

Sports

Swimmers, divers seeking Big Eight victory

By Mark Krause

The waters of the Bob Devaney Sports Center pool will be stirred up this weekend as the University of Nebraska plays host to competitors in the Big Eight Swimming and Diving Championships.

The meet will run today through Saturday. Competition will begin at noon each day, with finals at 7:30 each evening.

The Huskers will be seeking their third consecutive conference championship. Coach Cal Bentz said the meet is a very important one for the Huskers, even though some added emphasis has been given this year to the national meet.

"We must get the job done at home before we start thinking about the nationals," Bentz said. He said he believes his team can do the job.

"All indications are that we are ready to swim well. We have spent a lot of time in the water and in the weight room and these guys are ready to see it all pay off," Bentz said.

Bentz praised his 19th-ranked team

as a whole rather than singling out specific outstanding performers.

"I think that we have so many good athletes," Bentz said. "Any or all of them are outstanding in their own events."

These good athletes include Tim Boyd, Matt Rye and Cliff Looschen. Boyd and Rye are seniors, while Looschen is a freshman.

Boyd is Nebraska's only returning Big Eight individual champion. He captured the 50-yard freestyle crown last year. Rye, who finished second place in the 200-yard individual medley last year, should challenge for the crown again this year.

No serious injuries

Bentz said he is unaware of any serious injuries to his team. The Huskers' weakest events will be the 100-yard butterfly and the 1600-yard freestyle because they have only two swimmers in these races, he said.

Bentz said the Huskers have an advantage because of a large number of good performers. He said he sees Kansas, Missouri and Iowa State as

"pretty even with some excellent swimmers."

Bentz singled out Gardner Wright and Ron Neugent as the Jayhawks to watch. Iowa State will bring top performers Dave Symons and Gary DeRoos.

Symons is the Big Eight champion in the 200- and 500-yard freestyle events. DeRoos is the conference champion in the 100-yard backstroke and a national qualifier.

Divers balanced

In diving, Coach Jeff Huber said his team "is a little more balanced this year." He said the divers should do well.

"All four of our divers have a legitimate shot at winning," Huber said. These divers are veterans Lance Green, Dave Goodwin, Scott Hinrichs and newcomer Reynaldo Castro. They will be challenged by Missouri's Steve Braun, Huber said.

"He beat us on the low board in Missouri, so we can't take this meet too lightly," Huber said.

The Husker team has not competed since a Feb. 13 dual victory against Kansas. The layoff will not hamper the team, Bentz said.

"They are all rested and a little excited," Bentz said. "We are building into a crescendo."

Co-captain looking forward to swimming's 'last hurrah'

By Mark Quandahl

Nebraska men's swimming and diving team co-captain Mark Diedrich is looking forward to the Big Eight Championships this weekend, even though it may be his last meet.

"This is it. My last hurrah," said Diedrich, a senior from Hillsdale, Ill. "It'll be good to be done, but I don't feel empty, knowing that I've done all I can do."

"If I swim out of my head, I've got a chance to qualify for the NCAA," he said.

But qualifying for the Nationals isn't his primary goal, said Diedrich, who swims the 100- and 200-yard breaststroke.

"Number one, I want to go out with my best times in both events," he said. "However, the team win is what it's all about."

"If each individual performs to his potential, the score will take care of itself," he said.

Diedrich expects his last Big Eight meet to be emotional.

"I've spent 15 years of my life swimming," he said. "And I've always gotten out of it what I've put into it."

He said his two-year stint as the

team's co-captain was "kind of an honor, since the guys on the team pick you."

Team on upswing

Diedrich said he is looking forward to watching the Huskers' progress next year.

"Nebraska is on the upswing," he said.

Diedrich, who was an all-state and all-American in high school, said he had to make a big adjustment when he switched from high school to college swimming.

"College competition is a lot harder, a lot better," he said. "And they use totally different training methods."

Diedrich said he was all set to go to Illinois after high school, but longtime friend Bill Booth persuaded him to come to UNL on a recruiting trip.

"When I came in, the program was nothing," he said. "But I took a chance. I said 'let's go for it.'"

"The first year, we didn't have too much. Cal (Coach Bentz) built up from depth," he said. "There were maybe one or two swimmers winning, but our success was due to sheer numbers."

