

Sports

Well-rested swimmers head to Big Eight meet

By Mark Krause

Nebraska women's swimming Coach Ray Huppert emphasizes the importance of the Big Eight Championship meet in just three words.

"This is it," Huppert said of the three-day meet beginning Thursday at Ames, Iowa. Kansas will be the favorite to win the team title, but Huppert is not ready to throw in the towel.

"Let me say this. On any given day any team can beat any other team," Huppert said. He said he also tells that sports adage to his swimmers.

"Our girls feel very, very confident in what they are doing," he said.

Huppert said this will be the most balanced Big Eight meet in his seven years as Husker coach.

Although Kansas will be the favorite, "because of the number of athletes they have that will possibly score," Huppert said the four other teams have a legitimate shot at second place.

Fifth last year

But to take home the team crown, the Huskers "will have to swim well in every single event," Huppert said.

Big Eight in the dark with no stadium lights

The Big Eight conference may find itself left in the dark when the new football television contracts become effective this fall.

Literally left in the dark, that is. None of the conference schools have lighted stadiums, and that will be a problem with the way the new packages are set up.

Ted Turner's prime-time contract at WTBS eliminates all Big Eight schools unless they happen to be playing at a school that has lights.

The NCAA's joint contract with ABC and CBS also puts constraints on the number of conference games that can be shown. Half of the games will be shown in the late



Larry Sparks

afternoon and only one conference school — Colorado — has enough daylight left at that hour to play a football game. Considering the way the Buffaloes have played lately, they'd probably be better off in the dark anyway.

Of course, the Big Eight is certain to have several early afternoon games shown, but Midwestern fans are going to have to watch a lot of football from the Southern states and the West Coast.

In the long run, that will give those schools a big advantage. More money will be flowing into the athletic departments, allowing for better facilities, and their recruiting will be aided by the increased exposure.

It is obvious that the Big Eight is going to have to fight back. Installing permanent lighting at the stadiums may be out of the question. Funding is a big restraint these days and the lights would get very limited use.

After all, have you ever thought of watching a game in Nebraska on a cold November night? That fact alone may explain why only one of the 18 schools in the Big Eight and Big Ten has lighting.

Perhaps renting portable lighting systems that have been offered by an Iowa company would be the best solution. Big investments wouldn't be needed, and the lights would be available early in the season when night games are possible in the Midwest.

Random Thoughts: The Bob Devaney Sports Center is the place for sports fans to be this weekend. Two Big Eight championship events — indoor track and wrestling — are on the schedule. The Huskers are almost certain to make a good showing in both meets.

Moe Iba and his Cornhuskers are going to need a lot of vocal support at Wednesday's game against Colorado. A win against the Buffaloes is crucial to UNL's hopes of a top division finish in the conference.

Netters lose invitational

The UNL men's tennis team competed in an invitational at Sioux Falls, S.D. last weekend.

In the singles quarterfinals, Craig Johnson (UNL) lost a 6-4, 6-4 decision to Dave Morin (Minnesota) and Jim Carson (UNL) defeated Raman Japathy (Gustavus Adolphus) 6-1, 7-6. Carson was eliminated by Mike Hoefer (Minnesota) 2-6, 6-3, 6-3 in the semi-finals.

In the doubles quarterfinals, the team of Carson and Johnson (UNL) defeated Madsen and Covin (Minnesota) 6-2, 6-1. Carson and Johnson lost to Miller and Skansie (Gustavus Adolphus) 7-5, 4-6, 3-6 in the semi-finals.

adding that he would like to see a Big Eight meet like last year, even though his team finished fifth.

"Last year the conference's coaches voted Nebraska as having the best Big Eight meet," Huppert said. This was based on the number of Husker time drops in the meet.

Sherril Hayward will be defending her 100- and 200-yard backstroke crown. The Husker all-American, with seniors Laura Spindler and Marla Thompson, are the team captains. Huppert said they are good leaders.

