

sports

Creighton coach calls Bluejay loss useful lesson

By Bob Asmussen

Comparing the scores of Nebraska's game with Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and Creighton's game with the same team, one would wonder if Creighton is even going to show up for Saturday's Husker-Bluejay contest in Lincoln.

The Huskers defeated the Division III Pointers 74-45, Creighton lost to the same team 57-51, but Creighton Coach Willis Reed said overconfidence may have accounted for the loss.

"We weren't geared to play," Reed said. "The team thought Wisconsin Stevens-Point would be like a high school team. The game goes to show you that any five players can beat any other five players. St.

Joseph's proved that last season."

Reed said the loss, although a disappointment, may have taught his team a valuable lesson.

"It taught the team they have to be ready to play full throttle every game," Reed said.

Reed said the team wasn't down after the loss. He said his players will be ready for the Huskers on Saturday.

"We're going to go into every game with the feeling we can win," Reed said. "We haven't given up just because we lost one game."

Tempo will be the key to Saturday's game for the Bluejays, Reed said.

"Nebraska is very quick. We have to play them all over the floor. If we allow

them to control the tempo, we're going to be in for a long game," he said.

The Bluejays start only one senior, forward Daryl Stovall. Other starters are Alex Stivins at forward, Joe Bresnahan at center and Mark Jones and Tony Pruitt at guard. Reed said two players are doing well coming off the bench.

"Michael Johnson and Richard Bates have played well for us," Reed said. "Joe (Bresnahan) is doing a decent job at center."

Jack Moore is the Husker who concerns Reed the most. He said if Moore plays well the whole Husker team tends to play well.

"He gets going and the rest of the team follows," Reed said. "We have to be able to contain him."

Reed described this year as a "developing" year for his team. He said his team needs time to gel together.

"We won't be a great team," Reed said. "We have a young team and like any young team, we'll make some mistakes. I think we'll have an up-and-down year. We may play great one game and not so great the next."

Reed took over this season for Tom Apke, who left to become coach at Colorado. The former New York Knicks player and coach said he is happy with his decision to come to Creighton.

"I've received a lot of support," Reed said. "I like the school and the community. I checked things out before I came here and I knew it was the place for me."

Husker swimmer Hayward striving for top times

By Ken Havlat

Some people have the natural ability to swim. Sherri Hayward had to work for it.

In her first two years on the UNL women's swimming team, the junior recreation major made all-American status based on her placing in the AIAW swimming championships, the first Husker to receive the honor.

Hayward would prefer not to be put on a pedestal because she has earned those honors.

"Inside me, I don't like going around telling others that," Hayward said. "It is nice for me to know I was the first all-American. I know my records will eventually be broken. But, to be the first all-American, I can't say I could have done it without my teammates."

When she was in the third grade in Illinois, Hayward watched her older sister Terri swim. But it wasn't until her family moved to Columbus, Ohio, when Hayward was 10, that she began to feel the competitive spirit inside her. Hayward said she often wondered whether swimming was really worth the effort.

Parents provide support

"My parents are my strongest supporters," Hayward said. "At times when I wanted to quit, they supported my decision. And when I wanted to continue, they supported me too."

Because her parents live in Ohio, they haven't had much of a chance to see her swim at UNL. The only time Hayward's parents saw her swim was in last year's AIAW

championships. They made an 18-hour drive to see her compete in one event that lasted a little over two minutes.

"It's always neat to know they came that distance to watch me swim," Hayward said.

Hayward's high school, St. Francis De Sales in Columbus, didn't field a competitive swimming team, so she swam for the Worthington Swim Club.

Last July, Hayward competed for the Midwest team in the National Sports Festival held in Syracuse, N.Y. She finished fourth in the 200-yard backstroke, where she was nudged out for third by a member of the South team.

"All this taught me winning isn't everything," Hayward said. "Swimming is supposed to be fun, sportsmanship involved. When your teammates are behind you, it makes you feel pretty confident," she said. "I'm excited about this year more than I ever have been."