That year, the Huskers finished fourth in the conference.

"Four years later we're at the top of



Photo by Dave Bentz

Co-captain of the men's swimming and diving team, Mark Diedrich, prepares for this weekend's conference championships. Championship action begins at the Bob Devaney Sports Center pool at noon today.

the Big Eight," Diedrich said. "Now there's more qualifying for nationals. We're still deep, but we're hitting better. You can't go to the nationals with quantity - you need quality."

"It's pretty cool to watch a program develop like Nebraska's has," he said.

Family important

Diedrich said family support has played an important part in shaping his swimming career. Besides his brother and teammate, Mike, Diedrich credited his parents.

"They encourage me, never pressured me and were always helpful," he said. "They were really happy when I got a scholarship out of it."

Diedrich said that at times, it was

tough getting his scholastic and swimming priorities straight at UNL.

"Sometimes it's hard not to fall asleep," Diedrich said about studying.

"You have to scratch and claw to get by, and your social life suffers," he said. "But it's worth it."

Diedrich said he would like to see his brother Mike, Dave Achtemeir, Bill Booth and Guy Foster do well at the Big Eight meet.

"They really want it, and all have been swimming well in the stretch," he said.

"It's guys like us that make the difference," Diedrich said. "We could be first on a team like Oklahoma. But I'd rather be fourth here and be on a winner."

Crew training for spring meets

By Kevin Warneke

As the opening of UNL Mens' and Womens' Crew season looms less than a month away, the crew members have been putting in six days of practice each week.

The squad begins their season with a week of practice in Texas during spring break. Before returning to Lincoln, the squad will compete at Oklahoma City against crews from Wichita State, Washburn, Kansas and Minnesota. The Dallas and Oklahoma City rowing clubs will also compete in the meet.

April 3, the squad will contend Michigan State, Notre Dame, Iowa and Kansas State in the home opener. All home meets are in Omaha at Dam Site 12.

"We practice at Capitol Beach in Lincoln, but all our home meets are in Omaha because there are better facilities there," said Joel Merriman, coach of the mens' varsity squad.

Although the official spring season does not begin until they actually practice on the water, the squad has been practicing Monday through Saturday.

The practices consist of running Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. Tuesdays and Thursdays, the squad works out on the rowing facility at the Boathouse, which is a big cement tank that simulates rowing. The crew also works on an ergometer, which is a rowing machine. The squad members also go through circuit training, consisting

of 14 one-minute stations that each member completes twice. The stations include jumping rope, bench press and military lifting.

"Last season we had a one-minute rest between circuits, now we don't," Merriman said. "This makes it twice as hard."

The highlight of the season, Merriman said, will be the Midwest Sprints at Madison, Wis., late in the season.

"We should be in the top six out of the 20 teams present at the meet," he said.

Merriman said the womens' crew should have a powerful lightweight-4 team and the men should win every meet they have at home.

"We can't tell about the novice teams," Merriman said. "They usually don't develop until after spring training."

Self-motivation and the fact that the team is self-supporting are two strong points of the squad, Merriman said.

"You are your own motivator," he said. "We don't have 76,000 people cheering us on. We're also spending our own money, so we want to get the most out of it."

"We started with people who didn't even know what crew was and worked to a nationally ranked team," Merriman said. "Since we come from the cornfields of Nebraska, we get laughed at by the established crews like Harvard, but only until we put our boat in the water and show what we can do."

Sports Shorts

Tickets for this weekend's men's Big Eight Conference swimming and diving championships are still available. Passes which are good for all sessions can be purchased for \$8. Single-session tickets cost \$3 for adults and \$2 for students.

The Nebraska baseball team will open its home season Saturday at Buck Beltzer Field. The Huskers will meet Sioux Falls College at 1 p.m. for a double-header.

Nebraska High School girl's state basketball tournament action begins today at four Lincoln sites. Class A games will be played at Pershing Auditorium, Class B games will be at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, Class C will play at Lincoln High and Class D action will take place at Lincoln East. First round play begins at noon. Saturday's final round action will be televised live by KOLN-TV/KGIN-TV. Final round action will begin at noon in Pershing Auditorium.