82.

Lucero is attending Thomas Jefferson High School where she has been coached by Dennis Hartman.

This past season she was the state runner-up in the one-meter diving board, and recently she placed 15th at the Senior U.S. National Diving Championships and has qualified for the Summer Nationals in Columbus, Ohio.

The competition was the first senior national for Lucero and she will become one of the highest national finishers for the Husker recruiting program.

"Of course, we are very happy to have signed her here at Nebraska. We had signed her just before the senior nationals, and after her high school finish she has been getting more looks from some of the other schools," Huber said.

Lucero will join a Husker program that includes Ann Stahlnacker, an AIAW National qualifier, and swimmer Sherri Hayward, a two-time All-American.

Correction

A typographical error in yesterday's Daily Nebraskan caused a story to read that the UNL women's basketball team had recruited a 7 foot player. Sonija Nelson, a recruit from Kansas City Central High School, actually is 6-feet tall.

"People may think that's going to be hard, going against each other, but I don't think so. We've always competed against each other, and in the Junior Olympics, it came down to just him and me, with nobody else involved. It won't be that big of a thing," Bowers said.

Mark's back injury let him work only the pommel horse at state the previous year, and another back problem that arose this year was the cause of the separation, Mike said.

"Nebraska had only one scholarship open, and Mark was still injured when they came to us," he said.

Bowers, whose best score of the past year was a 9.7 on the parallel bars, said the new USGF ruling which limits a team to four all-arounders and one specialist per round, may hurt him.

"I don't think it will be hard to find a spot on the team," Bowers said. "But it will be tough to be an all-arounder when they only can have four. I'll probably be a specialist in a couple of events."

Bowers' first choice would be the pommel horse, except, he said, Nebraska already has two people at that who are really good (Frank Hibbits and John Balluf). Bowers said he'd like to work on the high bar and rings his first year, and move on to all-around later.

Bowers is looking forward to coming to Nebraska, saying it is time to move on.

"My senior year is going pretty good," Bowers said. "Northwest has been a nice place, but I'm kind of looking forward to college."

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COORS CO-RECREATIONAL INTRAMURAL SPORT FESTIVAL

The second annual Iowa-Nebraska Coors Co-Recreational Intramural Sports Festival was held April 4; this year's host school was the University of Nebraska-Omaha. The festival is a non-competitive event, designed to bring students together in an atmosphere conducive to interaction through physical activity. UNL chose to participate in innertube water polo, volleyball and softball.

Congratulations to the Kappa Sigma innertube water polo team, Denver Comets volleyball team, and the Lambda Chi Alpha-Gamma Phi Beta wiffleball team, pictured above, which earned the right to represent UNL at the festival by winning their respective intramural events.



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