"These swimmers have been through it three times and have done a fine job of relating this to our underclassmen," he said.

Huppert said Jane Meyer has looked good in practice and he is expecting excellent times from her. Marie Suppes, the second highest scorer for the Huskers in last year's Big Eight meet, also should swim well, Huppert said.

The return of Rene Sullivan is important to the Huskers, Huppert said, "and if we keep her healthy, she will play a valuable role in the outcome."

However, the divers will not be overshadowed by the swimmers, he said.

Diving potential

Saying that Nebraska diving Coach Jeff Huber "has done a tremendous job" in forming "a great diving program," Huppert said "I don't think there is a diver among our six that doesn't have the potential to score."

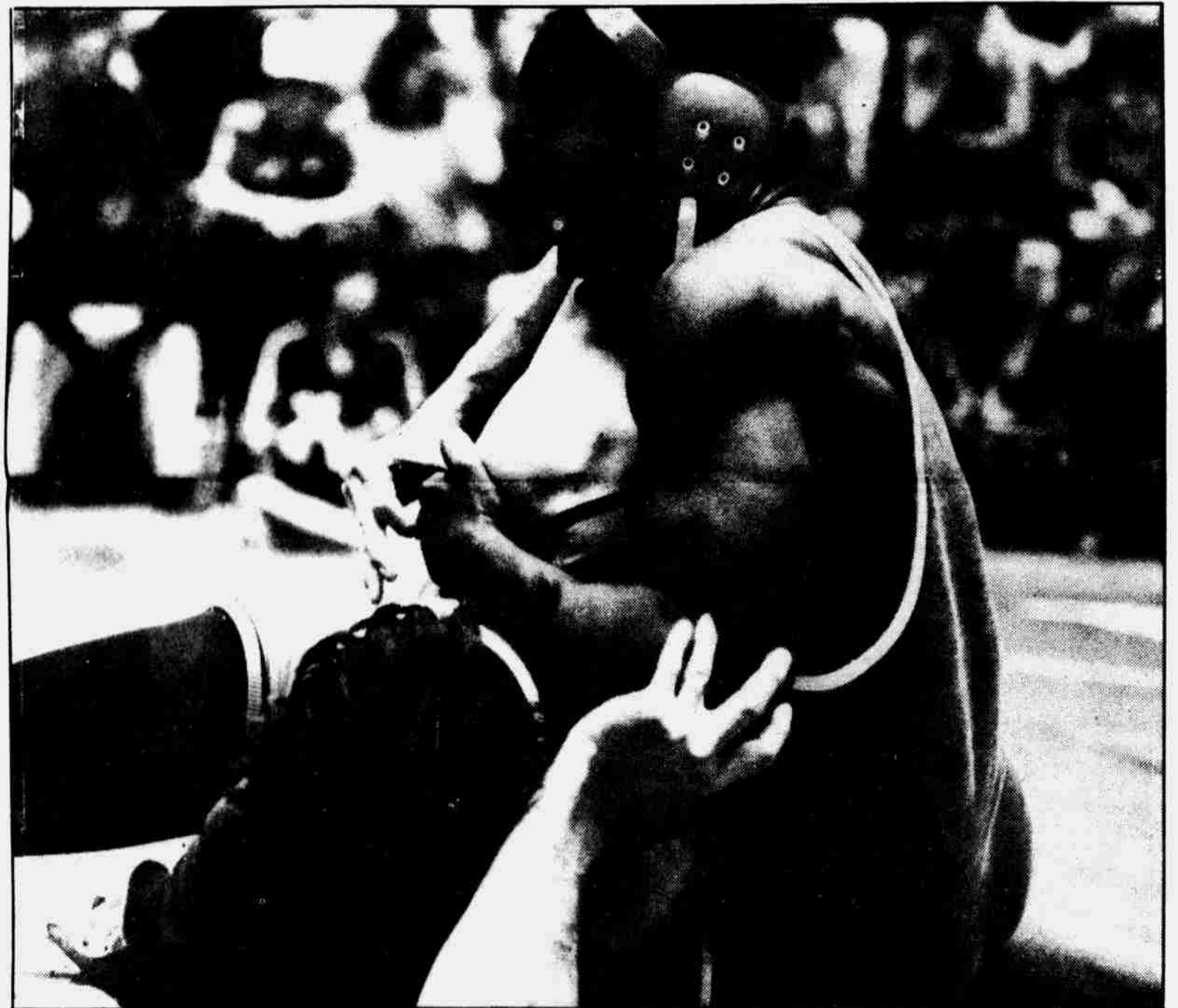
NU divers are Stacey Porter, Heidi Sloth, Cathy Lundy, Marcia Heaton, Anne Biggs and Wendy Lucero.