Hayward has team spirit

Hayward considers herself just another member of the Cornhusker team.

"I don't think I'm better than any other member of the team," Hayward said. "I've worked at it, put in all the effort I can at every workout. One girl back home missed most of the workouts. Some are just naturally talented."

It was easy for the 20-year-old swimmer to set goals this year, she said.

Musician leaves LA for gymnastics

By Patty Pryor

Even though he got off to a late start, UNL gymnast Derek Blanks has established himself as one of the top rings competitors in the country.

A transfer student from Long Beach City College, Blanks is a two-time junior college national champion in both the rings and vault. He was recruited by Nebraska last year as a rings specialist.

Despite his ability, Blanks said he did not develop a serious interest in gymnastics until the 10th grade, when a knee injury forced him to abandon his plans for a football career.

"Gymnastics seemed like the only thing left to do," he said.

"I wish I would've started earlier, though," he continued, "because I'd rather do all-around."

"I think I'd make a pretty good all-arounder, if I had just been coached right all along," he added. "I think that's really important."

Blanks said he was not sure how he developed such a strong ability in the rings.

Brother talked of gymnasts

"I just always liked it in high school," he said. "and my brother was always talking about the Japanese gymnasts and how they could do the iron cross."

The iron cross is a particularly difficult rings maneuver in which the arms are held straight out to the sides.

When he started out on the rings, his ability to handle another difficult position, called the back lever, encouraged him to continue in the event, he said.

"I guess I was just pretty aggressive, and the compliments I got really gave me the motivation."

Blanks' team at Long Beach competed against such four-year schools as Berkeley and Stanford and took the state meet nearly every year from 1969 to 1980.

His team was even successful in defeating Houston Baptist, who held the national rings and vault championships in 1979, he said.

Long Beach also won nationals in New York during his final year, he added.

Word of Blanks' reputation in the rings reached Nebraska Coach Francis Allen, who went out to Long Beach to recruit him.

"Francis came out and said I was the best rings man he had ever seen," Blanks said.

"As practices go on, goals seem more realistic for us," Hayward said. "For me, I hope to qualify NCAA in at least three events, 400 IM (individual medley), 100- and 200-yard backstroke and go below 2:04.7 in the 200-yard back, something I haven't achieved since I was a freshman."

Hayward considers being elected a tri-captain of the swim team a privilege, but takes it in stride.

"It is really nice the team thinks so much about you. It makes me feel confident," Hayward said.

Hayward has had to let her social life take a back seat to the desire to graduate in four years and maintain her 3.0 grade point average.

"At times it's tough," Hayward said. "I'm carrying 18 hours this semester and 17 the next. A lot of it is up to the individual. If you want something, you have to go out and get it. It keeps me busy. I enjoy what I'm doing, working with the mentally retarded. I would like to get more involved with them."

Nebraska won its first two duals of the year, something that has already made this season pleasing for Hayward.

"The win over Wyoming and UNO really helped some girls," Hayward said. "It helps us set a good approach for the season. Some individuals had their lifetime best. After all, half this team is new this year."

She said only Stacey Porter and herself have been on the swimming team since their freshman years.

Blanks, a Los Angeles native, said he knew very little about Nebraska before Allen's visit.

"I'd seen Nebraska on TV a couple times, and I knew they were two-time NCAA champs," he said. "But the only person I'd heard of was Jim Hartung."

At the time of his recruitment, Blanks was a member of a Los Angeles band which had been offered a chance to record with Columbia Records. This made his decision to come to Nebraska a tough one, he said.

Left hand for gymnastics

"What I really wanted to do was stay there, finish my major (industrial education) and record with my band," he said. "But my coach convinced me to do gymnastics."

Blanks was redshirted last year, because a delayed transfer of some of his credits made him ineligible at the start of the season.

