

Sports

Track team takes national title

By Ward W. Triplett III

The Nebraska women's track team, led by double winner Merlene Ottey, scored 84 points to capture its first national championship at the AIAW indoor track championships in Cedar Falls, Iowa Saturday.

Nebraska outdistanced Tennessee, which finished with 64 points, as well as first day leader and defending champion Virginia, which finished with 57 points.

"We weren't surprised at the win. That was something we were working for as a team and a coaching staff since the season began," said Nebraska Coach Gary Pepin.

"We were a little surprised that it took over 60 points to do. A year ago it took 42 to win," he said.

The Huskers' Nancy Kinding and Marjoe Goedhart finished third and fifth in the pentathlon as the Huskers scored only 24 points and came into Saturday's competition in third place.

The Huskers began Saturday's meet with a third place finish by freshman Rhonda Blanford in the 60-yard hurdles.

"Rhonda ran faster than what we had hoped," Pepin said. Her previous best was a :07.82 and she ran a :07.70, which is a pretty big jump. We knew she was capable of it because she was the fastest time in high school last year," he said.

Following Blanford's performance, the Huskers' Ottey won the 60-yard dash with a time of :06.61. As if that wasn't enough, Janet Burke of Nebraska took the second

spot with a :06.76. Burke was followed by teammate Alicia McQueen who was clocked at :06.86, George Mason's Sherri Funn averted a 1-2-3-4 Husher finish by edging Deb James :06.91 to :06.92.

"We had an awful lot of exceptional performances. Most everyone on the team had a personal best. It took that kind of effort," Pepin said. "Merlene was of course exceptional, and the four individuals in the top five of the 60 was exceptional too."

It also was a national first for any team to have four of the top five times in any event.

Ottey came back to win the 300-yard run with a :32.63, beating her own world record of 32.75. Burke finished third with a :34.62 and McQueen fifth with a :34.94 to virtually lock up the Husker championship. Tami Essington finished fifth in the 1,000-yard run with a 2:30.32 clocking, and Marcia Tate fourth in the 600-yard run with a 1:20.54 for other Husker placings.

Nebraska also shone in the relays, as Ottey, Jenny Gorham, Blanford and James set a meet record in the 880-yard relay with a 1:37.70, beating Morgan States 1:38.92 set in 1980.

The mile relay team of Ottey, Tate, Gorham, and Kathy Pugh finished third with a 3:47.07.

"We were extremely pleased with the efforts all of our team gave," Pepin said. "I think we really wanted to win this meet, and there were a lot of individual sacrifices made by people so the team could win. I'm very happy that we reached that goal."



Sports Shorts

The Nebraska wrestling team finished sixth in the NCAA championship meet Saturday in Ames, Iowa.

The Huskers scored 40 1/4 points for the finish, which is the best in Nebraska school history. Iowa won the meet, followed by Iowa State, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State and North Carolina.

Four Cornhuskers earned All-American honors by placing in consolation competition Saturday afternoon. Bill Scherr finished fourth at 190 pounds, Johnnie Selmon, a 142-pounder, finished fifth. Jim Scherr was sixth at 177-pounds and heavyweight Gary Albright was seventh.

Albright finished seventh by pinning North Carolina State's Tab Thacker. The pin was his fourth of the meet and earned Albright a trophy for having the most falls in the meet.

Husker shot putter Joe Staub placed 10th in the NCAA meet Saturday at Pontiac, Mich., with a 61-9 effort.

Three Cornhusker athletes failed to make it out of Friday's time trials. Dennis Wallace finished fourth in his heat of the 440 with a time of :49.48. Mike Cielocha was fifth in his heat of the 600 with a clocking of 1:13.12, and Randy Brooks was sixth in the 60-yard high hurdle preliminaries, running the event in :07.65.

The Nebraska women's gymnastics team finished second in the regional meet at Stillwater, Okla., Saturday. Oklahoma State won the meet with 145.55 points while the Huskers scored 144.2. Oklahoma finished third, followed by Missouri and New Mexico.

Nebraska's Kim Grabowski scored a 36.65 to finish second in the all-around behind Lisa Hartman of Oklahoma.

Although at-large bids to the NCAA championships won't be issued until Thursday, the *Omaha World-Herald* reported in its Sunday edition that Nebraska probably will receive a bid.



Photo by Dave Bentz

Lincoln Northeast's Mark Diaz ponders the state championship his Rockets won Saturday night by defeating Omaha Northwest 61-54 in the Class A finals of the boys' state high school basketball tournament.

In other championship games, Gretna defeated Lincoln Pius X 56-47 for the Class B title, Grant defeated Ewing 71-59 in Class C and Hordville defeated Maxwell 70-61 in Class D. It was the second consecutive championship for Grant and Hordville.

In the Class C game, Grant's Bill Jackman scored 35, giving him 214 career points in the state tournament and breaking the old record of 207 held by Crale Bauer of Hildreth. Grant's win also kept alive the state's longest winning streak at 52 games.

Husker tennis team anticipates improved season

By Mark Quandahl

With the two toughest matches of this season already out of the way, Coach Kathy Hawkins thinks her UNL women's tennis team could win the remainder of the meets.

"We're going to have a good spring record," Hawkins said. "Both in placing at tournaments and in the meets."

She said that of the three invitationals on the Husker spring schedule, they could capture two.

"We should get first place at the Kansas State Invitational (March 26 and 27) and the Wichita State Invite (April 23 and 24)," Hawkins said. "And we should place well at the Minnesota Invitational (April 30 and May 1)."

Hawkins said Nebraska's biggest improvement since last fall was added depth.

"We were young," Hawkins said, "but we all worked hard through the pre-season."

Concerning the Wisconsin match March 5, Hawkins

said the Huskers were more consistent and aggressive than before.

"We went out to win, and maintained that through the entire match," she said.

Although this year's team is young, Hawkins sees that as a strength instead of weakness.

"With an older team there's more pressure," she said. "They know they're young so there's not a lot to lose."

"A big part is believing in themselves," she said. "I know they have the ability. I've seen how much they've improved since last fall."

She said that with juniors Ann Swanson and Cindi Reiman leading the team, the Huskers won't lose one person from their starting six next year.

Reiman, the Huskers' No. 1 singles player, performed very well at Wisconsin, according to Hawkins.

"I'm not surprised," she said. "I'm happy to see her play at that level."

"Ann Swanson has improved quite a bit this season,

too," she added. "She'll be a strength at the number two spot if she continues."

Hawkins said Nebraska is looking forward to an April 9 bout with Missouri at Columbia.

"We should beat them," Hawkins said. "It will be a revenge match because they beat us 5-3 last year."

She said Oklahoma State and Colorado will be the top teams at the Big Eight meet April 16 and 17. Beating them would be next to impossible "since they are strong," Hawkins said.

"We plan on going from our tie-for-fifth and sixth-place finish last year to third," Hawkins said. "But anything above that would be really nice. The Big Eight will definitely be the highlight of the season."

The Kearney State team, which Nebraska meets in its first home meet of the season March 18, will not provide too much of a challenge, Hawkins said. She said the meet will be a good one to watch for Husker fans, and it'll give the team experience."