The breaststroke will be the weakest event for the Huskers, as it has been all year. This concerns Huppert because it is one of Kansas' strongest events.

"I'm going to be biting my fingernails," he said. But the Huskers are "rested and ready to go," Huppert said. They have not had a meet since a Feb. 6 dual with Oklahoma.

"This team has a legitimate chance of setting school records in all 24 events," Huppert said.

"Our team is looking extremely good in the water."



Nebraska's Ray Oliver earns an 8-4 win against Mike Sheets of Oklahoma State in a match earlier this season. Both athletes will be in action Saturday and Sunday in the Big Eight Championships at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Photo by Jodie Fields

Lincoln bowler wins PBA tournament

By Scott Ahlstrand

Feb. 13, Lincolnite Bill Straub won the Roloids Open Bowling Tournament on national television.

Straub was in first place going into the final five-step ladder format. He defeated Mike Aulby 217-212, by picking up a 10-pin spare and by striking in the 10th frame to win his first Professional Bowling Association singles title.

"I got off to a quick start in the finals and that allowed me to stay emotionally stable. I didn't have to make any lane adjustments, because I determined what type of ball I was going to throw in practice," Straub said. "The big job for me was to stay calm. Believe me, that's not as easy as it sounds."

"I told the television announcers, tongue in cheek, that there were two reasons why I did so well. The first one is that I changed my lifestyle to that of a spartan. I told them that I ran 25 miles a day, bowled 40 games a day and eat cactus leaves," Straub said. "I also told them that I liked the lanes. And of course that's the real reason."

The tournament didn't signal the end of a busy week, as Straub attended a post tournament banquet and then drove home all night, so that he could compete in a city tournament on Sunday.

"At the banquet I told them that I felt like a balloon that had been struck by a pin — deflated. As soon as I knocked the 10 pin over, it was all down hill emotionally," Straub said.

Straub believes in keeping commitments and has sacrificed a full-time chance at the tour because of them.

"Right now I have some responsibilities in Lincoln. My parents both have ill health and I have some other commitments," Straub said. "I don't like to disappoint myself or people who depend on me."

Straub has added teaching to his list of commitments. "Steve Mears, a former bowler at the university, was working with the team and he called me to see if I would be interested in working with them," Straub said. "Now I teach Bowling III, three days a week. It's very fulfilling to stand behind the kids and suggest adjustments and improvements in their games."

Straub said that he thinks collegiate bowling is a key to the future growth of the sport.

"Bowling is becoming a lot like baseball. You see more and more baseball players coming out of college instead of the minor league system," Straub said. "It's the same way in bowling. In a sense the colleges are bowling's minor leagues. The young guys who come on to the tour out of college do a lot to help the image of the bowler. A lot of people think of us as overweight, out of shape, beer drinkers who wear Joe's Bar and Grill shirts. But these young guys are changing that image."

Straub said the glamour of the tour is overrated. He said the tour often can put a strain on the bowler.

"Life on the tour is not as exciting as it seems. You call home and your wife asks where you are and you have to look at the hotel stationary to tell her. You get to go to a lot of resort areas. But essentially, all you ever get to see of them is the airport, the motel and the bowling alley."