He said he has no regrets at all about his decision, even though he considers gymnastics just "more of a hobby."

"Gymnastics is not really the main thing for me, maybe because it comes so easy," he said.

"And right now, my music is getting better," he said.

Blanks plays flute and trumpet with the Lincoln Jazz Society in Thursday night sessions at McGuffey's, and has been teaching himself piano for the last eight months.

Other than improving his music, Blanks has set other goals for himself, including scoring a 10 in the rings.

"I really feel that I can do it," he said. He is also working on a floor exercise routine and on stronger performances in vault. Blanks stressed motivation as the key to achieving these goals.

"I need someone to actually push me sometimes," he said. "I'm a pretty motivated person myself, but I like to know that the team can motivate you, too."

"When you know that they have confidence in you, it can really boost you up," he said.

Blanks said he appreciates the talent at Nebraska instead of feeling intimidated by it.

"If you're just a good gymnast, the score they give you will show it, and I think the audience can tell the difference," he said.

"The competition here is tough, but I'm just going to make it self-evident that I'm a national champion," he said. "You have to make the difference."

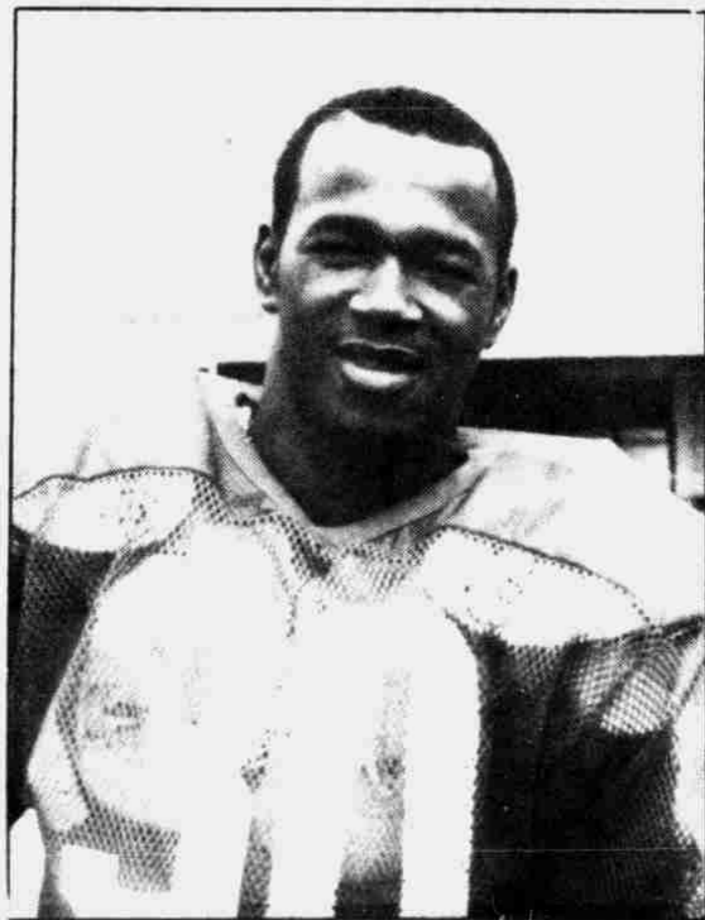
"I just want to be a champion and help those on the team be champions, too."

Rozier earns AP award

Nebraska I-back Mike Rozier was named Big Eight Offensive Newcomer of the Year Wednesday by The Associated Press.

Rozier alternated with Roger Craig as the top Husker I-back this season. He picked up 943 yards in 157 carries and scored six touchdowns.

Center Dave Rimington and defensive end Jimmy Williams were named to All-American team Tuesday. Honorable mention honors went to Rozier, tight end Jamie Williams, offensive tackle Dan Hurley, quarterback Turner Gill and safety Jeff Krejci.



UNL Sports Information Photo

Mike Rozier, Associated Press Big Eight Newcomer of the Year.